

The X-Files Mythology

Volume 2 – Black Oil

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Overview

The X-Files Mythology, Volume 2 – Black Oil

<i>The X-Files Mythology Volume 2 – Black Oil</i>	
Region 1 DVD cover	
Country of origin	United States
No. of episodes	15
Home video release	
DVD release	
Region 1	August 2, 2005
Series chronology	
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Volume 2 of *The X-Files Mythology* collection is the second DVD release containing selected episodes from the third to the fifth seasons of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. The episodes collected in the release form the middle of the series' mythology, and are centered on the discovery of a mind-altering extraterrestrial "black oil".

The collection contains five episodes from the third season, eight from the fourth season, and two from the fifth. The episodes follow the investigations of paranormal-related cases, or X-Files, by FBI Special Agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson). Mulder is a believer in the paranormal, while the skeptical Scully has been assigned to debunk his work. Events covered in the episodes include the assassination of a secretive informant, Scully's diagnosis with cancer and Mulder's apparent suicide.

Production for many of the episode's included in the collection required extensive effects. The titular black oil's on-screen appearance was achieved through visual effects; the shimmering oil effect was digitally placed over the actors' corneas in post-production. Steven Williams, William B. Davis, Mitch Pileggi and Laurie Holden all play supporting roles in the collection. Released on August 2, 2005, the collection received mostly positive reviews from critics.

Plot summary

The collection opens with the two-part episodes "Nisei" and "731". Investigating evidence of an alien autopsy, FBI special agent Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) infiltrates a secretive government train carriage carrying an alien-human hybrid. Mulder is almost killed by a Syndicate operative guarding the hybrid, but is saved by his informant X (Steven Williams). X had been tipped off about Mulder's activities by the agent's partner Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson). Scully, meanwhile, meets a group of women with abduction experiences similar to her own, and meets another member of the Syndicate known as the First Elder (Don S. Williams), who claims during her abduction she was placed on a similar train car and experimented upon by the Japanese scientists.^[1]

The crew of a French salvage ship trying to raise a World War II-era submarine from the sea floor are stricken with massive radiation burns—except for one, who has been infected with a parasitic black oil discovered on the submarine. The oil is controlling the crewman's body, and after passing through several hosts, has overtaken Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea), who Mulder has been pursuing. Scully finds that the submarine had been involved in discovering the oil on the sea floor during World War II, under the guise of finding a sunken fighter plane. The infected Krycek makes his way to a missile silo used to hide a UFO, and the oil escapes his body to board the craft. Meanwhile, Scully has tracked down Luis Cardinal, the man responsible for killing her sister.^[2]

When the Syndicate suspect that one of their members is passing information to Mulder and Scully, they organise a canary trap to find the leak, using information about the safety of Mulder's mother as bait. X's role as an informant is discovered, and he is shot dead, although he is able to pass along the name of another informant who can be of use to Mulder—Marita Covarrubias (Laurie Holden), the Special Representative to the Secretary-General of the United Nations.^[3] Covarrubias' aid is sought when Mulder attempts to reach Tunguska in Russia to investigate the source of a further black oil contamination. Whilst there, Mulder is held in a gulag and used as a successful test subject for a black oil vaccine. He escapes and is able to return to America, having found that Krycek is working with the Russians.^[4]

Having been diagnosed with cancer, Scully is unsure of her future with the FBI. Mulder is convinced that her condition is a result of her earlier abduction, and is prepared to make a deal with the Syndicate to find a cure. He is dissuaded by Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi), who secretly makes such a deal instead.^[5] While being pursued by an assassin responsible for a hoax alien corpse discovered on a mountaintop, Mulder fakes his own suicide, mutilating the assassin's face to provide a decoy body. He uses the distraction this offers to infiltrate The Pentagon to find a cure for Scully's cancer, while Scully is able to uncover and reveal a Syndicate connection within the FBI.^{[6][7]}

Background

During the third season the black oil was introduced, an alien entity that invaded bodies and made them into living hosts. The black oil was able to enter through a victim's mouth, eyes or nose; it would leave a victim's body to revert to its original form or find a new host. The oil is revealed to be a tool used by the Colonists, brought to Earth by meteorites to create hosts of the human population living there. The fourth season episodes "Tunguska" and "Terma" were conceived by the writers when they were trying to conceive a "big and fun canvas" to tell stories. They decided to create a story which had connections to the Russian gulags, which led to the "natural" idea that the Russians were experimenting separately from the Syndicate to create a vaccine for the black oil. Writer John Shiban felt it was natural creating an arms race-like story between the United States and Russia, being that the Cold War had ended a

few years earlier. The inspiration for the oil-containing rocks was NASA's announcement of possible evidence of extraterrestrial life in the Allan Hills 84001 meteorite; while the gulag scenes were based on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's books *The Gulag Archipelago* and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.^[8]

The on-screen appearance of the black oil was achieved through visual effects; the shimmering oil effect was digitally placed over the actors' corneas in post-production. The crew went through various iterations to find the two "right" types of fluids. According to physical effects crewman David Gauthier, they used a mix of oil and acetone, which he believed gave the substance a more globular look. During the filming of "Apocrypha", Nicholas Lea was fitted with a mask with tubes for the scene where the alien black oil leaves his body. Lea said filming the scene was horrible, and the scene ended up having to be filmed again a few days later. A similar scene from the start of the episode with the submarine captain was accomplished using a dummy head.^[9]

The decision to have the character of X killed off in "Herrenvolk" was made at the end of the third season. The writers felt that they could only do so much with the character and decided that they would either make him a bigger character in the series, or have him pay the price for collaborating with Mulder. The show's producers decided to give Gillian Anderson's character Dana Scully cancer early in the fourth season. Carter initially discussed giving Scully's mother cancer but decided to have Scully suffer from it instead. Carter felt the move would give the show an

interesting platform on which to discuss things such as faith, science, health care and a certain element of the paranormal.¹¹ Some of the writing staff felt that the decision was a poor one to make, citing it as "a cheap TV thing". However, Frank Spotnitz felt that, given the appearances of cancer-stricken abductees in previous episodes, it was an "obligatory" move to have Scully follow suit.

Reception

Released on August 2, 2005, the collection has received generally positive reviews from critics. Slant Magazine's Keith Uhlich rated it three-and-a-half stars out of five, noting that there is "an unabashed confidence to these episodes", although this "comes with something of a price as the thrill and surprise of season two mythology stories like "Colony" and "End Game" are replaced by a nagging suspicion that the writers are starting to tread water". Uhlich singles out "Talitha Cumi" as the collection's highlight, calling it "an overall mindblower". Writing for DVD Talk, Jeffrey Robinson was impressed with the collection, calling it "highly recommended". However, he felt that the cohesion between the episodes was lacking somewhat, and that the two-part episodes "Tempus Fugit" and "Max" did not add much to the overall storyline. *Exclaim!*'s Monica S. Kuebler, on the other hand, felt negatively about the collection. She too felt that the interrupted nature of the episodes caused a lack of "believable" pacing, and noted that the release "feels like a blatant cash grab by Fox to milk an old franchise while they still can".

Episodes

9	87	"Memento Mori"	Rob Bowman	Chris Carter & Vince Gilligan & John Shiban & Frank Spotnitz	February 9, 1997	4X14
Scully tries to live with her cancer, while Mulder and the Lone Gunmen break into a high-security research lab to find a possible cure.						
10	90	"Tempus Fugit"	Rob Bowman	Chris Carter & Frank Spotnitz	March 16, 1997	4X17
The agents investigate an unexplained crash of a commercial airliner, and their search for answers leads them to the bottom of a desolate lake and a startling discovery.						
11	91	"Max"	Kim Manners	Chris Carter & Frank Spotnitz	March 23, 1997	4X18
Mulder and Scully attempt to prove that the military deliberately sacrificed the passengers of the doomed airliner for stolen alien technology.						
12	94	"Zero Sum"	Kim Manners	Howard Gordon & Frank Spotnitz	April 27, 1997	4X21
As part of a deal to save Scully's life, Skinner is forced to help the Cigarette Smoking Man destroy evidence of a fatal bee attack, but finds that he's being framed for murder.						
13	97	"Gethsemane"	R. W. Goodwin	Chris Carter	May 18, 1997	4X24
Mulder tries to prove that a discovery frozen in the mountains of Canada is proof of extraterrestrial life, but his quest for the truth only leads to more lies ... and an unthinkable conclusion.						
14	98	"Redux"	R. W. Goodwin	Chris Carter	November 2, 1997	5X01
To find a possible cure for Scully's cancer, Mulder sneaks into a secret research facility where he discovers the startling origins of his partner's illness.						
15	99	"Redux II"	Kim Manners	Chris Carter	November 9, 1997	5X02
With Scully lying comatose in a hospital bed, Mulder receives crucial information from the Cigarette Smoking Man that could mean life or death for her.						

Special features

The X-Files Mythology, Volume 2 – Black Oil							
Set Details			Special Features				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 Episodes • 4-Disc Set • 1.78:1 Aspect Ratio • Subtitles: English • English (Dolby Digital 5.1 Surround) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audio Commentaries (Dolby Digital 2.0 Stereo) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commentary by director R.W. Goodwin on "Talitha Cumi" • Commentary by director Rob Bowman on "Memento Mori" • Commentary by director Kim Manners on "Max" • Threads of Mythology • Mythology Timeline 				
Release Dates							
 United States  Canada		 Australia		 Japan		 United Kingdom	
August 2, 2005		TBA		TBA		TBA	

References

Footnotes

- [1] Lovece, pp.204–208
- [2] Lovece, pp.211–212
- [3] Meisler (1998), pp.19–25.
- [4] Meisler (1998), pp.95–110
- [5] Meisler (1998), pp.221–230
- [6] Meisler (1998), pp.259–270
- [7] Meisler (1999), pp.27–46
- [8] Meisler (1998), p.102
- [9] Meisler (1998), pp.25–27

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- Lowry, Brian; Carter, Chris; Stegall, Sarah (1996). *Trust No One: The Official Guide to the X-Files*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-105353-8.
- Meisler, Andy (1998). *I Want to Believe: The Official Guide to the X-Files Volume 3*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-105386-4.
- Meisler, Andy (1999). *Resist or Serve: The Official Guide to the X-Files Volume 4*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-107309-1.

Episodes

"Nisei"

"Nisei"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
An alien corpse being autopsied. The episode references the 1995 alien autopsy video hoax which Fox had previously aired as genuine.	
Episode no.	Season 3 Episode 9
Directed by	David Nutter
Written by	Chris Carter Frank Spotnitz Howard Gordon
Production code	3X09
Original air date	November 24, 1995
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raymond J. Barry as Richard Matheson Tom Braidwood as Melvin Frohike Dean Haglund as Richard Langly Bruce Harwood as John Fitzgerald Byers Steven Williams as X Stephen McHattie as Red Haired Man Robert Ito as Dr. Takio Ishimaru/Shiro Zama Gillian Barber as Penny Northern Corrine Koslo as Lottie Holloway Brendan Beiser as Pendrell Lori Triolo as Diane Paul McLean as Coast Guard Officer Yasuo Sakurai as Kazuo Sakurai Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner 	
Episode chronology	
← Previous Next → "Oubliette" "731"	
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"Nisei" is the ninth episode of the third season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on November 24, 1995. It was directed by R.W. Goodwin, and written by series creator Chris Carter. "Nisei" featured guest appearances by Steven Williams, Raymond J. Barry and Stephen McHattie. The episode helped explore the series' overarching mythology. "Nisei" earned a Nielsen household rating of 9.8, being watched by 16.36 million people in its initial broadcast. The episode received largely positive reviews from critics.

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. In this episode, Mulder and Scully investigate the origins of an alien autopsy Mulder believes is real. The investigation uncovers Japanese involvement and sees Mulder smuggle himself onto a secret cargo train to find out more. "Nisei" is a two-part episode, with the plot continuing in the next episode, "731".

Inspired by the atrocities committed by Unit 731, a Japanese research program during World War II, "Nisei" was originally intended to be a stand alone mythology episode, but was lengthened into two separate parts. The episode featured several scenes that required stunt work, which David Duchovny performed himself. The episode's title refers to the term *nisei*, meaning the son or daughter of an *Issei* couple born outside Japan. In addition, the episode has been critically examined, due to its themes pertaining to "arrogated" scientists and their "connection to ancient evil".

Plot

In Knoxville, Tennessee, a mysterious train car is left in a rail yard. That night, a group of Japanese scientists enter the car and conduct an autopsy on an alien body. The scene is recorded and transmitted via satellite. Suddenly, a strike team storms the car and kills the scientists, taking the alien corpse away in a body bag. Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) purchases an edited video of the autopsy. He believes the tape is authentic, but Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) is skeptical.

When the agents go to Allentown, Pennsylvania to track down the distributor of the tape, they find him murdered. At the scene, they pursue and capture a Japanese man, Kazuo Sakurai, who is identified as a high-ranking diplomat. Walter Skinner appears and orders Sakurai released. Before doing so, Mulder searches his briefcase and finds both a list of Mutual UFO Network members and satellite images of a ship. The Lone Gunmen identify the ship as the *Talapus*, a salvage vessel docked in Newport News, Virginia. Meanwhile, Sakurai is killed by an assassin called the Red-Haired Man.

Scully investigates the MUFON group, discovering several women who claim to recognize her from her abduction experience. They have similar implants to Scully's, and inform her that they are all dying of cancer. Meanwhile, Mulder goes to the Newport News shipyard and searches the *Talapus*. Armed men arrive and scour the ship, but Mulder manages to escape. That night, he discovers a warehouse where a craft is being fumigated by a hazmat team. Mulder believes the craft to be of alien origin, recovered by the *Talapus*.

Skinner later confronts Mulder over the briefcase, the absence of which has caused an international incident with Japan. He refuses to assist Mulder any further with his case. Mulder meets with Senator Richard Matheson, who gives him the details on the autopsy and links it with the larger conspiracy of the alien-human hybrids. Mulder investigates further, discovering that the Japanese scientists were members of the notorious Unit 731 during World War II; like Victor Klemper, they were recruited by the U.S. government to develop the hybrids. Mulder believes that the scientists killed on the videotape were working on a secret railway, transporting test subjects.

After sharing her MUFON findings with Mulder, Scully runs her implant through the FBI labs to gather technological information about it. She analyzes the autopsy video, realizing that one of the scientists seen, Dr. Ishimaru, experimented on her during her abduction. Meanwhile, Mulder goes to West Virginia and tracks down the secret train car, watching a group of Japanese men place what seems to be an alien-human subject on board. Meanwhile, another Japanese scientist, Dr. Shiro Zama, waits for the train at a station in Ohio; he is forced to board after his bodyguard is killed by the Red-Haired Man in the restroom. The Red-Haired Man follows Zama aboard the train, which is headed for Vancouver, Canada.

Mulder tracks the train to the Ohio station, but learns it has just left when he arrives. Meanwhile, Scully goes to Mulder's apartment and is met by X, who warns her to keep Mulder from getting on the train. Scully calls Mulder, who has managed to drive ahead of the train and is just about to jump onto it from a bridge. Despite Scully's pleas, Mulder jumps onto the top of the train as it speeds past below.¹

Production

Writing

The idea to create a story involving the 731 unit came from series creator Chris Carter. He noted, "Unit 731 first came to my attention at the same time as it did for a lot of other people, when I read it in the *New York Times* about what the Japanese did to prisoners of war during the Second World War." Carter decided that an episode based around former war criminals who had received "clemency so [Americans] could use their science" would be "interesting".

Frank Spotnitz was assigned writing duties for "Nisei", which was originally intended to be a stand alone mythology story and to air as the seventh episode of the third season. However, as Spotnitz developed his script, the episode hit several logistical snags. Most notably, Spotnitz's script featured several scenes filmed on trains: Chris Carter explained, "We found that we were going to have some trouble shooting with trains." Eventually, the sheer scope of the episode caused co-executive producer R. W. Goodwin so much trouble that he wanted to scrap the story. Spotnitz explained, "Goodwin called Chris and said, 'This is unproducible. [...] you've got to throw out the script, basically.' I was devastated, and Chris [said] 'Let's make it a two-parter.'" So, the episode was bumped back to number nine and was lengthened to a two parter, resulting in it being delayed several weeks.



Lead actor David Duchovny performed the stunt involving his character jumping off a train by himself.

Filming

A co-executive producer called this episode and its second part "731" logically huge. The stunt where Mulder jumped on a moving train was worked on for six weeks. While there was some alarm in having David Duchovny do the stunt, the actor, who had previously performed his own stunts in the episode "Ascension" was willing to do it and considered it a fun experience.^[1] The producers used trained rangers to play the soldiers in the teaser, part of an attempt to keep the show grounded in reality at all times. An 11-year-old boy was used to play the dead alien on the autopsy table. The boy's twin sister was used to play the alien on the train car. Both underwent extensive makeup including oversized dark contact lenses to create the effect of the alien eyes.^[1]

After watching the video bought by Mulder, Scully criticizes it citing the 1995 alien autopsy video—a hoax made by Ray Santilli, a British video producer. Coincidentally, Fox ended up re-airing the alien autopsy video the night following this episode's original air date. The episode features the first appearance of Agent Pendrell, who appeared in several other episodes in the third and fourth seasons. Pendrell was named after a street in Vancouver.^[2] The title, "Nisei", refers to the term used, in countries of North and South America, to specify the son or daughter of an *Issei* couple born outside Japan. The term *nisei* Japanese American refers to *nisei* living in the United States.^[1]

Themes

Jan Delasara, in the book *PopLit, PopCult and The X-Files* argues that episodes like "Nisei" and "731," or the earlier episode "Paper Clip," show the public's trust in science "eroding." Delasara proposes that "arrogated" scientists who are "rework[ing] the fabric of life," are causing the public's faith in science to fade drastically, "a concern", she notes, "that is directly addressed by *X-Files* episodes". Moreover, she notes that almost all of the scientists portrayed in *The X-Files* are depicted with a "connection to ancient evil", with the lone exception being Agent Scully. In "Nisei," and later in "731", the scientists are former Japanese scientists who worked during WWII for the infamous 731 unit. In their attempts to create a successful human-alien hybrid, they become the archetypical scientists who "[go] too far," a

serious factor that Delasara argues "'alienates' [the public] further from science and its practitioners."^[3]

Reception

"Nisei" premiered on the Fox network on November 24, 1995, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on October 23, 1996. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 9.8 with a 17 share, meaning that roughly 9.8 percent of all television-equipped households, and 17 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 16.36 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[4] "Nisei" later won two Emmy Awards: one for "Outstanding Individual Achievement in Sound Editing for a Series" and one for "Outstanding Individual Achievement in Sound Mixing for a Drama Series."^[4]

"Nisei" received largely positive reviews. In a retrospective of the third season in *Entertainment Weekly*, "Nisei" was rated an A. The review noted that the episode contained "lots of excitement for Scully", though it also described Mulder's plot thread as "equally gripping". Writing for *The A.V. Club*, Todd VanDerWerff rated the episode an A-, calling it "a hell of a lot of fun". VanDerWerff described the cliffhanger ending as "just phenomenal", and felt that the episode had "the drive of a big-budget action film". However, he noted that it was becoming evident by this stage that the series' mythology was becoming "too big to ever resolve wholly satisfactorily". Paula Vitaris from *Cinefantastique* gave the episode a largely positive review and awarded it three-and-a-half stars out of four. Vitaris noted that, despite the teaser and first act being "promising enough", the episode "slides downhill rapidly with a storyline that crosses the border into ludicrous." Vitaris called the scene where soldiers kill prisoners "a scene more disturbing than anything else previously seen on *The X-Files*." Furthermore, she wrote that the final scene between Mulder and Scully was "beautifully written and acted."

Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson, in their book *Wanting to Believe: A Critical Guide to The X-Files, Millennium & The Lone Gunmen*, were slightly more critical and rated the episode three-and-a-half stars out of five. The two criticized the plot—despite calling the action sequences "quite breathless"—noting that "it seems rather funny: an entire team of black ops are sent to a small boat, but Mulder is still able to evade them without their noticing."^[5] Shearman and Pearson, called the episode "*Planes, Trains, and Automobiles* reinvented as an action movie."

Footnotes

[1] Lowry, p. 80

[2] Lowry, p. 126

[3] Delasara, p. 181

[4] Hurwitz and Knowles, p. 241

[5] Shearman and Pearson, p. 64

References

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- Shearman, Robert; Pearson, Lars (2009). *Wanting to Believe: A Critical Guide to The X-Files, Millennium & The Lone Gunmen*. Mad Norwegian Press. ISBN 0-9759446-9-X.

External links

- "Nisei" (<http://web.archive.org/web/20010413102319/http://www.thexfiles.com/episodes/season3/3x09.html>) on *The X-Files* official website
- "Nisei" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751166/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Nisei" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/nisei-1-548/>) at TV.com

"731"

"731"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 3 Episode 10
Directed by	Rob Bowman
Written by	Frank Spotnitz
Production code	3X10
Original air date	December 1, 1995
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen McHattie as Red-Haired Man • William B. Davis as Cigarette Smoking Man • Don S. Williams as First Elder • Steven Williams as X • Michael Puttenen as Conductor • Robert Ito as Dr. Takio Ishimaru/Shiro Zama • Colin Cunningham as Escalante • Brendan Beiser as Pendrell 	
Episode chronology	
← Previous Next → "Nisei" "Revelations"	
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"731" is the tenth episode of the third season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on December 1, 1995. It was directed by Rob Bowman, and written by Frank Spotnitz. "731" featured guest appearances by Stephen McHattie, Steven Williams and Don S. Williams. The episode helps explore the series' overarching mythology. "731" earned a Nielsen household rating of 12, being watched by 17.68 million people in its initial broadcast.

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. In this episode, Mulder risks his life infiltrating a train carrying a human-alien hybrid. Meanwhile, Scully tries to uncover the truth about her abduction. "731" is a two-part episode, continuing the plot from the previous episode, "Nisei".

The production of "731" involved several stunts, including the explosion of a retired railway car. The episode's production was successful for two members of the crew—earning director of photography John Bartley an American Society of Cinematographers award nomination for his work, and securing Bowman the job of directing the series' subsequent film adaptation, *The X-Files*.

Plot

In Quinnimont, West Virginia, a team of soldiers arrives at an abandoned leprosy research compound, rounding up most of the patients. One patient, Escalante, hides beneath a trapdoor during the arrival and follows the group to a secluded field nearby. He watches as the soldiers shoot the other patients, including apparent alien-human hybrids, into a mass grave.

Fox Mulder loses his cell phone after jumping on top of the moving train, losing contact with Dana Scully. When questioned by Scully, X tells her to analyze her implant, saying that it will give her answers about the train and Melissa's murder. Meanwhile, Mulder enters the train and finds that the secret railcar is quarantined and protected by a security system. He searches for Zama, enlisting the train conductor for help. In Zama's compartment, they find hand-written journals in Japanese. However, elsewhere on the train, the Red-Haired Man intercepts and strangles Zama.

Scully sees Pendrell, who tells her that the implant contains highly advanced technology that can replicate the brain's memory functions and enable someone to know a person's very thoughts. The manufacturer of the chip was Zama, who created the implant at the West Virginia compound. Scully travels there, meeting a group of deformed patients who have eluded the "death squads." Escalante tells her that the patients were experimented on by Zama, who departed long ago; since then, the death squads have set out to massacre them. Escalante shows her the mass grave but is killed when soldiers arrive to capture Scully. She is brought before the First Elder.

Mulder returns to the railcar, seeing its door ajar; an alien-human test subject is locked in a room inside. The Red-Haired Man attacks Mulder, causing the conductor to lock them both in the car. The Red-Haired Man claims to work for the NSA, and that a bomb in the car was triggered after he gained entry with Zama's pass code. Mulder doesn't believe him, but he is called by Scully on the Red-Haired Man's cell phone. Scully—who is with the First Elder in a similar railcar—tells Mulder that unwitting subjects, including herself, were operated on by Zama in the secret railway, with the alien abduction theory used as a smokescreen. She also confirms that a bomb is in the car and believes that the quarantined patient is infected with hemorrhagic fever. She fears that thousands will die from the disease if the car explodes. Mulder finds the bomb in the ceiling.

He has the car disconnected from the rest of the train on a remote rail siding. Mulder questions the Red-Haired Man, who says that the patient is immune to biological warfare. Zama had tried to sneak the patient out of the country, but the government would rather see it destroyed than let their research fall into Japanese hands; the Red-Haired Man was sent to kill them both. Mulder, however, believes that the patient is an alien-human hybrid. With help from Scully, Mulder successfully unlocks the door of the railcar, but he is knocked unconscious by the Red-Haired Man. As he is about to leave, X appears and shoots him. Realizing that the bomb is about to explode and that there is not enough time to both save Mulder and secure the patient, X decides to save Mulder. X exits carrying the still unconscious Mulder shortly before the bomb explodes.

After recovering from his injuries, Mulder attempts to find information on the railcar, but he is unable to do so. Scully returns the journal that he found on the car, but Mulder realizes that it is a rewritten substitute. Meanwhile, the real journal is translated in a shadowy room as the Smoking Man watches.^{[1][2]}

Production



The episode was inspired by Japan's Unit 731
(commander Shirō Ishii pictured)

Conception and writing

Writer Frank Spotnitz has claimed that his inspiration for the episode came from having read a *New York Times* article on the war crimes committed by Unit 731 of the Imperial Japanese Army, after which the episode is named. The unit was responsible for human subject research on both prisoners of war and civilians. Further inspiration was drawn from the films *North by Northwest* and *The Train*, which were the basis for the episode's train-car setting.^[3] Spotnitz also noted that the episode offered the writers the opportunity to "set the counter back" for the series' premise, allowing the character of Scully to still maintain a sceptical standpoint after the events of "Paper Clip", an earlier third season episode in which the character witnesses a group of aliens.^[4] The tagline for this episode was switched to "Apology is Policy."^[5]

Filming and post-production

The scene at the start of the episode with Duchovny's character Fox Mulder clinging to the side of the train car was filmed using a harness cabled across the top of the car that was removed digitally during post production. Duchovny performed the stunt himself, without the use of a double. Steven Williams and Duchovny separately recorded the scene in which Williams carries Duchovny from the car before it explodes against a blue screen. The results of this were flipped horizontally to aid the scene's "composition", and superimposed over the explosion. Twenty-five masked actors, mostly children, laid over prop bodies for the scene with the mass grave.^[6]

The producers built train car interiors for the quarantine car where the patient was being kept and the sleeper cars, and floated the train sets on inner tubes to create the feeling of movement. Seven different cameras were used by director Rob Bowman when filming the train car explosion. Forty-five gallons of gasoline and 120 black-powder bombs were used for the effect. The car used had been obtained cheaply from a Vancouver-based rail company, and had been considered scrap due to being bent. After the explosion was recorded, a bell from the train was recovered some distance from the site by the physical effects supervisor Dave Gauthier, who had it polished and engraved with a message for Bowman.

Bowman made use of a Steadicam for those scenes featured Mulder inside the train, and kept the character away from the centre of the screen, to accentuate his "paranoid" mindset. This was deliberately contrasted with the concurrent scene featuring Scully, who is speaking to Mulder over a telephone. This was shot using a camera dolly and a "graphically balanced" mise-en-scène, intended to leave the character seeming as "balanced, confident, strong" as "the Rock of Gibraltar".^[7] Bowman, who felt that the finished episode "was really like a movie", has stated that his cut of the episode impressed series creator Chris Carter enough for Carter to offer Bowman the job of directing the series' film adaptation.

Themes

Jan Delasara, in her book "*PopLit, PopCult and The X-Files*" argues that episodes such "731" and "Nisei", or the earlier third season episode "Paper Clip", show the public's trust in science "eroding". Delasara proposes that "arrogated" scientists who are "rework[ing] the fabric of life" are causing the public's faith in the scientific method to fade drastically, "a concern ... that is directly addressed by *X-Files* episodes". Moreover, she notes that almost all of the scientists portrayed in *The X-Files* are depicted with a "connection to ancient evil," with the lone exception being Agent Scully. In "731," and earlier in "Nisei," the scientists are former Japanese scientists who worked for Unit 731. In their attempts to create a successful human-alien hybrid, they become the archetypical scientists who "[go] too far," a serious factor that Delasara argues "alienates [the public] further from science and its practitioners".^[3]

Critical opinion has also noted that both parts of the story arc offer an alternative explanation for the events of the series so far, a "less romantic" outcome that paints the ongoing plot as an elaborate hoax to defer attention from the government's experiments, both military and medical. Reviewer Todd VanDerWerff feels that such an explanation would "speak more to the sadness at the core of the *X-Files* to have Mulder find his answers and be forced to accept they weren't what he was looking for", comparing such a realisation to the hero of *Don Quixote*. This "hoax" plot device would later be revisited in both the fourth season finale "Gethsemane" and the fifth season's opening two-part episodes "Redux and Redux II", although to a much lesser degree of effectiveness.

Reception

Scully finds some of the answers she's been looking for, and Mulder gets as close as he's ever gotten to the truth, and both of them are the driving forces behind the story. In the end, when all is said and done, neither can walk away from what happens here, not in the same way they can from their other cases.

—The A.V. Club's Zack Handlen on "731".

Ratings

"731" premiered on the Fox network on December 1, 1995, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on October 30, 1996. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 12 with a 21 share, meaning that roughly 12 percent of all television-equipped households, and 21 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 17.68 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[4]

Reviews

"731" received mostly positive reviews from critics. Writing for The A.V. Club, reviewer Zack Handlen rated the episode an A, calling it "terrific". However, Handlen felt that the version of events told to Scully in this episode was perhaps a better explanation for the series' mythology than its eventual resolution, noting that it might have offered "a conclusion whose emotional impact would've lived up to the intensity of early mythology episodes" such as this. In a retrospective of the third season in *Entertainment Weekly*, "731" was rated a B. The review noted that the episode was "Strangely tension-free", though it derided Scully's stubbornness to believe what the series had established as truth. Nick De Semlyen and James White of *Empire* named it the second "greatest" episode of the series and wrote "Arguably the greatest of The X-Files' many mythology episodes, 731 is a high-octane mix of action and intrigue, with the production values and pacing of a Hollywood blockbuster".

Director Rob Bowman called the episode one of his all time favorites. Actor Steven Williams felt that his portrayal of X in this episode helped endear him more to the show's viewers.^[5]

Awards

Director of Photography John Bartley earned a nomination for Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography in a Regular Series by the American Society of Cinematographers for his work on this episode.

Footnotes

- [1] Lowry, pp. 129–131
- [2] Lovece, pp. 206–208
- [3] Edwards, p. 157
- [4] Edwards, pp. 157–158
- [5] Lowry, p. 133
- [6] Lowry, pp. 131–133
- [7] Edwards, p. 158

References

- Delasara, Jan (2000). *PopLit, PopCult and The X-Files: A Critical Exploration*. Mcfarland & Co. ISBN 0-7864-0789-1.
- Edwards, Ted (1996). *X-Files Confidential*. Little, Brown and Company. ISBN 0-316-21808-1.
- Lovece, Frank (1996). *The X-Files Declassified*. Citadel Press. ISBN 0-8065-1745-X.
- Lowry, Brian (1996). *Trust No One: The Official Guide to the X-Files*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-105353-8.

External links

- "731" (<http://web.archive.org/web/20010413102319/http://www.thexfiles.com/episodes/season3/3x10.html>) on *The X-Files* official website
- "731" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751068/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "731" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/731-2-549/>) at TV.com

"Piper Maru"

"Piper Maru"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
A man is possessed by the black oil. First introduced in "Piper Maru", The black oil would later go on to play a much larger role in the series, including playing a pivotal role in the 1998 <i>X-Files</i> movie.	
Episode no.	Season 3 Episode 15
Directed by	Rob Bowman
Written by	Frank Spotnitz Chris Carter
Production code	3X15
Original air date	February 9, 1996
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner Nicholas Lea as Alex Krycek Robert Clothier as Christopher Johansen Ari Solomon as Gauthier Kimberly Unger as Joan Gauthier Jo Bates as Jeraldine Kallenchuk Morris Panych as Gray-Haired Man Lenno Britos as Luis Cardinal Stephen E. Miller as Wayne Morgan Paul Batten as Dr. Seizer Rochelle Greenwood as Waitress Joel Silverstone as Engineer #1 David Neale as Navy Base Guard Tom Scholte as Young Johansen Robert F. Maier as World War II Pilot Tegan Moss as Young Dana Scully 	
Episode chronology	
← Previous Next → "Grotesque" "Apocrypha"	
List of season 3 episodes List of <i>The X-Files</i> episodes	

"Piper Maru" is the fifteenth episode of the third season of the science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on February 9, 1996. The episode was written by executive producer Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz, and directed by Rob Bowman. "Piper Maru" is one of those which helped to explore the series' overarching mythology. Its introduction of the black oil became a storyline milestone for the series. The black oil would later go on to play a much larger role in the series, including playing a pivotal role in the 1998 *X-Files* movie. "Piper Maru" earned a Nielsen household rating of 10.6, being watched by 16.44 million people in its initial broadcast. The episode received mostly positive reviews from critics.

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. In this episode, a French salvage ship sends a diving crew to recover a mysterious wreckage from World War II, but the crew falls prey to a bizarre illness forcing FBI special

agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) to investigate the source. Their investigation brings them face-to-face with Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea).

"Piper Maru" was based around two visual images Chris Carter had wanted to include in a script "since the beginning of the show". The first of these was that of a deep-sea diver finding a still-living pilot trapped in the wreckage of a World War II-era fighter plane and the second was that of a black-and-white flashback taking place in a submarine. The title of the episode is a reference to the first and middle name of Gillian Anderson's daughter, who had been born during the production of the second season.

Plot

Piper Maru, a French salvage vessel, is exploring the Pacific Ocean. Gauthier, a member of the ship's crew, dives down into the sea and finds a sunken fighter plane from World War II. He is shocked to find a man alive in the plane's cockpit, with what looks like black oil in his eyes. When Gauthier returns to the surface, he has become possessed by the black oil.

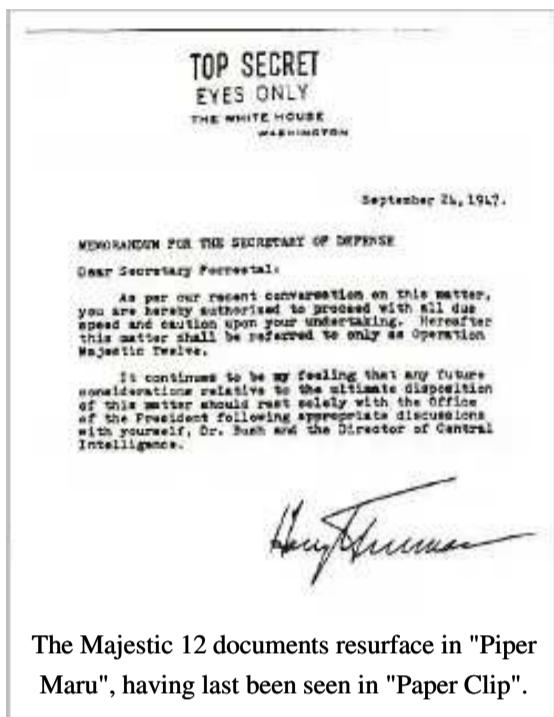
In Washington, Walter Skinner tells agent Dana Scully that the FBI's investigation into her sister's murder has been made inactive, despite the evidence that had been recovered. Fox Mulder tells Scully about the *Piper Maru*, which had laid anchor at the same coordinates as another ship believed to have salvaged a UFO; when the *Piper Maru* came to port in San Diego, her crew was found suffering from radiation burns. Aboard the ship, the agents find traces of the black oil on Gauthier's diving suit. Upon viewing a video of the dive, Scully identifies the sunken plane as a P-51 Mustang. Meanwhile, Gauthier returns home and searches for something. When his wife Joan arrives, the black oil passes itself along to her.

Scully visits an old friend of her father's, Commander Christopher Johanson, seeking information about the plane. Johanson admits that he had been sent to find a sunken bomber aboard the submarine *Zeus Faber*, and recalls how many aboard the sub suffered from radiation burns while he joined a mutiny against his commanding officer, who succumbed to the black oil. Meanwhile, Mulder visits Gauthier's home and finds him passed out, covered in the black oil; he has no memory of his experience. Mulder finds a letter from a salvage broker, and visits the broker's "secretary" Jeraldine. Mulder follows Jeraldine after her office is invaded by several armed men.

Both Mulder and Joan follow Jeraldine to Hong Kong, where Mulder learns that she is a middleman selling government secrets. Mulder tracks down Jeraldine and handcuffs himself to her. Arriving at her office, Mulder finds Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) waiting inside, having been selling the contents of the digital tape. Krycek escapes through a window while Jeraldine is shot by a group of men coming down the hallway. Mulder unlocks the handcuffs and escapes. Meanwhile, Joan walks down the hall and encounters the men, creating a flash that causes them all to suffer from the radiation burns.

Meanwhile, Skinner is initially confronted by several men, including the Gray-Haired Man, and is told not to pursue Melissa Scully's case any further. Skinner is later shot by Luis Cardinal. After Mulder catches Krycek in an airport, he tells him the tape is in a locker back in Washington and that he'll give it to him in exchange for letting him go. Mulder lets Krycek go to the bathroom, where he is confronted by Joan. As he departs the bathroom to leave with Mulder, Krycek's eyes show he is now infected with the black oil.^{[1][2]}

Production



Conception and writing

Conception of the episode was based around two visual images series creator Chris Carter had wanted to include in a script "since the beginning of the show". The first of these was that of a deep-sea diver

finding a still-living pilot trapped in the wreckage of a World War II-era fighter plane; and the second was that of a black-and-white flashback taking place in a submarine.^[3] Director Rob Bowman shared with Carter his experiences diving, feeling that an episode based on finding "something creepy" underwater would be a good idea.^[4] Carter also wanted the episode to feature the re-emergence of the "MJ documents" last seen in the earlier "Paper Clip".

