

THE X-FILES

"Detour"

Written by

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"Detour"

CAST LIST

Agent Fox Mulder  
Agent Dana Scully  
Michael Sloan  
Marty Fox  
Louis Asekoff  
Louis' Father  
Michael Kinsley  
Carla Stonecypher  
State Trooper  
Trooper #2  
Mrs. Asekoff  
Michele Fazekas  
Jeff Glaser

(X)

Creature #1 (non-speaking)  
Creature #2 (non-speaking)

September 23, 1997

"Detour"

SET LIST

EXTERIORS

THE WOODS

/BRUSH SURROUNDED CLEARING  
/EDGE OF THE WOODS  
/ROUGH TERRAIN  
/CLEARING  
/BRUSHY AREA SURROUNDING CAVE

HIGHWAY

/POLICE CHECKPOINT

ASEKOFF HOUSE

/BACK YARD

REST AREA

MOTEL

INTERIORS

N.D. SEDAN

ASEKOFF HOUSE

/LOUIS' ROOM  
/LIVING ROOM  
/STAIRS  
/KITCHEN

MOTEL ROOM

SMALL CAVE

TEASER

A CHORUS OF INSECTS drones in the darkness. Inhuman and eternal. As we FADE UP ON:

1 EXT. THE WOODS - LATE AFTERNOON (X) 1

A MAN in a light jacket trudges through the forest, carrying a surveyor's pole with a reflector on it. His name is MICHAEL SLOAN. A LEGEND reads: LEON COUNTY, NORTH FLORIDA. (X)  
(X)  
(X)

APPROACHING CAMERA, we see Sloan looks miserable, his face slick with sweat from the heat and humidity. He plants the pole in the earth, coming down close in f.g., as we go: (X)  
(X)  
(X)

ANGLE - SLOAN (X)

He holds the pole straight, unclipping his walkie-talkie as he turns in the direction of ANOTHER MAN barely visible in the distance, several dozen yards away. (X)  
(X)

SLOAN  
(impatient into  
walkie)  
Let's shoot this, Marty.

ANGLE - MARTY FOX

Standing in a brush-surrounded clearing in the distance. Small and bespectacled, Marty speaks into his walkie-talkie while squinting into the eyepiece of his tripod-mounted viewfinder (called a transit).

MARTY  
Hold it still...

LED readouts indicating elevation, distance and other geographical measures click up on the instrument.

MARTY'S POV - THROUGH THE TRANSIT

The viewfinder focuses on the pole reflector.

RESUME SLOAN

He grimaces, swatting at a MOSQUITO on his neck.

MARTY  
(annoyed, from walkie)  
Can you hold it still, Sloan?

SLOAN  
Let's see you hold it still.  
(swatting again)  
The sooner they pave over this  
swamp, the better.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

MARTY

Speaks into his walkie while looking through the transit.

MARTY

It's not a swamp. You're standing in a forest with indigenous plant and animal species you're obviously too ignorant to appreciate.

(beat)

Mark it there and gimme another position.

SLOAN

Finishes marking the point with a stake, then picks up some stakes off the ground, moves on. Speaking into his walkie talkie. (X) (X)

SLOAN

Shoot this next one real carefully, Marty -- 'cause this is where they're gonna put the Blockbuster.

(X)  
(X)  
(X)

MARTY

MARTY

(into the walkie)

You're a real moron, Sloan, you know that?

NEW ANGLE

Sloan has moved into a patch of waist-high brush, replanting the pole.

SLOAN

(to himself)

Tree hugger.

MARTY

Leans down to look through the transit again.

MARTY

You should be sad to see the demise of an ecosystem that's been here for thousands of years. We should all be.

(as he works)

Gimme four feet to your left.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

SLOAN  
(from the walkie)  
I can't.

MARTY  
What are you talking about --  
"you can't"?

SLOAN

Bends down, tries to pull the pole up from the ground.

SLOAN  
I can't move it. It's stuck.

MARTY  
(from the walkie)  
Then unstick it.

Sloan gets on his knees. Brushing aside the soil beneath him.

HIS POV - THE BASE OF THE POLE

Mired in a massive, gnarled root. The root could be part of a tree, but its skin is strangely peeled and cracked.

Sloan gingerly presses his fingers into the bark at the base of the pole. They come back smeared with BLOOD.

SLOAN  
(into the walkie)  
Some damn... this is weird.

MARTY  
What do you mean?

Suddenly, GLOWING RED EYES open on the surface of the bark -- IT'S ALIVE. As Sloan startles, SNAP CUT TO:

MARTY

Turning at the sound of Sloan SCREAMING in the distance.

MARTY  
(into his walkie)  
Sloan?

He bends down to look through his transit:

MARTY'S POV - THROUGH THE TRANSIT

The pole is still. Sloan stands into view, his anguished face is visible for a moment, then it's gone. Yanked downward.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

CLOSE - MARTY

Looks up from the transit, alarmed. He speaks into his walkie.

MARTY  
Sloan?! Sloan!!

Suddenly, he hears SOMETHING MOVING. Turning to see something -- we can't tell what -- cutting a path through the brush behind him. MOVING FAST TOWARD HIM.

Fear swelling in his throat, Marty turns, CAMERA MOVING WITH HIM as he tears through the brush, running away as fast as he can. All his instincts tuned to self-preservation.

CREATURE POV (LOW ANGLE)

Trailing Marty, cutting through the brush. Gaining on him.

RESUME MARTY

Running, the bushes and thickets a blur as they whip and slice against his skin.

HIGH ANGLE

Marty runs toward us at top speed, CAMERA DESCENDING to find a fallen log in the f.g. Marty jumps over it, dropping down behind the log to catch his breath. Looking behind him to see:

HIS POV - SCANNING THE WOODS

Quiet. No sign of what chased him. Of what attacked Sloan.