Frank Spotnitz began working on the episode immediately after writing the earlier third season episode "731", fleshing out the rest of the concept while on a flight out of Minneapolis. Spotnitz ended up writing his ideas

on a magazine, not having brought paper with him, and included in his outline the investigation of Scully's sister's murder and the reintroduction of Alex Krycek.^[5] The title of the episode is a reference to the first and middle name

of Gillian Anderson's daughter, who had been born during the production of the second season. The name Gauthier, used for the French diver and his wife, was a reference to special effects producer David Gauthier.^[6]

Filming and post-production

The episode's cold open was filmed in a water tank, using a replica P-51 Mustang plane which had been designed by the art director. Bowman also needed to direct a scene in which Gillian Anderson would react to a memory of playing with her sister as a child; the scene involved digitally compositing the children playing into Anderson's footage. Bowman asked Anderson to act towards a tree as though it were her sister, later telling her "I'm going to tell everybody I can that you just did that great reaction to a tree".^[7]

Bowman also reshotted the episode's ending, as originally Duchovny and Lea were to walk past the camera and continue off-screen. Feeling this was not effective, he replaced this with a walking shot which continued straight towards and into the camera, noting that "Nick will jump in front of a truck if he thinks it will make a scene better".

The on-screen appearances of the black oil was achieved through visual effects, with the shimmering oil effect being digitally placed over the actors' corneas in post-production. The crew went through various iterations to find the two "right" types of fluids. According to physical effects crewman David Gauthier, they used a mix of oil and acetone, which he believed gave the substance a more globular look. Special effects technician Mat Beck was able to digitally bend the oil effect around the shape of the actors' eyes.

The man in the plane in the teaser, Robert Maier, worked as a construction coordinator on the show,^[8] and felt that his part in the episode fulfilled a "life-long dream" of working as a stuntman. Nicholas Lea's name was purposely left until the ending credits in order to preserve the sense of surprise.^[9]



A WWII-era P-51 Mustang. A plane of this model is the source of the black oil in "Piper Maru".

Broadcast and reception

It's at this point in the mythology that the onus subtly shifts from Scully coming up with alternate theories of what's going on that make just as much sense as what Mulder's saying to the show desperately trying to keep Scully from knowing things so she can fit into her predetermined "skeptic" role. It mostly works here, because she's busy grieving her sister and being angry that the case into her sister's murder has been closed and coming up with knowledge about radiation burns and stuff, but it becomes more and more of a problem as the series goes along and it becomes more and more obvious that Mulder was right all along.

—The A.V. Club's Todd VanDerWerff

"Piper Maru" premiered on the Fox network on February 9, 1996, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on November 27, 1996. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 10.6 with an 18 share, meaning that roughly 10.6 percent of all television-equipped households, and 18 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 16.44 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[1]

"Piper Maru" received positive reviews from critics. In an overview of the third season in *Entertainment Weekly*, the episode was rated an A. The review described "Piper Maru" as featuring "a tough and sentimental Scully", noting that "action-packed detective work by Mulder enhance[s] an already crackling scenario." Reviewer Todd VanDerWerff of *The A.V. Club* gave the episode an A and wrote positively of the unfolding mythology, noting that the "great thing about "Piper Maru"" is that it still belongs to the period of time when the mythology episodes were exposing us to more pieces of the puzzle, fitting in various things that we were meant to incorporate into the whole. This is the first time we meet the black oil, but it's obvious that others know all about it". Critical Myth's John Keegan gave the episode eight out of ten, and complimented the introduction of the black oil, writing "this episode is a good introduction to the black oil virus, providing a bridge from the mythology elements earlier in the season to the larger scope of the conspiracy to be revealed."

The introduction of the sentient black oil in this episode has also been met with positive criticism. The oil has been described as "the most original and frightening creation of *The X-Files*' mythology", and has been listed as number two on Den of Geek's "Top 10 X-Files Baddies" countdown, where it was described as "a central part" of the series' mythology.

Gillian Anderson considered the episode an emotionally difficult one, saying "Piper Maru was challenging. There was something about it - having to pull from the past... how it brought the present and the past together. It was just good to play."^[10] Director Kim Manners complimented Anderson's performance, stating "you look at season one and look at season three and that girl exploded as an actress in terms of talent and capability."^[11] The 2004 film *Alien vs. Predator* featured an icebreaker named the *Piper Maru*, the naming of the ship being a nod to this episode.

Footnotes

[1] Lowry, pp. 161–164

[2] Lovece, p. 211

[3] Edwards, p. 166

[4] Edwards, p. 167

[5] Edwards, pp. 166–167

[6] Lowry, pp. 164–165

[7] Edwards, p. 168

[8] Lovece, pp. 103–105

[9] Lowry, p. 165

[10] Lowry, p. 164

[11] Hurwitz, p. 83

References

- Edwards, Ted (1996). *X-Files Confidential*. Little, Brown and Company. ISBN 0-316-21808-1.
- Hurwitz, Matt; Knowles, Chris (2008). *The Complete X-Files*. Insight Editions. ISBN 1-933784-80-6.
- Lovece, Frank (1996). *The X-Files Declassified*. Citadel Press. ISBN 0-8065-1745-X.
- Lowry, Brian (1996). *Trust No One: The Official Guide to the X-Files*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-105353-8.

External links

- "Piper Maru" (<http://web.archive.org/web/20010413102319/http://www.thexfiles.com/episodes/season3/3x15.html>) on *The X-Files* official website
- "Piper Maru" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751180/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Piper Maru" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/piper-maru-1-554/>) at TV.com

"Apocrypha"

"Apocrypha"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
The black oil leaving its host	
Episode no.	Season 3 Episode 16
Directed by	Kim Manners
Written by	Frank Spotnitz Chris Carter
Production code	3X16
Original air date	February 16, 1996
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner Nicholas Lea as Alex Krycek William B. Davis as Smoking Man John Neville as Well-Manicured Man Don S. Williams as First Elder Lenno Britos as Luis Cardinal Tom Braidwood as Melvin Frohike Dean Haglund as Richard Langly Bruce Harwood as John Fitzgerald Byers Brendan Beiser as Pendrell Kevin McNulty as Agent Brian Fuller Suleka Mathew as Agent Linda Caleca Barry Levy as Navy Doctor Dmitry Chepovetsky as Young Bill Mulder Craig Warkentin as Young Smoking Man 	
Episode chronology	
← Previous Next → "Piper Maru" "Pusher"	
List of season 3 episodes List of <i>The X-Files</i> episodes	

"Apocrypha" is the sixteenth episode of the third season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on February 16, 1996. It was directed by Kim Manners, and written by Frank Spotnitz and series creator Chris Carter. "Apocrypha" featured guest appearances by John Neville, Don S. Williams and Brendan Beiser. The episode helped to explore the overarching mythology, or fictional history of *The X-Files*. "Apocrypha" earned a Nielsen household rating of 10.8, being watched by 16.71 million people in its initial broadcast.

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. In this episode, Mulder returns from Hong Kong, having found rogue agent Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) while investigating a mysterious mind-altering black oil. Meanwhile,

Scully pursues the man who she believes killed her sister. "Apocrypha" is the second part of a two-part episode, continuing the plot from the previous episode, "Piper Maru".

"Apocrypha" was the first mythology-centred episode to be directed by Manners, and made use of a mixture of physical and digital effects to create the episode's antagonistic black oil. The episode's sets were also augmented with digital effects, amplifying what could be constructed within the given budget.

Plot

In 1953, a burned crewman talks to three government agents about his experience on the submarine *Zeus Faber*, completing the story told in the previous episode. He explains that he and other crew members were locked in with their captain, who was infected by the black oil. After being knocked out from behind, the black oil leaves the captain's body and exits via a grate into the sea. It is revealed that Bill Mulder and the Smoking Man are two of the agents who are interviewing the crewman.

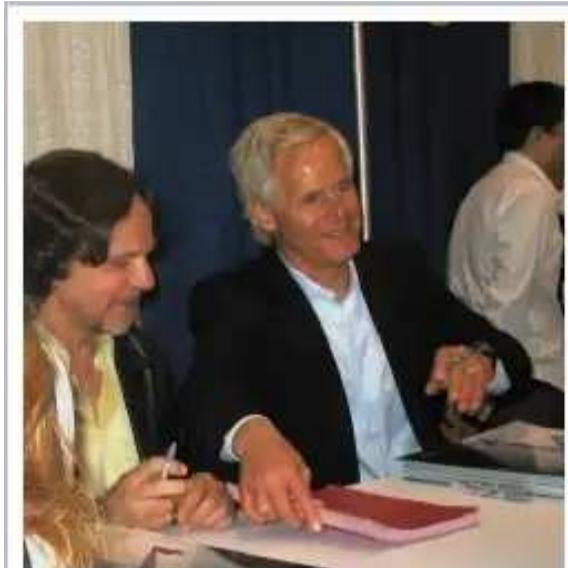
In the present, Fox Mulder and Alex Krycek return to the United States, but are run off the road by another vehicle. The assailants attempt to apprehend Krycek, but are severely injured when he emits a flashing light. The Smoking Man sees their bodies and orders their destruction. Mulder, who was knocked unconscious in the crash, awakens in the hospital. Dana Scully tells Mulder about Walter Skinner's condition, and says that an analysis of saliva has identified his shooter as the same person who killed her sister Melissa.

The Syndicate meets to discuss the events surrounding the *Piper Maru* and realize someone is leaking information. Meanwhile, Skinner tells Scully that he recognizes his shooter as the man who was with Krycek when the digital tape was stolen from him. Mulder believes that the oil found on the diving suit and Gauthier is a medium used by an alien to transfer from body to body, and that Krycek is currently occupied by it. Mulder and the Lone Gunmen use Krycek's key to recover the tape from a locker at an ice rink, but Mulder finds the case empty. Krycek returns the tape to the Smoking Man in exchange for the location of the recovered UFO.

As Luis Cardinal is identified as Skinner's shooter, the Syndicate admonishes the Smoking Man for moving the UFO to a new location. By rubbing a pencil over the envelope containing the tape case, Mulder finds a phone number which connects him to the Syndicate's office. Mulder speaks to the Well-Manicured Man, who agrees to meet with him. The Well-Manicured Man tells Mulder that a UFO was sunk during World War II and that a cover story of a sunken atomic bomb was used to cover up its attempted recovery. He reveals that anyone can be gotten to, causing Mulder to ask Scully to check on Skinner.

Scully accompanies Skinner as he is being transported in an ambulance. When Cardinal attempts to break in, she tracks him down and arrests him. Cardinal tells her that Krycek is headed to an abandoned missile silo in Black Crow, North Dakota. There, the agents are captured by the Smoking Man's men and are escorted away. Deep inside, Krycek sits atop the UFO and coughs out the black oil, which seeps into the ship. Skinner recovers and returns to work. Mulder sees Scully at Melissa's grave, explaining that Cardinal was found dead in his cell. Meanwhile, Krycek is trapped within the silo, banging on the door in an attempt to be let out.^{[1][1]}

Production



Writers Frank Spotnitz (left) and Chris Carter (right) in 2008

Conception of the episode was based around a visual image series creator Chris Carter had wanted to include in a script "since the beginning of the show". The image was of a black-and-white flashback taking place in a submarine.^[2]

The episode's title is a reference to Biblical apocrypha, which series creator Chris Carter felt was appropriate to the episode's thematic concerns—hidden documents and truths not brought to light. Director Kim Manners had directed a number of stand alone episodes thus far, but this was his first episode directed featuring the series' overarching mythology.^[3] Manners felt that directing a mythology-centred episode was significantly different from directing a stand-alone "monster of the week" episode. He explained that "there is some individual creative contribution from the directors" in stand-alone episodes, but that with mythology episodes "what you need to as a director is to be sure that

the performances are there ... and that the yarn is presented in its cleanest and most interesting fashion".^[4]

Nicholas Lea was fitted with a mask with tubes for the scene where the alien black oil leaves his body. Lea said filming the scene was horrible, and the scene ended up having to be filmed again a few days later. The similar scene

from the start of the episode with the submarine captain was accomplished with a dummy head. The depiction of the oil in this scene was originally filmed using a magnetic fluid pulled along with magnets, although the end result of this was deemed not to be "menacing" enough, and looked "a little bit comic". To get around this, the sound stage used to represent the submarine's interior was constructed in a manner so as to be capable of rocking back and forth, with the movement being used to guide the flow of a different liquid. This effect was then enhanced digitally in post-production. The black oil effect over people's eyes was accomplished by inserting the footage digitally in post production.^[5]

The missile silo used for the episode's climactic scene was incomplete when the scene was filmed, as the crew did not have enough time or money left to complete the set. The crew built the incomplete silo on a sound stage around a completed spacecraft prop, and were able to digitally extend the set with computer generated interiors to give the impression of a much larger silo. Exterior shots of the silo building were also enhanced digitally, with various buildings and machinery created with computer generated imagery and composited into the exterior shots.

Broadcast and reception

I don't really know what's going on in mythology episodes. I never have. And I don't mean that I lost the thread once the writers stopped trying to make all the pieces fit. I mean that, right now, even after having watched "Apocrypha" and the episode that preceded it, and all the other mythology episodes before that, I don't know the details. To me, it's just creepy stuff happening for obscure reasons to the characters I care about.

—The A.V. Club's Zack Handlen on the general impression of "Apocrypha"

"Apocrypha" premiered on the Fox network on February 16, 1996, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on December 4, 1996. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 10.8 with an 18 share, meaning that roughly 10.8 percent of all television-equipped households, and 18 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 16.71 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing, making it the most viewed episode of the third season.^[6]

In an overview of the third season in *Entertainment Weekly*, "Apocrypha" was rated an A. The review noted that the episode offered "some interesting progressions in the grand theme" of the series, although it was also "worth it just

for the awesome missile site finale" alone. Writing for The A.V. Club, Zack Handlen also rated the episode an A. Handlen felt the episode was impressive in its general impression, but that the details were not necessarily important; he also added that the cyclical nature of the plot of most mythology episodes was not something he felt negatively about, noting that although the series' protagonists are often defeated, they "can't be corrupted or dissuaded or undone". Co-writer Frank Spotnitz said of the episode "I actually think you didn't learn a lot more about the conspiracy in these two episodes, but emotionally, I think they were really good episodes ... It is really easy to go through a lot of these action things with people dying and never addressing them. So I thought it was very interesting [5] to do so".

Footnotes

- [1] Lovece, p. 212
- [2] Edwards, p. 166
- [3] Lowry, p. 171
- [4] Edwards, p. 170
- [5] Edwards, p. 169

References

- Edwards, Ted (1996). *X-Files Confidential*. Little, Brown and Company. ISBN 0-316-21808-1.
- Lovece, Frank (1996). *The X-Files Declassified*. Citadel Press. ISBN 0-8065-1745-X.
- Lowry, Brian (1996). *Trust No One: The Official Guide to the X-Files*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-105353-8.

External links

- "Apocrypha" (<http://web.archive.org/web/20010413102319/http://www.thexfiles.com/episodes/season3/3x16.html>) on *The X-Files* official website
- "Apocrypha" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751075/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Apocrypha" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/apocrypha-2-555/>) at TV.com

"Talitha Cumi"

"Talitha Cumi"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 3 Episode 24
Directed by	R. W. Goodwin
Teleplay by	Chris Carter
Story by	David Duchovny Chris Carter
Production code	3X24
Original air date	May 17, 1996
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner William B. Davis as The Smoking Man Steven Williams as X Roy Thinnes as Jeremiah Smith Brian Thompson as The Bounty Hunter Rebecca Toolan as Teena Mulder Jerry Hardin as Deep Throat Peter Donat as William Mulder Stephen Dimopoulos as Detective Hrothgar Matthews as Galen Muntz John MacLaren as Dr. Laberge Angelo Vacco as Door Man Cam Cronin as Paramedic Bonnie Hay as Night Nurse 	
Episode chronology	
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List of season 3 episodes List of <i>The X-Files</i> episodes	

"Talitha Cumi" is the twenty-fourth episode and the season finale of the third season of the science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on May 17, 1996 in the United States. The teleplay was written by series creator Chris Carter, based on a story he developed with lead actor David Duchovny and was directed by R. W. Goodwin. The episode is one of several that explored the series' overarching mythology. "Talitha Cumi" achieved a Nielsen household rating of 11.2, being watched by 17.86 million people in its initial broadcast. The episode received mostly positive reviews from critics.

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. In this episode, Mulder and Scully search for a man who seems to possess strange powers, who may have information about Mulder's family and the Syndicate.

The basic premise of "Talitha Cumi", most notably the scene featuring Jeremiah Smith's interrogation by The Smoking Man (William B. Davis), was heavily influenced by "The Grand Inquisitor"—a chapter in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*—on the suggestion of Duchovny. The title of the episode is Aramaic for "arise maiden," a reference to the healing power of Jeremiah Smith.

Plot

At a cafe in Arlington, Virginia, a man draws a gun and shoots three people before he is shot by police snipers outside. An older man revives the gunman and his victims by touching them with the palms of his hands.

Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) arrive to investigate. They interview the victims and gunman, finding that the mysterious healer, Jeremiah Smith (Roy Thinnes), disappeared while being interviewed by a detective. Meanwhile, The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) meets with Mulder's mother Teena (Rebecca Toolan), and the two argue as someone photographs them from a distance. Later, Assistant Director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) notifies Mulder that Teena has suffered a stroke. At the hospital, Teena writes the word "PALM" on a notepad, which Mulder takes to mean her stroke is connected to Jeremiah Smith.

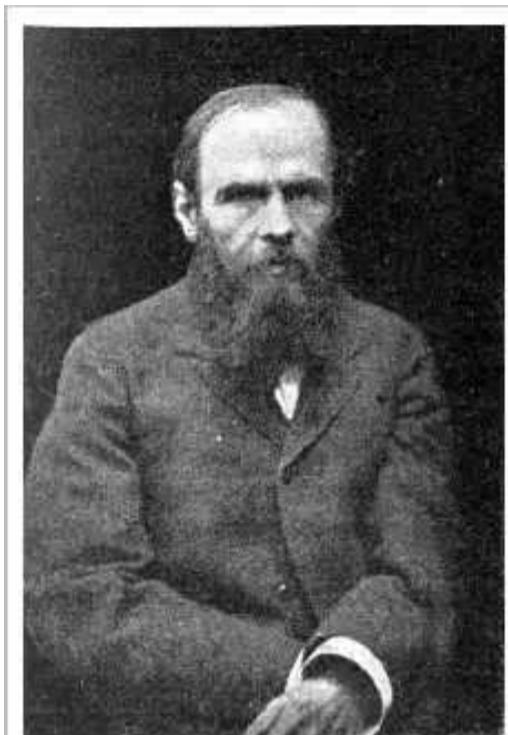
Mulder finds footage of Smith being interviewed, and sees that someone else appears in Smith's place when the detective looks away. Meanwhile, Smith is at his place of work at the Social Security Administration (SSA) when he is captured by the Smoking Man, and taken to a high-security prison. Mulder heads to his mother's home and encounters X (Steven Williams), who shows him his photos of Teena and the Smoking Man. Mulder searches the house and realizes that "PALM" was Teena's attempt to write "LAMP". He then finds an alien stiletto weapon inside one of the lamps—the same kind used by the alien bounty hunter in previous episodes.

At FBI headquarters, Scully meets a man who appears to be Smith, who has come to turn himself in. During an interview with Scully and Skinner, he claims to have no memory of the shooting or of healing anyone. Meanwhile, the Smoking Man interrogates the real Smith, who has lost faith in the Syndicate's project. He shapeshifts into Deep Throat (Jerry Hardin) and Bill Mulder (Peter Donat) to unnerve his captor. Finally Smith reveals that the Smoking Man is dying of lung cancer.

Mulder blames the Smoking Man for his mother's condition. When he learns about the statement given by "Smith", Mulder goes to the SSA to bring him in for questioning. "Smith" initially complies but flees into a crowd, shapeshifting into someone else. The impostor—a bounty hunter—arrives at Smith's cell to kill him, finding it empty. Mulder visits Teena at the hospital, but encounters the Smoking Man. Mulder threatens the Smoking Man with a gun, but he says that Teena met with him about the whereabouts of his sister, Samantha. In the parking garage, Mulder is confronted by X, who demands the alien stiletto. When Mulder refuses to hand it over, the two grapple to a stalemate.

Scully finds other identical "Jeremiah Smiths" working at SSA offices across the country. She is later met by Smith, who reveals she had met an imposter. Smith promises more information, and he and Scully meet Mulder at an abandoned site. Mulder wants to take Smith to see his mother, but the bounty hunter arrives seconds later.^{[1][2]}

Production



Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov* influenced the episode's writing.

Conception and writing

This episode, per David Duchovny's suggestions, was heavily influenced by "The Grand Inquisitor", a chapter in Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. This was particularly evident in the scenes in the prison between The Smoking Man and Jeremiah Smith. In addition, this reference is woven into the story, in Smith healing the shooter and the shooting victims in the episode's teaser, in the title of the restaurant—"The Brothers K"—and the episode's title, originally from Mark 5:41, in which Jesus heals the daughter of Jairus and quotes the Aramaic phrase meaning, "Little girl, get up!" but which also figures in *The Brothers Karamazov*.^[1] These references were originally suggested by David Duchovny for the episodes "Colony" and "End Game" but never made their way into those episodes and were used here.^[3]

As Carter was writing "Talitha Cumi," he decided that the episode's main theme would be loyalty. It was decided that the commitment Mulder felt towards the X-Files would be tested by seeing if he would be willing to

sacrifice those he cared about, most notably his mother, Scully, and the quest to find his sister, Samantha.^[4] In addition, the Smoking Man's allegiances are in that he must decide whether or not to heal himself of cancer using the power of Jeremiah Smith. Ultimately, Mulder's loyalties prove altruistic, whereas the Smoking Man chooses self-interest over The Syndicate's cause.^[5]

Casting

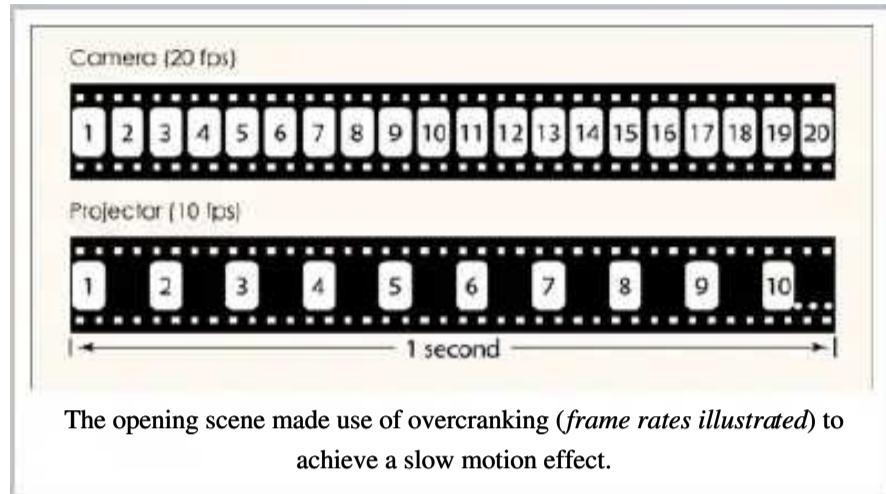
Hrothgar Mathews was chosen as the suicidal gunman out of several actors, one of whom had even brought a fake gun to his audition.^[5] During his audition, he tried out the test reading several ways, including a style that had a "messianic quality". Mathews was chosen for the role and told by Chris Carter that, despite his character's life-changing event, he was "still a lunatic".

Roy Thinnes, who portrayed the alien healer Jeremiah Smith, was suggested to Chris Carter by David Duchovny, after the latter had met and spoken to the Thinnes on an airplane flight.^[6] Carter had seen Thinnes' television work before, and had been a fan of his appearance on the 1967–68 television series *The Invaders*. Early on in pre-production, the writers decided to have Smith morph into various characters that the Smoking Man had, either personally or involuntarily, killed, including Deep Throat, Bill Mulder, and Melissa Scully.^[7] Melinda McGraw, who portrayed Melissa Scully during the second season, was unavailable for filming, so her scene was cut. In addition, a photo-double was brought in for Jerry Hardin, who played Deep Throat, because he was unavailable on one of the filming days.^[8] Frank Spotnitz later called the prison sequence the scene with "the biggest cast ever."

Gillian Anderson's stand-in, Bonnie Hay, was cast as the main hospital nurse, marking her fifth appearance as a character in the show. She had previously portrayed a nurse in the earlier third season episode "D.P.O." and the two-part second season episodes "Colony" and "End Game."^[9]

Filming and post-production

The fight between Mulder and X was heavily edited by Fox's broadcast standards department. Despite the fact that most of the action was done by stunt doubles, Steven Williams was injured during the filming of the fight scene.^[10] The opening scene with the restaurant shooting was filmed mostly on two handheld cameras, with director R. W. Goodwin using a variety of short shots and rapid cuts to different perspectives. This was done to create a chaotic scene which would contrast with how the character of Thinnes' character Jeremiah Smith was presented—shots focussed on him were filmed using a Steadicam to allow the character to seem "rock steady". The film used was also overcranked, where the frame rate of the recording is much higher than that which will be played back, slowing down the footage when it is played at a normal frame rate. This gave a slow motion effect to Thinnes' movements, in order to aid the "Godlike" impression Goodwin wanted.^[10]



The "Grand Inquisitor" scene between Jeremiah Smith and The Smoking Man involved several instances of morphing from one character to another. The morph involving Smith assuming the guise of Peter Donat's character Bill Mulder was simply achieved by using static cameras, allowing Thinnes to leave the set and Donat to take his place, with the morphing effect bridging the change in actors. However, Jerry Hardin, who was involved in another morph to his character Deep Throat, was unavailable on the day this was shot, as he was filming for a movie elsewhere. The sections of the morph involving Thinnes were recorded, and the set was reconstructed later when Hardin was available, with the actors matched up based on footage and photography to recreate the same positions, which producer Paul Rabwin has described as "backwards" and "very difficult".^[11]

Broadcast and reception

There's always something vaguely Freudian about conspiracy theories, isn't there? Powerful figures with impenetrable motives controlling the lives of the innocent--well, from a certain skewed angle, that's pretty much what parents do. Believing in conspiracy is believing that there's someone out there, somewhere, who can make everything make sense. And of course you have to stop them, because you want to make your own kind of sense.

—The A.V. Club's Zack Handlen

"Talitha Cumi" premiered on the Fox network on May 17, 1996, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on September 3, 1997. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 11.2 with a 21 share, meaning that roughly 11.2 percent of all television-equipped households, and 21 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 17.86 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[1]

In an overview of the third season in *Entertainment Weekly*, "Talitha Cumi" was rated an "A-". The review called the episode a "frustratingly provocative cliff-hanger", calling the interrogation scene of Jeremiah Smith "a tour de force". Chris Carter has also noted that the interrogation 'is really a summation of my feelings about science ... that it has definitely usurped religion and can explain everything now'. Writing for *The A.V. Club*, Zack Handlen rated the episode an "A", praising its cliffhanger ending and "good storytelling". Handlen felt that the episode dealt with themes familiar to the series, but in a manner which did not appear repetitive; and again noted Jeremiah Smith's confrontation with The Smoking Man as a highlight.

Footnotes

[1] Lowry, pp. 219–222

[2] Lovece, pp. 216–217

[3] Lowry, p. 4

[4] Lowry, p. 12

[5] Lowry, p. 19

[6] Lowry, p. 38

[7] Lowry, p. 9

[8] Lowry, p. 25

[9] Lowry, p. 224

[10] Edwards, p. 181

[11] Edwards, pp. 181–182

References

- Edwards, Ted (1996). *X-Files Confidential*. Little, Brown and Company. ISBN 0-316-21808-1.
- Lovece, Frank (1996). *The X-Files Declassified*. Citadel press. ISBN 0-8065-1745-X.
- Lowry, Brian (1996). *Trust No One: The Official Guide to the X-Files*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-105353-8.

External links

- "Talitha Cumi" (<http://web.archive.org/web/20010413102319/http://www.thexfiles.com/episodes/season3/3x24.html>) on *The X-Files* official website
- "Talitha Cumi" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751213/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Talitha Cumi" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/talitha-cumi-1-563/>) at TV.com

"Herrenvolk"

"Herrenvolk"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
X naming Fox Mulder's next informant. The death of X was called "shocking" by one reviewer.	
Episode no.	Season 4 Episode 1
Directed by	R. W. Goodwin
Written by	Chris Carter
Production code	4X01
Original air date	October 4, 1996
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner • William B. Davis as The Smoking Man • Roy Thinnes as Jeremiah Smith • Brian Thompson as Alien bounty hunter • Steven Williams as X • Laurie Holden as Marita Covarrubias • Rebecca Toolan as Teena Mulder • Vanessa Morley as Samantha Mulder • Don S. Williams as First Elder • Morris Panych as Gray-Haired Man • Brendan Beiser as Pendrell • Michael David Sims as Senior Agent • Ken Camroux as Second Senior Agent • Casey Murphy as Young Blond Boy • Sean Murphy as Young Blond Boy • Garvin Cross as Repairman • Liza Huget as Nurse 	
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"Herrenvolk" is the fourth season premiere of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on October 4, 1996. It was directed by R.W. Goodwin, and written by series creator Chris Carter. "Herrenvolk" featured guest appearances by Roy Thinnes and Brian Thompson, and introduced Laurie Holden as recurring character Marita Covarrubias. The episode helped to explore the overarching mythology, or fictional history of *The X-Files*. "Herrenvolk" earned a Nielsen household rating of 13.2, being watched by 21.11 million people in its initial broadcast.

FBI special agent Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) is shown more evidence of his sister's abduction by the mysterious Jeremiah Smith (Thinnes) and makes a desperate attempt to rescue her, whilst being pursued by the Alien Bounty

Hunter. Mulder's informant X is found out by those he has betrayed—with fatal consequences. "Herrenvolk" is the second part of a two-part episode, continuing the plot from the third season finale, "Talitha Cumi".

"Herrenvolk" saw the death of Steven Williams' character X, and featured the first appearance of Mulder's sister Samantha, a character described by Carter as the "lifeblood" of the series, since the second season premiere, "**Little Green Men**". The episode featured scenes filmed using swarms of bees, which caused problems due to the difficulty of taming and directing the animals. Other special effects in the episode were achieved through motion control photography.

Plot

In rural Alberta, Canada, an electrician is stung by a bee as he works on a telephone pole. Five identical boys approach the pole and watch as the electrician's body adversely reacts to the sting, causing him to fall to the ground and die. The boys look down at his body, then walk off silently.

At a remote industrial site, Fox Mulder (David Duchovny), Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson), and Jeremiah Smith (Roy Thinnes) are approached by the Alien Bounty Hunter (Brian Thompson). Mulder and Smith flee with both Scully and the Bounty Hunter in pursuit, eventually reaching a waterfront. Mulder sneaks up on the Bounty Hunter and stabs him in the neck with the alien stiletto. Both he and Jeremiah escape on a boat, leaving Scully alone with the seemingly dead Bounty Hunter. When she approaches the body, the Bounty Hunter wakes up and chokes her, demanding to know where Mulder and Smith are heading. He releases her after realizing she has no such knowledge.

On the boat, Mulder and Smith debate whether they should save Mulder's mother Teena, despite the risk of Men in Black awaiting them. Mulder ultimately agrees that it would be too dangerous to visit her. Instead, they head towards Canada, where Smith says Mulder will find his sister, Samantha. Meanwhile, the First Elder (Don S. Williams) meets with The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) in Teena's hospital room, confronting him with photos of his prior meeting with her, taken by X (Steven Williams). They realize that there is a leak, and plan to smoke out its source by releasing false information about Teena being in danger.

The Bounty Hunter learns of Mulder's whereabouts by listening in on a phone call between him and a captive Scully, leaving her to pursue him and Smith. In Washington, Scully reports to Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi), who informs her that the other Jeremiah Smiths have all disappeared. Scully and Agent Pendrell investigate the data that the Smiths were compiling, trying to decipher the encrypted files. Scully contacts X, who tells her that it is related to the government's long-running smallpox eradication program. X also tells her that he believes Teena's life is in danger.

Meanwhile, in Canada, Smith and Mulder's car runs out of gas. Walking the last few miles on foot, they come across the corpse of the electrician, grossly decomposed and covered in ants. Jeremiah takes Mulder to a mysterious field where they find a group of identical children; the girls all resemble Samantha at the age when she was abducted. Jeremiah tells Mulder that the cloned children are mindless chattel used to tend the fields, incapable of speaking. After retrieving a gasoline can, Mulder tries to take one of the female clones with him. However, the Bounty Hunter arrives and chases them. As he corners them in a large bee hive, the Bounty Hunter is crushed and stung repeatedly in a trap set up by the trio.

Scully and Pendrell report to Skinner and the Office of Professional Responsibility on the data being tracked by the Smiths, which appears to be a cataloging of human beings. Meanwhile, the Bounty Hunter catches up to Mulder, Smith, and the clone, plowing into their car with a van. After knocking Mulder unconscious, the Bounty Hunter pursues a fleeing Jeremiah. Mulder returns to the hospital to see his mother, resigned to the fact that he cannot save her. The Syndicate leads X to a trap at Mulder's apartment, where he is shot by the Gray-Haired Man. X crawls into the apartment and writes the letters "SRSG" in his blood before dying. The letters lead Mulder to Marita Covarrubias (Laurie Holden), the assistant to the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations. Covarrubias tells Mulder that the fields in Canada have been abandoned, but shows him a picture of the drone children tending to the shrubs. At the hospital, the Smoking Man directs the Bounty Hunter to heal Mulder's mother, telling him that the fiercest enemy is the one with nothing to lose.^[1]

Production



Scenes in the episode were filmed in a ginseng field in Kamloops, British Columbia (*Wisconsin pictured*).

The appearance of Samantha Mulder, this time as a clone of her from when she was still a little girl, was due to series creator Chris Carter's desire to bring her back. Carter felt Samantha was an important element of the show, referring to her as being part of the lifeblood of the series. The decision to kill the character X was made at the end of the third season. The writers felt that they could only do so much with the character and decided that they would either make him a bigger player on the show, or have him pay the price for collaborating with Fox Mulder. Ultimately they decided on the latter. This led to the introduction of Marita Covarrubias at the end of the episode, Mulder's latest informant.^[2]

The exterior shots of the crop fields in the episodes were filmed in ginseng fields, which writer Frank Spotnitz felt had an "otherworldly" quality to them. These fields were located near the city of Kamloops, which is approximately a three-and-a-half hour drive from Vancouver; a location from which the production had rarely strayed during its first five seasons. The hair, makeup and wardrobe truck ended up getting lost while driving there. A fiberglass composite lattice used by the aircraft industry was used to create the honeycombs through which the alien bounty hunter chases Mulder.^[9]

The death of X was a prominent scene in the episode, and it took several takes to complete the final scene; with Spotnitz feeling that "it was a good way to send him off". Director R. W. Goodwin has noted that he is responsible for directing the episodes that featured the deaths of X, Deep Throat, Mulder's father, and Scully's sister.

Thousands of live bees were used during production, with the understanding that the bees would not sting without a queen present. However, this theory proved incorrect, and Vanessa Morley, who played the Samantha Mulder clones, was stung during filming. She kept quiet and did not react until the scene had finished filming, leading Spotnitz to call her "a trooper". The cold open for the episode, with multiple cloned boys, was achieved with motion control photography, allowing for two children to play all five of the clones; multiple takes were recorded with the boys in different positions, and with the camera controlled by a computer to follow exactly the same motions for each take, these could be seamlessly composited together.

The episode title comes from the German word for "Master Race".^[3] The tagline for this episode is "Everything Dies" instead of the usual "The Truth is Out There". This phrase is uttered by the bounty hunter to Mulder during the episode. During the production of "Herrenvolk", Carter had already begun the pre-production phases of the series' feature film adaptation, which would be released in 1998.^[4]

Broadcast and reception

This is the sort of mythology episode that would ultimately give the show a bad name, as it adjusts and shifts established elements, gives us a few token new pieces of information, but makes sure to tie up any loose end that could potentially change the show's dynamic too aggressively.

—The A.V. Club's Zack Handlen on the episode's plotting.

"Herrenvolk" premiered on the Fox network on October 4, 1996, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on September 10, 1997. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 13.2 with a 23 share, meaning that roughly 13.2 percent of all television-equipped households, and 23 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode.^[5] A total of 21.11 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing, making it the first episode of *The X-Files* watched by more than 20 million people.

In an overview of the fourth season in *Entertainment Weekly*, "Herrenvolk" was rated an A-. It was noted that the episode "makes good use of locations", and the ambiguous resolution to Jeremiah Smith's plot arc was seen as a positive, as it "opens the door to all sorts of provocative potentialities". Writing for The A.V. Club, Zack Handlen rated the episode a B+, though he felt it suffered from "treading-water plotting". Handlen also described the episode as being tense on its own, but suffering from "stagnation" when held as part of the series' ongoing mythology. He cited the death of X as an example of this, feeling that the scene was "appropriately shocking" and perhaps "one of the most memorable deaths in the series"—however, the almost immediate introduction of a successor character, Marita Covarrubias, was seen as "deflat[ing] the importance" of the events.

Footnotes

[1] Meisler, pp. 19–25

[2] Meisler, pp. 25–27

[3] Meisler, p. 25

[4] Edwards, pp. 191–192

[5] Meisler, p. 298

References

- Edwards, Ted (1996). *X-Files Confidential*. Little, Brown and Company. ISBN 0-316-21808-1.
- Meisler, Andy (1998). *I Want to Believe: The Official Guide to the X-Files Volume 3*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-105386-4.

External links

- "Herrenvolk" (<http://web.archive.org/web/20010412205049/http://www.thexfiles.com/episodes/season4/4x01.html>) on *The X-Files* official website
- "Herrenvolk" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751135/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Herrenvolk" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/herrenvolk-2-564/>) at TV.com

"Tunguska"

"Tunguska"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 4 Episode 8
Directed by	Kim Manners
Written by	Chris Carter Frank Spotnitz
Production code	4X09
Original air date	November 24, 1996
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner Nicholas Lea as Alex Krycek William B. Davis as The Smoking Man John Neville as Well-Manicured Man Laurie Holden as Marita Covarrubias Brendan Beiser as Pendrell Fritz Weaver as Senator Sorenson David Bloom as Stress Man Malcolm Stewart as Dr. Sacks Campbell Lane as Committee Chairman Stefan Arngrim as Prisoner Brent Stait as Timothy Mayhew Dawn Murphy as 1st Customs Officer Andy Thompson as 2nd Customs Officer Phillip Heinrich as Assault Agent Jano Frandsen as Older Agent 	
Episode chronology	
<p style="text-align: center;">← Previous Next →</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Musings of a Cigarette Smoking Man" "Terma"</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">List of season 4 episodes List of <i>The X-Files</i> episodes</p>	

"Tunguska" is the eighth episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on November 24, 1996. It was directed by Kim Manners, and written by Frank Spotnitz and series creator Chris Carter. "Tunguska" featured guest appearances by John Neville, Nicholas Lea and Fritz Weaver. The episode helped explore the series' overarching mythology. "Tunguska" earned a Nielsen household rating of 12.2, being watched by 18.85 million people in its initial broadcast.

In the episode, FBI special agent Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) travels to Russia to investigate the source of a black oil contamination. His partner Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and assistant director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) are summoned to attend a United States Senate hearing on Mulder's whereabouts. "Tunguska" is a two-part episode, with the plot continuing in the next episode, "Terma".

"Tunguska" was inspired by reports of evidence of extraterrestrial life possibly being found in the Allan Hills 84001 meteorite, while the gulag setting was inspired by the works of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The story offered the writers a chance to expand the scale of the series' mythology globally, although production of the episode was described as

troublesome and expensive.

Plot

The episode opens *in medias res* to Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) as she is brought before a Senate select committee to be questioned about the whereabouts of Fox Mulder (David Duchovny). Scully refuses to answer the committee's questions and attempts to read a statement denouncing the conspiracy within the government. Senator Sorenson, the committee's adversarial chairman, threatens to hold Scully in contempt of Congress.

Ten days earlier, at Honolulu Airport, a courier returning from the Republic of Georgia is searched by customs officers. One of the officers removes a glass canister from the courier's briefcase and accidentally shatters it, exposing both men to the black oil. Meanwhile, in New York City, Mulder and Scully take part in an FBI raid against a domestic terrorist group. Mulder's tipster within the group is revealed to be Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea), whom the terrorists released from the missile silo where he had been trapped. Krycek has turned against The Smoking Man (William B. Davis), and tells the distrustful agents that he can help expose him.

Krycek leads the agents to Dulles International Airport, where they try to apprehend a second courier carrying a diplomatic pouch from Russia. The courier leads the agents on a pursuit through the airport, but drops the pouch before escaping. The pouch is revealed to carry a seemingly unremarkable rock. Mulder has Krycek confined at the high rise apartment of Assistant Director Walter Skinner before having the rock analyzed at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center. Dr. Sacks, a NASA scientist, tells Mulder and Scully that the rock is a prehistoric meteorite fragment that might contain fossilized alien bacteria.

Skinner is approached by the Smoking Man, who demands that the pouch be returned. The courier breaks into Skinner's apartment and searches for the pouch, only to be thrown off Skinner's patio by Krycek. Meanwhile, Dr. Sacks cuts into the fragment, but inadvertently releases the black oil inside; the organism penetrates the scientist's hazmat suit and puts him in a coma-like state. Mulder travels to New York to visit Marita Covarrubias (Laurie Holden), who reveals that the fragment originated from the Russian province of Krasnoyarsk and provides the documents needed to travel there. Mulder reluctantly brings along Krycek, who is fluent in Russian.

In Charlottesville, Virginia, the Smoking Man is admonished by the Well-Manicured Man (John Neville) when the latter learns about Mulder's travels. Skinner and the agents are subpoenaed to appear before Senator Sorenson's panel over the missing pouch; when Skinner questions Scully about Mulder's whereabouts, she is not forthcoming. Meanwhile, as Mulder and Krycek hike through the forests of Krasnoyarsk, the former theorizes that the fragment may be tied to the Tunguska event, a mysterious cosmic impact that occurred in the area in 1908. The two men come across a slave labor camp, but are captured by the taskmasters and thrown into a gulag.

Skinner and Scully meet with Senator Sorenson who questions them on the death of the courier and the location of Agent Mulder. Mulder talks with a fellow prisoner who tells him that innocent people have been captured and brought here to be subjected to experiments. Immediately afterwards guards burst into the room and inject Mulder with a syringe. When Mulder awakens he is in a large room bound with chicken wire along with many other prisoners. Black material is dumped onto his face, infecting him with the black oil.^[1]

Production



The possible discovery of life in the Allan Hills 84001 meteorite inspired the episode's script.

"Tunguska" and its follow-up "Terma" were conceived by the writers when they were trying to conceive a "big and fun canvas" to tell stories. They decided to create a story connected to the Russian gulags, which led to the "natural" idea that the Russians were experimenting separately from the Syndicate to create a vaccine for the black oil. Series writer John Shiban felt it was natural to create an arms race-like story between the United States and Russia, being that the Cold War had ended a few years earlier. The writers desired to expand the series' mythology globally, a concept that continued into the fifth season and the series' 1998 feature film adaptation. The idea of a conspiracy with a global reach was first broached in the series' second season, and it was

felt that this two-part story was a good place to expand upon this, allowing the production crew to "stretch the limits" of their resources and imagination. The inspiration for the oil-containing rocks was NASA's announcement of possible evidence of extraterrestrial life in the Allan Hills 84001 meteorite; while the gulag scenes were based on Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's books *The Gulag Archipelago* and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*.^[8]

The scenes featuring the SWAT raid on a terrorist cell found to be harbouring Alex Krycek were filmed in a single night, requiring sixty individual film setups split between three camera crews working simultaneously. By dawn,

[1]

only four of the sixty required shots had not been filmed, and these were later completed on a sound stage. Additional scenes shot for the episode featuring The Smoking Man and the Well-Manicured Man were cut due to time constraints.^[2] A scene featuring Scully briefing Skinner on the events of the episode was also cut, as it was felt that it was "redundant" within the narrative, repeating information that had already been shown to the audience. David Duchovny's father was present during production of the episode, leaving the actor to enjoy the shoot; although the crew described production as expensive and "stubbornly trouble-plagued". "Tunguska" marked the fourth appearance in the series by Malcolm Stewart, who had previously appeared in "Pilot", "3" and "Avatar".

Reception

"Tunguska" just doesn't work as well because it abandons the central idea of the conspiracy's American-ness, the idea that the American government is out there, ready to snatch you at a moment's notice and do nasty things to you, that said government has been up to this for a long, long time. The move to make the conspiracy a global one must have seemed smart at the time, but it also robs the series of something essential, of a sense that the worst monsters are the ones who purport to have our own best interests at heart.

—The A.V. Club's Todd VanDerWerff on the episode's scope.

"Tunguska" premiered on the Fox network on November 24, 1996, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on October 28, 1997. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 12.2 with an 18 share, meaning that roughly 12.2 percent of all television-equipped households, and 18 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode.^[3] A total of 18.85 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[4]

Writing for The A.V. Club, Todd VanDerWerff rated the episode a B, noting that the move to a global scale detracted from the series' overall relevance. VanDerWerff felt that "the action setpieces in this episode and the next one are really terrific", and praised William B. Davis' portrayal of The Smoking Man. However, he described "Tunguska" as being "one of the first really unfocused mythology episodes in the show's run", and found the plot of the episode to not be moving the series forward enough, noting that "for the first time, Mulder feels less like he's driving the action and more like he's a messenger boy". Based on an advance viewing of the episode's script, *Entertainment Weekly* rated "Tunguska" an A-, praising the "arms race" plotline. David Duchovny described this episode, along with "Terma", as being action-heavy and "lots of fun".

Footnotes

[1] Edwards, pp. 200–201

[2] Meisler, p. 103

[3] Edwards, p. 201

[4] Meisler, p. 298

References

- Edwards, Ted (1996). *X-Files Confidential*. Little, Brown and Company. ISBN 0-316-21808-1.
- Meisler, Andy (1998). *I Want to Believe: The Official Guide to the X-Files Volume 3*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-105386-4.

External links

- "Tunguska" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751251/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Tunguska" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/tunguska-1-571/>) at TV.com

"Terma"

"Terma"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 4 Episode 9
Directed by	Rob Bowman
Written by	Chris Carter Frank Spotnitz
Production code	4X10
Original air date	December 1, 1996
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner William B. Davis as The Smoking Man Nicholas Lea as Alex Krycek John Neville as the Well-Manicured Man Jessica Schreier as Dr. Bonita Charne-Sayre Stefan Arngrim as a Prisoner Brendan Beiser as Agent Pendrell Campbell Lane as the Committee Chairman Pamela MacDonald as a Nurse Brenda McDonald as Auntie Janet Igor Morozov as a Russian Horseman Robin Mossley as Dr. Kingsley Looker Eileen Pedde as Angie Jan Rubes as Vasily Peskow Brent Stait as Terry Edward Mayhew Malcolm Stewart as Dr. Sacks Fritz Weaver as Senator Sorenson^[1] 	
Episode chronology	
← Previous Next → "Tunguska" "Paper Hearts"	
List of season 4 episodes List of <i>The X-Files</i> episodes	

"Terma" is the ninth episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on December 1, 1996. It was directed by Rob Bowman, and written by Frank Spotnitz and series creator Chris Carter. "Terma" featured guest appearances by John Neville, Nicholas Lea and Fritz Weaver. The episode helped explore the series' overarching mythology. "Terma" earned a Nielsen household rating of 10.3, being watched by 17.34 million viewers during its original airing.

FBI special agent Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and assistant director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) attend a United States Senate hearing, while Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) attempts to escape from a Russian gulag. "Terma" is a two-part episode, continuing the plot from the previous episode, "Tunguska".

Several scenes in "Terma" were inspired by the novels of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, while its tagline—changed to "E pur si muove" from the usual "The truth is out there"—is a reference to Galileo Galilei's investigation by the Roman Inquisition. "Terma" features a climactic explosion at an oil refinery wellhead, requiring the physical effects staff to

ignite a 300 feet (91 m) plume of flammable liquids.

Plot

Having been imprisoned in a gulag in Krasnoyarsk, Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) learns that Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) is a double agent working for the Russian taskmasters. Mulder is able to escape from the camp while taking Krycek hostage, although the two become separated in the confusion. Krycek is found by a group of men whose left arms have all been amputated, and has his arm forcibly severed to prevent his involvements in black oil vaccination tests.

Meanwhile, Vasily Peskow (Jan Rubes), a former KGB agent, has come out of retirement and traveled to America. While there, he assassinates Bonita Charne-Sayre, a doctor working for the Syndicate to develop a black oil vaccine. From here, Peskow tracks down Charne-Sayre's test subjects, testing a Russian vaccine on them before killing them to cover his tracks.

Mulder has been able to return to America with the help of a group of Russian peasants, and rejoins his partner Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson). Scully and assistant director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) had been detained by a United States Senate committee seeking to uncover Mulder's whereabouts, but the committee was adjourned upon Mulder's arrival. The agents attempt to track down Peskow, following the trail of murders. However, the assassin is able to outwit the agents, and destroys the last of the oil-containing rocks seen in the previous episode in an oil-well explosion. He returns to Russia, where it is revealed that he had been hired for this task by Krycek.^[2]

Production



The episode's gulag scenes were inspired by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn (*left*), while its tagline is a reference to Galileo Galilei (*right*)

The episode's title refers to terma, a set of Buddhist teachings hidden from the world. Series creator Chris Carter felt these represented the secrets kept by the Syndicate. The opening credits of the episode saw the series' usual tagline of "The truth is out there" replaced with "E pur si muove". The phrase, Italian for "and yet, it moves", is attributed to astronomer Galileo Galilei, when forced by the Roman Inquisition to denounce his belief in heliocentrism. The episode's gulag scenes were inspired by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's novels *The Gulag Archipelago* (1973) and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1963).^[5]

Shots of the oil refinery seen in the episode were filmed at a thermal energy station situated in Port Moody, British Columbia. The climactic oil-well explosion was achieved through physical effects, with crew member Dave Gauthier building a replica wellhead in a disused rock quarry, through which liquid was piped at pressures of 250 pounds per square inch (1,700,000 Pa) to create a plume 300 feet (91 m) high. This wellhead was rigged to spray oil-colored water for shots of the plume itself, which was switched with a remote control to a stream of kerosene and liquid propane for the shots involving the oil catching fire.

Actor Nicholas Lea, who plays recurring character Alex Krycek, worked with a Russian-speaking vocal coach to ensure that his dialogue was delivered with the correct accent and stresses. Malcolm Stewart, who portrayed NASA scientist Dr. Sacks in the episode, had previously appeared in several earlier episodes of the series, including "Pilot", the second season episode "3", and the third season's "Avatar". Carter has called "Terma", along with its companion piece "Tunguska", "an action piece from beginning to end".

Reception

"Terma" premiered on the Fox network on December 1, 1996, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on November 4, 1997. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 10.6 with a 15 share, meaning that roughly 10.6 percent of all television-equipped households, and 15 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode.^[3] A total of 17.34 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[4]

Writing for The A.V. Club, Zack Handlen rated the episode a B-, finding that it contained too much "vamping for time", without enough focus on any of the individual plot threads. Handlen felt that the plot thread based on the murder of the Well-Manicured Man's doctor friend should have been the episode's focus, and derided the "pomposity" of the dialogue elsewhere in the episode. Based on an advance viewing of the episode's script, *Entertainment Weekly* rated "Terma" an A-, praising the "arms race" plotline. Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson, in their book *Wanting to Believe: A Critical Guide to The X-Files, Millennium & The Lone Gunmen*, rated "Terma" one star out of five, comparing it unfavourably with the previous episode. Shearman and Pearson described the episode as "awful", noting that there "is virtually no structure to it at all". The episode's dialogue was described as being "dreadful, boring and facile", with its long, clumsy lines and "ever more complex and ever less interesting" speeches.^[5]

Footnotes

[1] Meisler, p. 104

[2] Edwards, pp. 200–201

[3] Edwards, p. 201

[4] Meisler, p. 298

[5] Shearman and Pearson, pp. 89–90

References

- Edwards, Ted (1996). *X-Files Confidential*. Little, Brown and Company. ISBN 0-316-21808-1.
- Meisler, Andy (1998). *I Want to Believe: The Official Guide to the X-Files Volume 3*. Harper Prism.
- ISBN 0-06-105386-4.
- Shearman, Robert; Pearson, Lars (2009). *Wanting to Believe: A Critical Guide to The X-Files, Millennium & The Lone Gunmen*. Mad Norwegian Press. ISBN 0-9759446-9-X.

External links

- "Terma" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751216/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Terma" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/terma-2-572/>) at TV.com

"Memento Mori"

"Memento Mori"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 4 Episode 14
Directed by	Rob Bowman
Written by	Chris Carter Vince Gilligan John Shiban Frank Spotnitz
Production code	4X15
Original air date	February 9, 1997
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner William B. Davis as Cigarette Smoking Man Sheila Larken as Margaret Scully David Lovgren as Kurt Crawford Tom Braidwood as Melvyn Frohike Dean Haglund as Richard Langly Bruce Harwood as John Fitzgerald Byers Morris Panych as Gray-Haired Man Julie Bond as Real Estate Woman Sean Allen as Dr. Kevin Scanlon Gillian Barber as Penny Northern 	
Episode chronology	
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"Memento Mori" is the fourteenth episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on February 9, 1997. It was directed by Rob Bowman, and written by series creator Chris Carter, Vince Gilligan, John Shiban and Frank Spotnitz. "Memento Mori" featured guest appearances by Sheila Larken, David Lovgren and Morris Panych. The episode helped to explore the overarching mythology, or fictional history of *The X-Files*. "Memento Mori" earned a Nielsen household rating of 15.5, being watched by 19.1 million people in its initial broadcast. The title translates from Latin as "remember that you will die."

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. When Scully is diagnosed with a brain tumor, Mulder attempts to discover what happened to her during her abduction experience, believing the two events to be related.

"Memento Mori" was written when previous series writer Darin Morgan did not contribute a script for the season. Discussion between the writing staff led to the "obligatory" decision to have Scully diagnosed with cancer, although the decision was not unanimous. Guest actor Lovgren portrayed multiple clones of his character using post-production techniques to merge several shots together; while actor Pat Skipper had a scene cut from the final episode for time restraints, later appearing in the season finale.

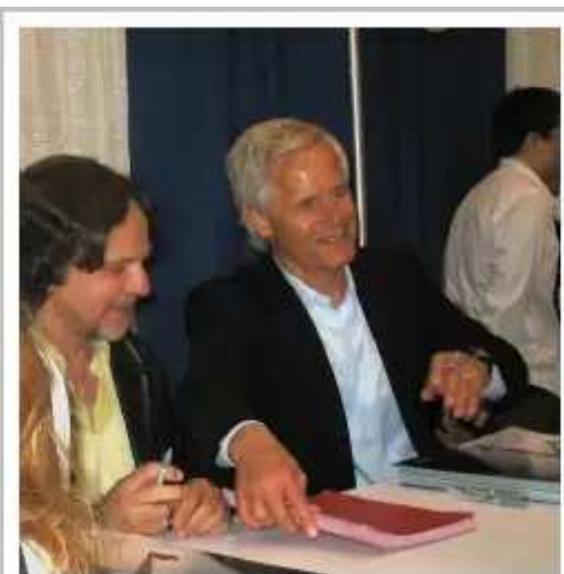
Plot

Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) learns that she has a cancerous tumor between her sinus and cerebrum. She initially tells only Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) of the diagnosis, and is determined to continue to work. The agents head to Allentown, Pennsylvania to see Betsy Hagopian, a Mutual UFO Network member who was previously discovered to be suffering from similar symptoms. The agents learn that Betsy has died, yet find someone using her phone line. They trace the call to Kurt Crawford (David Lovgren), a fellow MUFON member. Crawford tells them that all but one of the MUFON members Scully previously met have died of cancer. Scully is skeptical of Mulder and Crawford's claims that a government conspiracy and her abduction are behind her illness.

Scully visits the last surviving MUFON member, Penny Northern, who is being treated for cancer at a medical centre. Meanwhile, Mulder discovers that all the abductees were childless but had been treated at a nearby fertility clinic. When Mulder is called away by Scully, an assassin, the Gray-Haired Man (Morris Panych) arrives and kills Crawford with a stiletto weapon, revealing him to be an alien-human hybrid. After meeting Penny's physician, Dr. Scanlon, Scully elects to begin chemotherapy. Mulder sneaks into the clinic and finds Crawford there, seemingly alive. Mulder and "Crawford" hack into the clinic's computer database and find information revealing Scully has a file there. Mulder sees Skinner and asks to deal with The Smoking Man to save Scully, but Skinner convinces him not to do so.

Mulder recruits The Lone Gunmen to help him break into a high security research facility where he thinks he may be able to find more information on how to save Scully. Meanwhile, Skinner tries to deal directly with The Smoking Man for Scully's life, who tells him he will get back to him. Inside the facility, Mulder discovers that Dr. Scanlon works alongside several clones of Kurt Crawford. The clones show him Scully's harvested ova and tell him they are trying to save the abducted women's lives, since they acted as their birth mothers. They also hope to subvert the colonization project as an inside job. Mulder takes Scully's ova and leaves, being pursued by the Gray-Haired Man as he escapes. He returns to the hospital to see Scully, who tells him that Penny has died but that she intends to fight the disease. Afterward, Mulder thanks Skinner for advising him not to negotiate with the Smoking Man, after which Skinner and the Smoking Man come to terms on their deal in seclusion.^[1]

Production



Writers Spotnitz (left) and Carter (right) had debated whether or not the character of Scully should be diagnosed with cancer, ultimately calling it "obligatory".

The show's producers decided to give Gillian Anderson's character Dana Scully cancer early in the fourth season. Series creator Chris Carter initially discussed giving Scully's mother cancer but decided to have Scully suffer from it instead. Carter felt the move would give the show an interesting platform on which to discuss things such as faith, science, health care and a certain element of the paranormal.^[1] Some of the writing staff felt that the decision was a poor one to make, citing it as "a cheap TV thing". However, Frank Spotnitz felt that, given the appearances of cancer-stricken abductees in previous episodes, it was an "obligatory" move to have Scully follow suit.

The episode was written by Vince Gilligan, John Shiban, and Frank Spotnitz three days after another script idea fell through.^[2] Spotnitz noted that "Darin Morgan had left the show but was going to contribute an episode. And we realized at the eleventh hour that it wasn't going to happen, and we were stuck with nothing. John, Vince and I broke that

story in maybe two days. We split up the acts, wrote it in probably another two days, and gave the crew something to prep before Christmas break. That was the worst ever." Carter ended up rewriting the script over the holiday.^[3] The initial cut ended up being too long, resulting in a scene introducing Scully's older brother Bill Scully, played by Pat Skipper, being removed. The character, still played by Skipper, would eventually make his first appearance in the fourth season finale "Gethsemane".^[4] The scene which would have established the character was intended to echo a similar scene in the second season episode "One Breath", which featured Don S. Davis as Scully's father. Both scenes featured the actors standing over a supine Scully, wearing white United States Navy dress uniforms. Also deleted from the episode was a kiss between Mulder and Scully, which would have been the first in the series' run. This was an ad-lib on Anderson and Duchovny's part, and was removed from the episode as it was something Chris Carter felt he wanted to make use of in the series' film adaptation. Such a kiss was eventually deferred to season six's "Triangle".

The episode's opening scene, featuring a camera moving slowly towards Scully in a harsh white light, was achieved by constructing a long narrow set covered in aluminium foil, which amplified the light being used and downplayed any colors. This shot was drained of color entirely, and was combined with a series of blurring and framing effects in post-production to further enhance the intended image—to create the impression of waking from a dream.

A scene featuring multiple clones of the character Kurt Crawford was achieved with motion control photography, allowing actor David Lovgren to portray all of the clones—multiple takes were recorded with the actor in different positions within the scene, and by using a camera controlled by a computer to follow exactly the same motions for each take, these could be seamlessly composited together. Producer Paul Rabwin has noted that achieving these shots was difficult due to the mixture of green and blue light sources in the scene.

Broadcast and reception

"Memento Mori" premiered on the Fox network on February 9, 1997, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on December 10, 1997. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 11.5 with a 17 share, meaning that roughly 11.5 percent of all television-equipped households, and 17 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 19.10 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[5]

Writing for *The A.V. Club*, Todd VanDerWerff rated the episode an A, calling it "an occasionally beautiful, occasionally haunting, often overwritten story". He felt that the episode took the uncommon route of tying together several previously-mentioned aspects of the series' mythology, making it "easy to believe the pieces might come together at this point". However, VanDerWerff also noted that the episode's two main plot threads—Scully's cancer and Mulder's investigation—seemed "clumsily grafted" together, and did not explore the theme of living with the fear of death as well as the previous episode, "Never Again", had done. Frank Spotnitz praised the episode, saying, "I think that was the best mythology episode we ever did. It's my favorite one". Chris Carter has stated that he feels "Memento Mori" ranks "among the best mythology episodes of all nine seasons".

This episode was submitted to the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences to represent *The X-Files* in that year's Primetime Emmy Awards. Episode writers Chris Carter, Vince Gilligan, John Shiban, and Frank Spotnitz were nominated for an Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing for a Drama Series. Art directors Graeme Murray and Gary Allen and set decorator Shirley Inget won the Creative Emmy Award for Best Art Direction in a Series, while actress Gillian Anderson also won the Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series for her work in this episode and the fourth season as a whole.^[5]

Footnotes

- [1] Meisler, p. 164
- [2] Note: To retrieve information, click "Season 4" and navigate to "Memento Mori"
- [3] Hurwitz and Knowles, p. 109
- [4] Meisler, p. 165
- [5] Meisler, p. 296

References

- Hurwitz, Matt; Knowles, Chris (2008). *The Complete X-Files*. Insight Editions. ISBN 1-933784-80-6.
- Meisler, Andy (1998). *I Want to Believe: The Official Guide to the X-Files Volume 3*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0-06-105386-4.

External links

- "Memento Mori" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751158/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Memento Mori" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/memento-mori-577/>) at TV.com

"Tempus Fugit"

"Tempus Fugit"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 4 Episode 17
Directed by	Rob Bowman
Written by	Chris Carter Frank Spotnitz
Production code	4X17
Original air date	March 16, 1997
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joe Spano as Mike Millar Tom O'Brien as Sergeant Louis Frish Scott Bellis as Max Fenig Chilton Crane as Sharon Graffia Brendan Beiser as Pendrell Greg Michaels as Scott Garrett Robert Moloney as Bruce Bearfeld Felicia Shulman as Motel Manager Rick Dobran as Sergeant Armando Gonzales Jerry Schram as Larold Rebhun David Palfy as Dark Man Mark Wilson as Pilot Marek Wiedman as Investigator Jon Raitt as Father Kathy Rollheiser as Mother Maria Lusia Cianni as Teenager Peter Taraviras as Go Team Member Mark Schooley as Go Team Member 2 	
Episode chronology	
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"Tempus Fugit" is the seventeenth episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on March 16, 1997. It was directed by Rob Bowman, and written by Frank Spotnitz and series creator Chris Carter. "Tempus Fugit" featured guest appearances by Joe Spano, Tom O'Brien and Brendan Beiser, and saw the return of Scott Bellis as alien abductee Max Fenig. The episode helped to explore the overarching mythology, or fictional history of *The X-Files*. "Tempus Fugit" earned a Nielsen household rating of 11.9, being watched by 18.85 million people in its initial broadcast. The title translates from Latin as "time flies."

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. In the episode, Max Fenig—an old acquaintance of Mulder—is found dead following an airplane crash, which Mulder believes to have been caused by a UFO attempting to abduct Fenig. "Tempus Fugit" is a two-part episode, with the plot continuing in the next episode, "Max".

"Tempus Fugit" was conceived when the series' special effects supervisor Dave Gauthier constructed an elaborate rig capable of simulating a crashing airplane. Carter and Spotnitz expanded upon the idea of a crash to bring back the character of Fenig, who had last been seen in season one's "Fallen Angel". "Tempus Fugit" received mixed to positive critical reception, and earned the production crew two Emmy Award nominations, including a win for Outstanding Sound Editing For A Series.

Plot

Max Fenig (Scott Bellis) is traveling on an airplane, Flight 549, which flies over upstate New York. He watches another man on the plane who seems to be following him. The man heads to the plane's bathroom, where he assembles a zip gun. However, when he comes back out, the airplane begins shaking and a bright light flashes outside, showing that the plane is encountering a UFO. The emergency door next to Max's seat is opened.

Elsewhere, Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) celebrate Scully's birthday. They are approached by a woman named Sharon Graffia, who claims to be Max's sister; she tells them that Max planned to deliver something to Mulder, but that his flight to Washington has crashed. The agents head to the crash site in Northville, New York, and attend an NTSB meeting where Flight 549's final transmissions are shown. Mulder theorizes that the plane was forced down by aliens attempting to abduct Max; the NTSB team, led by chief investigator Mike Millar (Joe Spano), dismisses his claims.

When Mulder and Scully survey the crash site, they realize that there is a nine-minute disparity between the crash and the time on the victims' wristwatches, indicating missing time. Mulder believes that Max was abducted from the plane and that his body will not be found. Meanwhile, Scott Garrett, a Man in Black posing as an NTSB investigator, steals the zip gun from the assassin's body and erases his face and fingerprints with acid. Larold Rehbun, a passenger who sat next to Max, is found alive. His injuries indicate exposure to radiation.

Upon being confronted by Scully, Sharon denies that Max brought a radioactive substance aboard the plane, but divulges that she is not actually Max's sister. She also gives up details about his underground life. Scully subsequently tells Mulder that Max worked at an environmental energy plant in Colorado under an alias, and believes that he may have caused the crash after bringing plutonium on board; Mulder, however, believes that Max was taken off the plane by a UFO, and that Rehbun's injuries were caused by exposure to the craft. Scully informs Mulder that Max's body has already been pulled from the crash site. Meanwhile, Sharon is abducted from her hotel room.

After identifying Max's body, Mulder finds that the wristwatches have been stolen from the other victims. He refutes the NTSB's official explanation of malfunction as a cause of the crash, and is doubtful that the true cause will be found unless they discern what happened during the nine minutes of missing time. The agents visit Sergeant Louis Frish (Tom O'Brien), an air traffic controller from the U.S. Air Force who was on duty during the crash. Frish denies anything unusual happened. However, after the agents leave, Frish and a colleague argue over whether to reveal the "truth" about Flight 549's demise.

After finding Sharon's trashed hotel room, Mulder meets with Millar, who tells him that the door was pulled off the plane from the outside while it was in flight. Later, Frish finds his colleague dead from a faked suicide. A group of commandos arrive to capture Frish, but he escapes. Frish goes to see Mulder and Scully, telling them that he lied before and that his commanding officer had ordered him to track the plane's coordinates as it was being intercepted by a second aircraft. Seconds later, there was an explosion and the plane disappeared from his radar. Mulder believes that a third aircraft, a UFO, approached the plane and was destroyed by the second aircraft, also causing the Flight 549 crash. The agents leave with Frish and are soon chased by the commandos. Meanwhile, Millar returns to the crash site and encounters a UFO. He finds Sharon nearby, having just been returned by her abductors.

Scully returns to Washington with Frish while Mulder heads to Great Sacandaga Lake, searching for the crashed UFO. Scully brings Frish to a local bar where they run into fellow FBI agent Pendrell (Brendan Beiser). The Man in Black soon enters the bar seeking to kill Frish, accidentally shooting Pendrell instead. Meanwhile Mulder arrives at

the lake where he finds a team of men already searching for the crashed UFO. He dives underwater and finds the craft, including an alien body.^[1]

Production



Dave Gauthier's Boeing 737 rig was the basis of the episode's conception.

Writing

During the production of the third season, special effects supervisor Dave Gauthier constructed an elaborate mock-up of a Boeing 737 airplane in order to be able to simulate a crash.^[1] Series creator Chris Carter decided to make use of this rig during the fourth season. When conceiving of the episode, the desire to add to Fox Mulder's emotional involvement by having someone he knew on board led to the writers bringing back the character of Max Fenig to be that person.

Scott Bellis, who had previously portrayed Fenig in the first season episode "Fallen Angel", had auditioned for other roles on the show in the interim, but had always been rejected by the producers because his character was felt to be too memorable. Bellis met series star David Duchovny at a gym several times, and learnt from him that the character of Max was being considered for a two-part episode. The episode's co-writer Frank Spotnitz did not want to have Fenig's appearance "milked" or do something the show had already done. As such he came up with the idea to kill off Fenig in the first part of the episode, which he felt was "a bold choice".^[1]

Filming

Gauthier's 737 rig—which required 400 US gallons (1,500 L) of hydraulic fluid to construct—was designed to move across multiple axes in order to better simulate turbulence; it could rotate 22 degrees each way about its length, and move four feet to either side. The fuselage could be opened up at intervals every 6 feet (1.8 m) to better allow cameras to record inside it.^[2] The show's producers wanted the plane crash site and investigation to be as authentic as possible, so they used a National Transportation Safety Board official to act as their technical advisor on the episode to ensure that everything was properly recreated. The NTSB officials noted that the site was authentic in every way "except for the smell"; Carter has noted that this level of verisimilitude left some of the crew members "frightened by their work". Director Rob Bowman admitted that the episode exceeded its given budget, noting that Carter would often defend him from Fox studio officials angry at his production costs.^[3] Bellis' abduction scene, in which his character is levitated through the door of the airplane, was achieved by pulling the actor out of the airplane rig with a harness; additional coverage was achieved by repeating this with a stuntman, who Bellis notes was pulled out of the rig "a lot harder".

Broadcast and reception

"Tempus Fugit" premiered on the Fox network on March 16, 1997, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on January 14, 1998. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 11.9 with an 18 share, meaning that roughly 11.9 percent of all television-equipped households, and 18 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 18.85 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[3]

The episode received mixed to positive reviews from critics. Zack Handlen, writing for *The A.V. Club*, rated

"Tempus Fugit" an A-. Handlen praised the effectiveness of the cold, open, and noted the episode highlighted how "particularly ruthless" the series was with its recurring cast, noting "the mortality rate helps to create a mood of ever-encroaching doom, as if the darkness that seems about to swallow Mulder and Scully in so many scenes ... is as much symbolic as it is literal". Paula Vitaris, writing for *Cinefantastique*, rated "Tempus Fugit" two-and-a-half stars out of four, describing it as "gripping" with "lots of action". However, Vitaris felt that the fleeting use of guest star Scott Bellis was "a waste", and that the discovery of an alien corpse towards the end "robs this story of any ambiguity". 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 "the best conspiracy episode we've seen in nearly two years". Shearman and Pearson felt that "Tempus Fugit" was "told very clearly, with remarkably little baggage", and praised the acting of guests Tom O'Brien and Joe Spano.^[4] Twelve members of the show's post-production crew won the 1997 Emmy Award for Outstanding Sound Editing For A Series for their work on this episode; while four others received a nomination for Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Drama Series.^[5]

Footnotes

[1] Edwards, p. 211

[2] Meisler, p. 196

[3] Hurwitz and Knowles, p. 111

[4] Shearman and Pearson, p. 97

[5] Meisler, p. 296

References

- Edwards, Ted (1996). *X-Files Confidential*. Little, Brown and Company. ISBN 0316218081.
- Hurwitz, Matt; Knowles, Chris (2008). *The Complete X-Files*. Insight Editions. ISBN 1933784806.
- Meisler, Andy (1998). *I Want to Believe: The Official Guide to the X-Files Volume 3*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0061053864.
- Shearman, Robert; Pearson, Lars (2009). *Wanting to Believe: A Critical Guide to The X-Files, Millennium & The Lone Gunmen*. Mad Norwegian Press. ISBN 097594469X.

External links

- "Tempus Fugit" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751215/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Tempus Fugit" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/tempus-fugit-1-580/>) at TV.com

"Max"

This article is about the episode. For the character, see Max Fenig.

"Max"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 4 Episode 18
Directed by	Kim Manners
Written by	Chris Carter Frank Spotnitz
Production code	4X18
Original air date	March 23, 1997
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner Brendan Beiser as Pendrell Scott Bellis as Max Fenig Chilton Crane as Sharon Graffia John Destrey as Mr. Ballard Rick Dobran as Armando Gonzales Stacy Fair as a Flight Attendant Jaclynn Grad as a Stewardess Dave Hannay as Waiter #1 Braden Kayce as an Airport Security Officer Stewart Laine as an MP Greg Michaels as Scott Garrett Tom O'Brien as Louis Frish Dafid Palfy as Dark Man Regy Sayhay as Waiter #3 Jerry Schram as Larold Rebhun Michael Short as Waiter #2 Joe Spano as Mike Millar Val Stefoff as a Bartender Mark Wilson as a Pilot 	
Episode chronology	
← Previous Next → "Tempus Fugit" "Synchrony"	
List of season 4 episodes List of <i>The X-Files</i> episodes	

"Max" is the eighteenth episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on March 23, 1997. It was directed by Kim Manners, and written by Frank Spotnitz and series creator Chris Carter. "Max" featured guest appearances by Joe Spano, Tom O'Brien and Scott Bellis, and saw the final appearance of Brendan Beiser as special agent Pendrell. The episode helped to explore the overarching mythology, or fictional history of *The X-Files*. "Max" earned a Nielsen household rating of 11.6, being watched by 18.34 million people in its initial broadcast. The episode received mixed to positive reviews from critics.

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. Following the airplane crash that killed alien abductee Max

Fenig, Mulder is pursued by an assassin looking to recover an alien artifact. "Max" is a two-part episode, with the plot continuing from the previous episode, "Tempus Fugit".

Manners praised the large cast of extras used during production, concluding that they were the best he had worked with. "Max" featured scenes filmed at Vancouver International Airport and in a studio water tank, as well as using the custom-built Boeing 737 set constructed for "Tempus Fugit". Dialogue in the episode was inspired by the 1949 film *The Third Man*.

Plot

Background

Max Fenig (Scott Bellis), a Mutual UFO Network member, has been repeatedly abducted by aliens throughout his life. After meeting with FBI agent Fox Mulder (David Duchovny), Fenig was abducted once again, and thought to have been lost entirely.^[1] Several years later, Fenig is found dead amongst the victims of an airplane crash. Investigating the disaster, Mulder and his partner Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) learn that the airplane crashed after being intercepted by a military jet—and possibly by an alien spacecraft. Mulder's search for evidence of such a craft leads to him diving to the bottom of Great Sacandaga Lake to find it; while Scully is ambushed by an assassin seeking to kill a military witness, leading to her colleague Pendrell (Brendan Beiser) being shot.^[2]

Events

Mulder is caught by a group of commandos after swimming to shore. In Washington, Scully tends to the critically wounded Pendrell while Man in Black Garrett escapes. Assistant Director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) arrives shortly afterwards and tells Scully that the orders to protect Frish have been countermanded and he is being arrested for providing false testimony. Scully releases Mulder from confinement and tells him the "official" explanation for the crash, that Frish and Gonzales caused the crash by mistakenly vectoring a military fighter craft with the plane, and that Frish has been lying to cover it up. Mulder is skeptical of this latest explanation and thinks the crashed UFO he found underwater is really what was involved in the crash. Scully tells Mulder that Sharon is not really Max's sister, but rather an unemployed aeronautical engineer who met Max in a mental institution. She also tells him that Agent Pendrell died from his wounds.

Mulder and Scully visit Max's trailer, and watch a tape of him where he talks about finding proof of alien existence. The military recovers the crashed UFO from the lake, including the alien body. The agents visit Millar, whose investigation has been unable to prove or disprove the military's cover story. Mulder tells Millar what he believed really happened. Mulder believes that Max boarded the plane with proof of alien life and that a UFO stopped the plane, abducting him. A military aircraft intercepted the two however, with orders to attack the UFO. While Max was being returned, the military aircraft struck, causing both the UFO and plane to crash.

Mulder visits Max's trailer again and looks through his mail, finding a luggage claim ticket. Scully visits Sharon, now in a mental institution, who tells Scully that she stole technology from her employer that Max believed was alien. The device was in three parts, one which she had, one that he brought on the plane and a third one. Mulder uses the claim ticket to obtain the third device at a New York airport and heads on a plane to return to Washington. Garrett, who is also aboard, sits next to him. Mulder soon realizes who Garrett is and holds him at gunpoint. Garrett does not care, telling Mulder that if he shoots him the plane will depressurize and he will be able to escape with a parachute he has with him. Mulder imprisons Garrett in the airplane bathroom but Garrett soon emerges with a zip gun and orders him to hand over the device. Suddenly the plane starts shaking and bright lights shine in through the windows. When the plane touches down and Mulder gets out both Garrett and the device are gone and Mulder is missing nine minutes, having no memory of what happened. The agents visit Sharon one last time in Max's trailer and say goodbye.^[1]

Production



A speech in the episode was based on dialogue from 1949's *The Third Man*, starring Orson Welles.

The writers decided to kill off agent Pendrell in this episode. Actor Brendan Beiser portrayed the character in eight other episodes, first appearing in the third season episode "Nisei".^[3] Val Steffof, the assistant director of the filming crew, wanted a part, telling director Kim Manners "you know, I can act"; this led to Steffof

being cast as a bartender. The song "Unmarked Helicopters" by Soul Coughing can be heard playing in Max Fenig's trailer; the song also appeared on the 1996 compilation album *Songs in the Key of X: Music from and Inspired by the X-Files*.

The very first scene was shot in a small tank across the street from North Shore Studios in Vancouver. Wide-angle lenses were used to film the scene as the actors did not actually have much room for swimming. This made it look like the actors are actually covering some ground, while in reality they only swam 10 to 12 feet (3.0 to 3.7 m). On the set of the following scene in which Fox Mulder reaches the shore, it was raining and very cold. Manners commented that the acting crew was more tired than usual because

of it—during filming, Duchovny struggled to run from the actors playing his pursuers, but had previously been able to run from two horses when filming the episode "Tunguska".

It took several days to film the alien abduction scene. Internal shots of the airplane's cockpit were filmed in a real flight simulator, separate from the airplane set used for the rest of the interior shots. The exterior scenes were filmed at Vancouver International Airport. Executive producer John Shiban was asked to write a speech for Garrett in the scene in which Mulder encounters him on the airplane. Inspired by a speech given by Orson Welles in *The Third Man*, Shiban wrote the monologue as an homage to the film. The scenes of the airplane's final airborne moments included eighty extras who Manners felt were "eighty of the best extras I've ever worked with in my life".^[4] Several extras were as young as four years old, leading series creator Chris Carter to note that the scene would benefit from showing younger children, though these were represented by dolls as a safety precaution.

The beam of light seen shining from beneath the UFO in the episode was achieved by compositing several shots together, with elements including a crane carrying a spotlight—borrowed from the Canadian Coast Guard^[5]—and the spray from an aerosol combined to create the final shot.

Broadcast and reception

"Max" premiered on the Fox network on March 23, 1997, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on January 21, 1998. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 11.6 with an 18 share, meaning that roughly 11.6 percent of all television-equipped households, and 18 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 18.34 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[3]

The episode received mixed to positive reviews from critics. Todd VanDerWerff, writing for *The A.V. Club*, rated "Max" an A-. VanDerWerff was unconvinced that the episode, along with "Tempus Fugit", merited being stretched over two parts; however, he felt that the character of Fenig was "a simultaneous paean to the many, many lives lost in this fictional war and a very real story about someone who could very well live on the edges of our society, driven mad by visions that are only real to himself, visions the rest of us would immediately disregard as unbelievable and surreal". Paula Vitaris, writing for *Cinefantastique*, rated "Max" one-and-a-half stars out of four. Vitaris praised the episode's visual effects; however, she felt that the two parts of the story would have better served as "a taut one-hour episode". Vitaris also felt that the episode's final act, featuring Mulder on an airplane, saw Mulder

uncharacteristically putting civilians at risk and was an example of "out and out bad writing". 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, describing it as "tighty, satisfying, witty and touching". Shearman noted that the second half of two-part episodes in the series tended to "drop the ball", but felt that the story arc of "Tempus Fugit" and "Max" was "very solid", calling them "the most satisfying "event" multiparter that *The X-Files* has ever done".^[5]

References

- [1] Lovece, pp. 68–70
- [2] Meisler, pp. 177–184
- [3] Lowry, pp. 122–131
- [4] Edwards, p. 211
- [5] Shearman and Pearson, p. 98

References

- Edwards, Ted (1996). *X-Files Confidential*. Little, Brown and Company. ISBN 0316218081.
- Hurwitz, Matt; Knowles, Chris (2008). *The Complete X-Files*. Insight Editions. ISBN 1933784806.
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- Lowry, Brian (1996). *Trust No One: The Official Guide to the X-Files*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0061053538.
- Meisler, Andy (1998). *I Want to Believe: The Official Guide to the X-Files Volume 3*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0061053864.
- Shearman, Robert; Pearson, Lars (2009). *Wanting to Believe: A Critical Guide to The X-Files, Millennium & The Lone Gunmen*. Mad Norwegian Press. ISBN 097594469X.

External links

- "Max" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751156/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Max" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/max-2-581/>) at TV.com

"Zero Sum"

"Zero Sum"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 4 Episode 21
Directed by	Kim Manners
Written by	Frank Spotnitz Howard Gordon
Production code	4X21
Original air date	April 27, 1997
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner William B. Davis as Cigarette Smoking Man Laurie Holden as Marita Covarrubias Don S. Williams as First Elder John Moore as Third Elder Morris Panych as Gray-Haired Man Nicolle Nattrass as Misty Nagata Paul McLean as Special Agent Kautz Fred Keating as Detective Roy Thomas Allan Gray as Dr. Peter Valdespino Addison Ridge as Bespectacled Boy Lisa Stewart as Jane Brody Barry Greene as E.R. Doctor Christopher J. Newton as Photo Technician Oscar Goncalves as Night Attendant Jason Anthony Griffith as Uniformed Officer Julia Body as Supervisor 	
Episode chronology	
← Previous Next → "Small Potatoes" "Elegy"	
List of season 4 episodes List of <i>The X-Files</i> episodes	

"Zero Sum" is the twenty-first episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on April 27, 1997. It was directed by Kim Manners, and written by Frank Spotnitz and Howard Gordon. "Zero Sum" featured guest appearances by William B. Davis, Laurie Holden and Morris Panych. The episode helped to explore the overarching mythology, or fictional history of *The X-Files*. "Zero Sum" earned a Nielsen household rating of 11.7, being watched by 18.6 million people in its initial broadcast. The episode has received mixed to positive responses from critics.

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. In the episode, a case Mulder is asked to investigate is covertly covered up by the agents' boss Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi), who has made a sinister bargain with The Smoking Man (Davis).

The decision to center another episode around Skinner—following the third season episode "Avatar"—was made when Gillian Anderson took a week off to shoot the film *The Mighty*. Rather than have Duchovny carry the additional workload, the writing staff decided to focus the episode on supporting cast members. "Zero Sum" featured the final appearance in the series by Morris Panych. In addition, the episode saw the return of the virus-carrying bees which featured in the season-opener "Herrenvolk" and would later return in the 1998 feature film.

Plot

At a postal routing center in Virginia a woman is killed by a swarm of bees in the bathroom while taking a cigarette break. Assistant Director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi), working for The Smoking Man (William B. Davis), covers up the death by deleting the file on the case from agent Fox Mulder's (David Duchovny) computer, cleaning up all the evidence at the scene, burning the woman's body in an incinerator and replacing the police's blood sample for the case by posing as Mulder. As he leaves the police station, Skinner is chased down by Detective Roy Thomas, who believes he is Mulder. Skinner tells him there is nothing on the case warranting his involvement, and leaves.

Shortly after Skinner arrives home he is met by Mulder, who tells him about the case and the fact that someone is going to great lengths to cover it up. Mulder reveals that Detective Thomas was killed, which shocks Skinner. Mulder tells Skinner that Scully is undergoing tests regarding her cancer. Later that night Skinner meets with The Smoking Man, who is accompanied by Thomas' murderer, the Gray Haired Man (Morris Panych). Skinner is angry that Thomas was killed and wants to end their arrangement, which The Smoking Man refuses to allow. Mulder calls Skinner, telling him about the woman's body being burned and the blood evidence being tampered with. Mulder tells Skinner that he does have the gun that Thomas was killed with, which is currently being looked at by ballistics. Skinner searches his drawer and realizes that his gun was missing and is the one that Mulder was telling him about. Skinner, realizing he has been set up, calls The Smoking Man, who confirms that Thomas was killed with Skinner's gun and that by going to the police Skinner would end up implicating himself in the murder. The Smoking Man refuses to provide any details on what he is covering up.

Skinner returns to the routing center where he tears a hole in the bathroom wall and finds a large honeycomb of dead bees. He visits an entomologist to look at one of the bees and is told that Mulder visited him six months ago about a similar subject. Skinner finds Mulder's file on the matter, copying down the contact information for Marita Covarrubias (Laurie Holden). Mulder tells Skinner that a bank near the police station took a picture of the detective, which shows him with Skinner, but the picture is too obscured for Mulder to identify him. Skinner visits Covarrubias, who does not have any evidence to provide him at this time. The entomologist is killed by a swarm of bees. The next day, Mulder and Skinner look at his body, which is infected with smallpox transmitted by the bees. Skinner visits the co-worker of the postal worker who died, who tells him she was pressured to not say anything about what happened by men who demanded a damaged package. At the photo lab Mulder analyzes the photo, which reveals Skinner's identity.

The Smoking Man meets with the Syndicate, who are responsible for the bees. Soon afterward a swarm of bees attacks a nearby school, and one of the teachers dies as a result. Skinner heads to the hospital, where he is met by Covarrubias. She demands to know what he knows about the matter. He tells her he believes that the bees are being used as a carrier for some sort of experiment. Skinner returns home where he is confronted by Mulder, who now suspects that Skinner has been working against him all this time. Skinner is able to convince Mulder that he would not have forced his own drawer lock open and hence could not have been the murderer. Convinced of Skinner's evidence, Mulder turns in the gun with the serial number filed off so Skinner is not blamed for the murder. That night Skinner confronts The Smoking Man in his apartment, angry that nothing has been done for Scully. The Smoking Man convinces him that Scully will die if he kills him and Skinner leaves without killing him, but not before firing warning shots. Shortly afterwards Covarrubias calls The Smoking Man, who tells her to tell Mulder what he wants to hear while an unknown man is shown behind her listening on another phone.^[1]

Production



"Zero Sum" brought back the virus-carrying bees from "Herrenvolk"; they would also appear in 1998's *The X-Files*.

Co-writer Frank Spotnitz described the episode as a "fortunate accident". Late in the fourth season of the show Gillian Anderson left the show for a week to film her part in the film *The Mighty*. The producers, knowing that they would have to write an episode without Dana Scully, decided it was not fair

to have David Duchovny carry the same workload as in a normal episode considering her absence. As such, a story was devised in which his involvement would be light. This resulted in the decision to write, for the second year in a row, an episode focused on Assistant Director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi). Howard Gordon, having written the previous Skinner-centric episode, "Avatar" joined Spotnitz and the two wrote the episode over a weekend while another Gordon

written episode, "Synchrony" was in production. The writers felt that this was the perfect time to bring in Skinner's deal with The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) to cure Scully's cancer, made in the episode "Memento Mori".^[2] Frank Spotnitz said of Skinner's deal, "The hard thing for Skinner was that we had to keep him in the middle. We had him tell Mulder not to bargain with The Smoking Man in order to save Scully's life. And then he himself struck a Faustian bargain with the Cigarette Smoking Man and was in his debt for some kind."^[3]

The writing staff felt that "Zero Sum" was a logical place to bring back the bees that were used in the season premiere, "Herrenvolk", feeling it was important to not have something paranormal happen to Skinner in this episode considering that had been done in the previous season. Live bees were used for filming, but showed up poorly in the footage; visual effects technician Laurie Kallsen-George then spent nine days digitally enhancing the footage to improve upon this.^[4] The virus-carrying bees would later form a central plot point in the series' 1998 feature film adaptation.

Director Kim Manners noted that the episode "was a really good show for me, because I had not got a chance to work with Mitch. And they wrote a great script, you know? It was really something he could sink his teeth into and he just did a great job. Bill Davis was fabulous in that show too". This was the second episode of the series to not feature Scully, the first being the second season episode "3". Guest actor Morris Panych, portraying the Syndicate assassin The Grey-Haired Man, makes his last appearance in the series in this episode. Panych had previously appeared in "Piper Maru", "Avatar", "Herrenvolk" and "Memento Mori".^[5] ^[6] ^[7] ^[8]

Broadcast and reception

"Zero Sum" premiered on the Fox network on April 27, 1997, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on February 11, 1998. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 11.7 with a 17 share, meaning that roughly 11.7 percent of all television-equipped households, and 17 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 18.6 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[3]

The episode has received mixed to positive responses from critics. Zack Handlen, writing for *The A.V. Club*, rated the episode an A, calling it "utterly bad-ass". Handlen felt that the episode effectively toyed with the series' usual narrative structure, making lead character Fox Mulder seem "nearly as much of an antagonist" as The Smoking Man; Handlen also felt that "Zero Sum" gave significant insight into the character of Walter Skinner. Paula Vitaris, writing for *Cinefantastique*, rated "Zero Sum" one-and-a-half stars out of four, noting that its "pacing and tone are off".

Vitaris felt that "Duchovny and Pileggi give good performances", despite Pileggi seeming "unintentionally comic" at times; though she noted that "an episode without Scully feels pretty empty". 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, noting that "Pileggi looks much more comfortable here than he did in last year's showcase ['Avatar']". Shearman and Pearson felt that the episode's attempts to tie into the wider storylines—the appearance of Marita Covarrubias in particular—are where it "really stumbles"; noting that its success lies "in the shock value of seeing a deliberately familiar story through the fractured view of another character".^[9]

Footnotes

- [1] Meisler, pp. 221–230
- [2] Meisler, pp. 230–231
- [3] Hurwitz and Knowles, p. 113
- [4] Meisler, p. 231
- [5] Lowry, pp. 161–164
- [6] Lowry, pp. 201–204
- [7] Meisler, pp. 19–25
- [8] Meisler, pp. 155–163
- [9] Shearman and Pearson, pp. 101–102

References

- Lowry, Brian (1996). *Trust No One: The Official Guide to the X-Files*. Harper Prism. ISBN 0061053538.
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External links

- "Zero Sum" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751266/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Zero Sum" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/zero-sum-584/>) at TV.com

"Gethsemane"

"Gethsemane"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 4 Episode 24
Directed by	R. W. Goodwin
Written by	Chris Carter
Production code	4X24
Original air date	May 18, 1997
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charles Cioffi as Scott Blevins Sheila Larken as Margaret Scully Pat Skipper as Bill Scully Matthew Walker as Arlinsky James Sutorius as Babcock John Finn as Michael Kritschgau Steve Makaj as Scott Ostelhoff John Oliver as Rolston Nancy Kerr as Agent Hedin Barry W. Levy as Vitagliano Amie Walters as Father McCue Rob Freeman as Detective Rempulski Craig Brunanski as Saw Operator 	
Episode chronology	
← Previous Next → "Demons" "Redux"	
List of season 4 episodes List of <i>The X-Files</i> episodes	

"Gethsemane" is the twenty-fourth and final episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series *The X-Files*. It premiered on the Fox network on May 18, 1997. It was directed by R.W. Goodwin, and written by series creator Chris Carter. "Gethsemane" featured guest appearances by Charles Cioffi, Sheila Larken and Pat Skipper, and introduced John Finn as recurring character Michael Kritschgau. The episode helped to explore the overarching mythology, or fictional history of *The X-Files*. "Gethsemane" earned a Nielsen household rating of 13.2, being watched by 19.85 million people in its initial broadcast.

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. In the episode, Mulder is shown evidence of alien life which may actually be part of a huge government hoax designed to deflect attention from secret military programs. Meanwhile, Scully struggles with her cancer in the face of hostility from her brother, who believes she should no longer be working.

"Gethsemane" was filmed on one of the series' most elaborate and costly sets, replicating an icy mountaintop inside a refrigerated building using real snow and ice. Shooting for exterior scenes took place on Vancouver's Mount Seymour, occurring just a week before Duchovny's wedding. The episode, which has been described by Carter as pondering "the existence of God", has received mixed responses from critics, with its cliffhanger ending frequently

being cited as its main failing.

Plot

The episode opens *in medias res* to police investigating a dead body in the apartment of FBI agent Fox Mulder (David Duchovny). Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) confirms the unseen body's identity and leaves. She subsequently appears before an FBI panel led by Section Chief Scott Blevins (Charles Cioffi), reviewing her work with Mulder on the *X-Files*.

In Canada's St. Elias Mountains, a frozen extraterrestrial body is discovered by an expedition team. Professor Arlinsky, the team's leader, sends ice core samples containing presumably alien DNA to Mulder. Scully has the samples tested and confirms the DNA's non-terrestrial origin, but is attacked by a man who steals the samples. Scully learns that her attacker is Michael Kritschgau (John Finn), a Defense Department employee. When she tracks down Kritschgau and holds him at gunpoint, he reveals that he might be killed.

Meanwhile, Mulder and Arlinsky return to the mountains, but finds that most of the expedition members have been shot dead. The sole survivor is a man named Babcock, who reveals that he has saved the alien corpse from theft by burying it. Together, the three men bring the corpse to the United States. There, Mulder and Arlinsky perform an autopsy on the corpse, believing it belongs to a genuine extraterrestrial. After Mulder leaves to meet with Scully, a mysterious assassin, Scott Ostelhoff, arrives and kills Arlinsky.

Scully introduces Mulder to Kritschgau, who claims that everything Mulder thinks he knows about aliens is a lie. He tells him that his sister's abduction was fabricated, that all evidence of alien biology are merely scientific anomalies, and that the alien body he has just examined was fake. Kritschgau claims that the entire alien mythos is a hoax perpetrated by the U.S. government as a cover for the activities of the military-industrial complex. Mulder dismisses these claims until Scully tells him Kritschgau told her that she was given cancer to make him believe.

Mulder finds Arlinsky and Babcock dead, with the alien body missing. Mulder, distraught, sits in his apartment watching a conference about extraterrestrial life on television. The narrative returns to the present, where Scully reveals to the panel that Mulder died the previous night of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.^[1]

Production



Exterior shots in the episode were filmed on Vancouver's Mount Seymour.

The icy caverns featured in the episode were constructed inside a warehouse which had previously been used for cold storage; and required the use of truckloads of lumber and 10,000 square feet (930 m²) of Styrofoam. The set would become one of the most expensive and elaborate built during the series' history.^[1] The set required a constant temperature of -21 °F (-29 °C) in order to maintain the real snow and ice used to decorate it. This refrigeration allowed the actors' breath to visibly fog up, and allowed the cast to "have a place that feels real" to aid their acting.

The outdoor scenes were filmed around Vancouver's Mount Seymour, with weather conditions making shooting difficult enough to require an extra day of work. The episode's production

took place just a week before David Duchovny's wedding, with his fiancée Téa Leoni visiting the set during filming. The first cut of the episode was twelve minutes too long, resulting in some of the scenes in the mountains being removed. Series creator Chris Carter re-edited the entire episode two days before it aired.^[2]

Carter has described "Gethsemane" as a "big ideas episode", noting that its main concern is debating "the existence of God". The title of the episode is an allusion to the biblical garden of Gethsemane where Jesus was betrayed by

Judas Iscariot. The character Michael Kritschgau was named after a former drama teacher of Gillian Anderson. The tagline for this episode is "Believe the lie", changed from the usual "The truth is out there". This episode marks the first appearance of one of Scully's brothers since a flashback in the season two episode "One Breath". Section Chief Scott Blevins makes his first appearance since the fourth episode of the first season, "Conduit".

Reception

"As far back as Deep Throat, Mulder was asked why he stubbornly clung to his beliefs to in the wake of so much proof to the contrary, and he answered it was because such proof was never convincing enough. Nor is it here."

—Robert Shearman on the episode's transparency.

Ratings

"Gethsemane" premiered on the Fox network on May 18, 1997, and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC One on March 4, 1998. The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 12.7 with a 19 share, meaning that roughly 12.7 percent of all television-equipped households, and 19 percent of households watching television, were tuned in to the episode. A total of 19.85 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing.^[3]

Reviews

Lon Grahmke of *Chicago Sun-Times* reacted positively towards the episode, calling it a "stunning" season finale.

Paula Vitaris, writing for *Cinefantastique*, rated "Gethsemane" two stars out of four, noting that it "withholds so much information that it barely qualifies as a complete episode". Vitaris felt that the large degree of ambiguity in the episode's script left the actors' performances "curiously neutral", adding that the cast "struggle manfully" with the material. Writing for *The A.V. Club*, Zack Handlen rated the episode a B+, noting that "everything here has a ring of familiarity to it". Handlen felt that the episode's premise and ending were poorly executed, as "trying to balance possible truths while maintaining the plausibility of both is incredibly difficult to pull off on a long-running show", adding that the episode "comes down on the only side of the fence it really could" given that "there've been too many scenes of shape-changing bounty hunters and mystical alien healers to really let this idea play out know [sic] in any real way". 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, noting that while it "attempts to do too much", it "has a passion behind it which makes it gripping". Shearman and Pearson felt that the episode's cliffhanger ending, centering on the apparent death of Mulder, was too unbelievable, noting that it would be out of character for him to grow so disillusioned as to take his own life.^[1]

The episode created speculation about whether or not Mulder was actually dead. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* discussed fan theories behind Mulder's madness while a cartoon ran in *The New Yorker* a few weeks later surrounding Mulder's "death". Series creator Chris Carter noted that "the whole plot line of 'Gethsemane' revolved around a hoax, but there are actually huge revelations in this show. And it's an amazing thing that we could get people to believe that Mulder could actually kill himself because his belief system was stolen from him". UGO Networks listed the episode at number 21 in a countdown of "TV's Best Season Finales", noting that it "rocked the core of the series' entire mythology". Den of Geek's John Moore felt that the episode was "one of the finest season-enders" of the series, noting that it "ended by completely pulling the carpet out from under the fans". Moore listed the character of Michael Kritschgau as the seventh-best villain of the series, adding that he shook "what we knew about the show to its core" by "provid[ing] nourishment to a seed of doubt that had been playing on Mulder's mind for the entire season".

Footnotes

[1] Meisler, p. 270

[2] Meisler, p. 271

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- Shearman, Robert; Pearson, Lars (2009). *Wanting to Believe: A Critical Guide to The X-Files, Millennium & The Lone Gunmen*. Mad Norwegian Press. ISBN 097594469X.

External links

- "Gethsemane" (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0751130/>) at the Internet Movie Database
- "Gethsemane" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/the-xfiles/gethsemane-1-587/>) at TV.com

"Redux"

"Redux"	
<i>The X-Files</i> episode	
	The so-called "fake" aliens
Episode no.	Season 5 Episode 1 & 2
Directed by	R. W. Goodwin ("Redux") Kim Manners ("Redux II")
Written by	Chris Carter
Production code	5X02 5X03
Original air date	November 2, 1997 November 9, 1997
Running time	44 minutes (Per episode)
Guest actors	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitch Pileggi as Walter Skinner William B. Davis as Cigarette Smoking Man Charles Cioffi as Scott Blevins John Finn as Michael Kritschgau Steve Makaj as Scott Ostelhoff Barry W. Levy as Vitagliano Willy Ross as "Quiet Willy" Ken Camroux as Senior Agent Don S. Williams as First Elder Bruce Harwood as John Fitzgerald Byers Dean Haglund as Richard Langly Tom Braidwood as Melvin Frohike Julie Arkos as Holly John D. Sampson as Sentry Robert Wright as Dr. Zuckerman Amie Walter as Father McCue Megan Leitch as Samantha Mulder Sheila Larken as Margaret Scully Pat Skipper as Bill Scully Jr. 	
Episode chronology	
← Previous Next → "Gethsemane" "Unusual Suspects"	
List of season 5 episodes List of <i>The X-Files</i> episodes	

"Redux" is the collective name for the two-part fifth season premiere of the science fiction television series *The X-Files*. "Redux I" first aired on November 2, 1997 on Fox in the United States, with "Redux II" airing on November 9. Both episodes subsequently aired in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Both episodes were written by series creator Chris Carter, with "Redux" directed by R. W. Goodwin and "Redux II" helmed by Kim Manners. "Redux" became the second-most-watched episode ever broadcast, earning more than 27 million viewers in the United States alone. The first part of the episode received mixed to negative reviews, whereas the second part received mixed to positive

reviews from critics.

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal, called X-Files. The episodes' story continues on from the fourth season finale "Gethsemane". "Redux I" follows Scully, who helps Mulder to fake his own death in an effort to discover which members of the FBI they can trust before the agents individually search for an answer to Scully's cancer. "Redux II" continues immediately afterwards with Scully hospitalized, and Mulder is offered a deal to ally with The Smoking Man (William B. Davis).

"Redux", being a part of a three-part episode arc, became a storyline milestone for the series. It marked the first episode in which Fox Mulder loses his belief in extraterrestrial life and the revelation that someone inside the FBI has tried to discredit Mulder and Scully's work on the X-Files. When writing the episode, Carter wanted to tie up loose ends from the previous seasons. Despite being the first two episodes of the season aired, they were the second and third episodes produced, the first being "Unusual Suspects", which explained the origins of The Lone Gunmen.

Plot

Background

In Canada's St. Elias Mountains, a frozen extraterrestrial body is discovered by an expedition team. Professor Arlinsky, the team's leader, sends ice core samples containing presumably alien DNA to Fox Mulder. Both Mulder and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) eventually meet Michael Kritschgau (John Finn), a Defense Department employee who claims that everything Mulder thinks he knows about aliens is a lie. Kritschgau tells Mulder that his sister Samantha Mulder's abduction was fabricated, that all evidence of alien biology are merely scientific anomalies, and that the alien body discovered in Canada was fake. Kritschgau claims that the entire alien mythos is a hoax perpetrated by the U.S. government as a cover for the military-industrial complex. Distraught by Kritschgau's claims, Mulder loses his faith. Later, the FBI investigates Mulder's apparent suicide. Scully confirms the unseen body's identity.^[1]

Redux

As a distraught Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) sits in his apartment, he receives a phone call from Kritschgau, who tells him that "they" may be listening. Mulder, spotting a small hole in his ceiling, rushes upstairs and bursts into the apartment above his and kills government employee Scott Ostellhoff. He tells Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) about the incident, telling her that Ostellhoff had made numerous calls to the FBI.

The FBI looks into the situation and finds Ostellhoff's body; however, they believe it is the body of a suicidal Mulder. The next day Scully identifies Ostellhoff's body as Mulder and is met by assistant director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) who tells her that Section Chief Scott Blevins (Charles Cioffi) is looking for her. She meets with them, and tells them about the previous incidents leading to Mulder's apparent suicide. Meanwhile Mulder has broken into the Department of Defense.

While Mulder is gone, The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) searches Mulder's apartment, believing he is not dead. Scully does some research into the phone records, coming to the conclusion that Ostellhoff was calling Skinner. Mulder meanwhile continues through the Department of Defense Headquarters finding more fake alien bodies inside. He heads through a tunnel to The Pentagon, where he finds an elaborate filing system and warehouse of evidence, the same warehouse that The Smoking Man was seen leaving at the very end of "Pilot". Mulder ultimately tracks down a small metal vial that he believes may contain Scully's cure.

Scully debriefs the FBI panel and explains that Mulder was a victim of an elaborate conspiracy and that she was given a fatal disease by someone in the room. As she is about to present her evidence, her nose bleeds and she collapses. Mulder brings the vial he found to the Lone Gunmen, who tell him it is not a cure, only deionized water.^[1]

Redux II

After hearing of Scully collapsing, Mulder arrives at the hospital where Scully is being treated. Before he is able to make contact with her, he is detained by Skinner and two FBI agents. Mulder is then brought to Blevins and a senior agent who demands information on why Scully lied about Mulder's death. After the meeting, Mulder tells Skinner that a traitor in the FBI gave Scully her cancer. In the meantime, The Smoking Man has a meeting with the First Elder (Don S. Williams), trying to convince him that Mulder will join their side if he is given a good reason to do so.

Mulder later tells Scully that he wants to reveal the conspiracy to the public. As he is leaving, he meets with The Smoking Man who tells him that he can cure Scully's cancer by using a chip included in the vial Mulder took from the Pentagon. Meanwhile, Kritschgau goes before the FBI panel, denying any knowledge of Ostelhoff's murderer, also revealing that his son died that morning. Kritschgau claims to work for not only the Department of Defense but also a congressional lobbying firm known as Roush. Mulder sees Scully and her doctor about the chip. Scully's family is skeptical, particularly her brother Bill, who is quite upset with Mulder. Scully decides to go ahead and have the chip inserted in her neck.

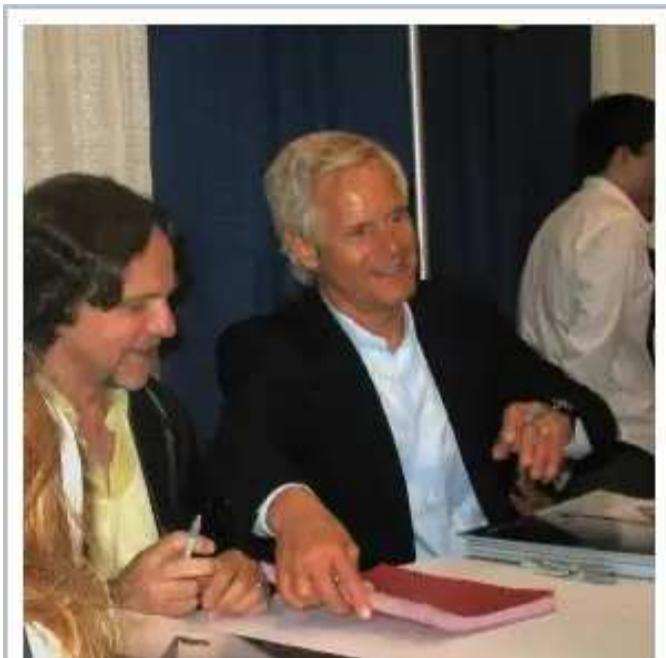
The Smoking Man contacts Mulder, arranging a meeting at a nearby diner. There Mulder meets his sister Samantha, who calls The Smoking Man her father. Samantha claims to not remember anything about her abduction and is reluctant to stay or tell Mulder where he can find her. The next day, The Smoking Man offers Mulder the truth if he quits the FBI and comes work for him; Mulder refuses. Mulder later meets with Blevins, who now has evidence Skinner was withholding information concerning Ostelhoff's death. Blevins tells Mulder he can help him if he names Skinner as the traitor in the FBI. Later, Mulder meets with Scully, telling her he was going to make the deal with The Smoking Man but now will not after his meeting with Blevins. Despite Scully's pleas, he refuses to name Skinner as the traitor in the FBI.

Mulder meets with the FBI panel while "Quiet Willy" follows The Smoking Man with his sniper rifle. Mulder tells the panel of the conspiracy against him and Scully. Questioned by Blevins and the senior agent about whether he killed Ostelhoff, Mulder instead names Blevins as the traitor in the FBI. The Smoking Man, looking at a picture of a young Mulder and Samantha, is shot by "Quiet Willy". Blevins is killed by the senior agent in his office, who makes it appear like a suicide. At the hospital, Skinner meets with Mulder, telling him that The Smoking Man is dead, although his body was not found. Mulder admits that he guessed when he named Blevins, who Skinner reveals was on the payroll for Roush. Mulder tells Skinner that Scully's cancer has gone into remission.^[2]

Production

Chris Carter, when talking about "Redux" and "Redux II", noted that he "wanted to tie up a lot of loose ends from the past season, and play the idea that the conspiracy is a hoax and that it had been done to hide various terrestrial and temporal misdeeds".^[2] Despite being the season premiere, "Redux" was

the second episode produced of the season due to David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson being needed for filming on *The X-Files* movie. In "Redux II", the role of "Quiet Willy" was originally intended for the character the "Gray-Haired Man", but was re-written for a new character when actor Morris Panych was unavailable. The role went to Willy Ross, whose real name is Steve Allen.^[3] The tagline for "Redux" is changed to "All Lies Lead to the Truth". Director R. W. Goodwin has said that the crew filming "Redux" were so impressed by actor John Finn's monologue detailing the supposed military hoax that he received a round of applause after finishing his takes. The script for this speech was particularly long, with Goodwin comparing it to "the Yellow Pages".



Chris Carter (right), the writer of both parts of the episode, pictured in 2008

"Redux II" had four different storylines: Mulder's quest, the medical treatment, Scully's religious faith, and The Smoking Man's cure for Dana Scully's cancer. Although it was normal for the writers to add one or two different storylines for the different episodes, to create different interpretations, but Carter felt it took "the idea of the show" and spun it "in the most interesting way". The episode also started what would become Fox Mulder's loss of belief in extraterrestrials until the episode, "The Red and the Black". While the writers kept "playing" with the idea of Mulder's loss of faith, fans and viewers could not grow to accept his loss of faith, which left The Smoking Man victorious.

"Redux II" was highly praised by Carter, saying that "I think that Redux II is one of the best episodes we've ever done". Frank Spotnitz said "Redux II is one of my favorite episodes. I think the story has a crystal purity and clarity, and it just comes to a perfect point for me". Anderson said "I thought it was a terrific episode, especially the scenes in the hearing room, and the whole progression of Scully praying. How it was written and shot and how it was edited. Fabulous".^[4]

Reception

"The aliens don't really matter, just as it doesn't matter if Scully's god is God, or just her faith in the essential meaning of her own suffering. What matters is that true belief, the best sort of belief, is the belief that takes us closer to who we want to be, to our best selves."

—Zack Handlen, on the episode's theme of faith.

"Redux" first aired on November 2, 1997 on Fox in the United States, with "Redux II" airing on November 9. "Redux I" earned a Nielsen rating of 16.1, with a 22 share. It was viewed by 27.34 million people. It was the highest rated episode of the season, and the second highest watched episode, in terms of viewers, after "Leonard Betts", which aired after Super Bowl XXXI.^[5] "Redux II" earned a Nielsen rating of 15.0, with a 21 share. It was viewed by 24.84 million people. Part of the reason "Redux I" was so widely viewed was because the show's previous episode, "Gethsemane", had created speculation about whether or not Mulder was actually dead. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* discussed fan theories behind Mulder's madness while a cartoon ran in *The New Yorker* a few weeks later surrounding Mulder's "death".^[6]

Critical reception to "Redux" was mixed to negative. Todd VanDerWerff, writing for *The A.V. Club*, awarded the first episode a C+ rating and wrote that "'Redux [Part 1]' was a pretty good episode back in 1997. It's not a very good episode now". VanDerWerff noted that the idea that Mulder had killed himself was not effective because the show's audience knew that a movie had been schedule for release in the summer of 1998. Finally, he called the episode's ending "one of the show's weaker cliffhangers". Paula Vitaris from *Cinefantastique* gave the first part of the episode a negative review and awarded it one star out of four. She heavily criticized the story's pacing, noting that the episode "is all plot, plot, plot. [And] much of the plot is unbelievable." Furthermore Vitaris criticized several plot holes in the episode, including Mulder's easy entrance into the Department of Defense and the characters antics, such as his attack of Ostelhoff. However, despite the overall negative review, Vitaris did mention that, "There's only one truly galvanizing scene, as that's the confrontation between Scully and Skinner after he follows her to the lab where she is performing her DNA test." 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 one star out of five. The two heavily criticized the "Skinner-as-traitor" plot, noting sardonically that "the production team aren't going to do [reveal he is the antagonist], and the shock 'villain in the room' reveal will be Section Chief Blevens—a character so important in the framework of the series that, barring his appearance in the Season Four finale, we haven't seen him in ninety-four episodes."^[7] Not all reviews were so negative. Tom Kessenich, in his book *Examination: An Unauthorized Look at Seasons 6–9 of the X-Files* named "Redux" and "Redux II", together, as the tenth best "Episode of All Time". In his critique of "Redux", he noted "While many people don't care for 'Redux', I think it does a good job of preparing us for the second hour (although, it invalidates Gillian's emotional context from the S4 finale)."^[8]

Critical reception for "Redux II" was mixed to positive. Zack Handlen of *The A.V. Club* awarded the episode an A rating and noted that "whatever reservations I may have over a three-episode story arc, this final entry does a good job of re-investing us in the show's basic ideals, returning us to a rough form of the status quo in a way that's exciting, emotionally powerful, and satisfying despite only incremental forward momentum". In addition, Handlen praised David Duchovny's performance, stating that he "was on fire the whole episode". Tom Kessenich praised the second part of the episode and wrote "'Redux II' is the standout hour of the two without question. With Scully on her deathbed, Mulder meets his sister only to lose her again and is put in a position where he may deal with the devil. The finale moments [...] are quite simply perfect and as good as any the show ever produced." Shearman and Pearson rated the episode two-and-a-half stars out of five. The two noted "['] is a likable enough little romp, but it's too leisurely to be exciting, too predictable to be revealing, and—most crucially, not really funny enough to be comedy."^[7] Vitaris gave the second part of the episode a slightly less negative review than the first, but only awarded it one-and-a-half stars out of four. She criticized the ending, noting that "it's all wrapped up neatly yet ambiguously." However, Vitaris did note that "what makes 'Redux II' tolerable is Duchovny, who always hits the right notes of anger, despair, grief, relief, or emotional numbness."

References

Footnotes

- [1] Meisler (1998), pp. 259–270
- [2] Meisler (1999), p. 24
- [3] Meisler (1999), pp. 46–47
- [4] Meisler (1999), p. 35
- [5] Meisler (1999), p. 284
- [6] Meisler (1998), p. 271
- [7] Shearman and Pearson (2009), p. 125
- [8] Kessenich (2002), p. 218

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External links

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