CLOSE - MARTY

Allowing himself a brief moment of relief. Bracing himself on the log. His face reacting to the strange texture of the wood. Looking down to see:

RED EYES

Staring up at him from the blistered bark. As Marty recoils in terror, we go:

REVERSE - SHOOTING ACROSS THE LOG

(X)

Marty is violently YANKED OUT OF SIGHT, disappearing behind the log. We HOLD ON the wilderness for a moment, the CHORUS OF INSECTS rising to an angry crescendo, then:

(X)

(X)

(X)

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

2 EXT. THE WOODS - EARLY MORNING - A HUNTING DOG

2

Trots through the woods, nose to the ground, tail whipping. Trailed by 12-year-old LOUIS ASEKOFF, huffing to keep up.

FATHER  
(whisper, o.s.)

Louis...

Louis turns at the sound of his FATHER, who walks several yards behind, a 12-gauge SHOTGUN at his side. In his 40s, he has clipped hair and a military bearing about him.

FATHER  
Let Bo do the work.

Louis slows, letting Bo run on ahead. As his Father catches up, the two of them now walking side by side:

LOUIS  
How's he know how to find a  
possum?

(X)

Louis' father holds up a finger to his lips. Louis looks around, reminded of other creatures in the woods around them, unseen.

FATHER  
Animals sense things we can't.  
That's how they survive.

LOUIS  
Is that how Bo knows how to hunt?

FATHER  
Yep. Our ancestors were hunters,  
too. But most of us have lost  
those instincts.  
(indicates shotgun)  
So now we need a little help.

Louis' eyes go from his father to something behind him.

LOUIS  
Hey, dad... what's that?

The Father stops, turning to see:

THE SURVEYOR'S TRANSIT

Abandoned where Marty left it the night before, in the brush-surrounded clearing.

(CONTINUED)



2 CONTINUED:

2

FATHER  
Surveyor's equipment. Somebody  
left his stuff out here.

Just then, Bo starts BARKING excitedly. Their heads turn toward  
the dog, yapping at something, disappearing into the woods.

CAMERA PUSHING SLOWLY IN ON THE FATHER'S FACE

Sensing something's wrong.

FATHER  
Stay close, Louis.

As they move toward the dog:

SLIGHT TIME CUT TO:

3 LOW ANGLE - THE DOG

3

Standing near the FALLEN LOG -- the same log where we last saw  
Marty. Panting now, whining a little. Waiting for its masters.  
The Father comes into frame, looking at the ground to see:

MARTY'S JACKET

Torn and bloodied. A swarm of FLIES buzzes over it.

TILT UP TO THE FATHER

(X)

Startled by the discovery. Blocking Louis from seeing it as he  
comes up behind him.

LOUIS  
What is it, Dad?

The Father doesn't answer. Instead, he looks at:

THE DOG

Growling at something in the distance.

(X)

THE FATHER

Looks from Bo to the woods. On red alert. Senses firing. He's  
probably been hunting all his life, and he knows something is  
terribly wrong.

LOUIS  
Dad...?

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

FATHER

Quiet.

The Father turns his head TOWARD CAMERA. He hears SOMETHING MOVING in the distant brush. Then it stops. Making up his mind, he pulls a dog leash out of his jacket, tethering Bo.

(X)

FATHER

Listen to me. I want you to take Bo and run home.

The Father hands the leash to his son.

LOUIS

What's the matter?

His father calmly but quickly breaks open his shotgun, then reaches into his shot bag, pulling out two SHELLS.

FATHER

Run home and don't stop. For anything.

(turning to his son)  
Understand?

Louis nods.

FATHER

(a whisper)

Run, Louis.

The boy heads off with the dog, back in the direction which they came. His father watches him, then snaps closed the loaded shotgun. Looking into the woods with fearful anticipation.

4 EXT. THE WOODS - A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY

4

CAMERA FOLLOWS LOUIS as he sprints through the woods, the dog pulling him along. Huffing and panting, Louis' mind on his father, when... KA-BOOM!

A SHOTGUN BLAST erupts somewhere behind them. Louis practically jumps out of his skin. He stands, paralyzed for a moment. Looking back in the direction from which he came. When -- KA-BOOM! A second blast echoes through the forest.

Bo strains at the leash, wanting to go back. Louis hesitates a moment more, then pulls the dog back.

LOUIS

(terribly frightened)

Bo no... no. C'mon...

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

Steering him onward. As they hurry off, we go:

5 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

5

A two-lane ribbon of asphalt in rural Florida, flanked on either side by pine forest. An N.D. rental car moves down the highway. As it approaches:

MAN'S VOICE

Last year was something of a personal revelation...

6 INT. N.D. SEDAN - DAY - CONTINUOUS

6

Special Agent MICHAEL KINSLEY sits behind the wheel, driving.

KINSLEY

... we were doing an exercise called Team Builders where we were given two minutes to build a tower out of ordinary office furniture...

Bookish with thinning hair, he looks more like an accountant than a special agent.

CARLA STONECYPHER

Rides shotgun, reading a brochure: "FBI CREATIVE TEAM SEMINAR."

STONECYPHER

... when I stood on Mike's shoulders and put that electric pencil sharpener on top of the pile, both of us knew we could never have done it alone.

Stonecypher and Kinsley trade a look of mutual respect.

NEW ANGLE TO REVEAL AGENT SCULLY

Sitting in the back seat, next to a glum Agent Mulder, who is staring at her in numb horror.

MULDER

Kill me now.

Scully takes a deep breath. It's obviously been a long ride.

WIDE ON INTERIOR

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

KINSLEY

You ever been to one of these teamwork seminars Agent Scully?

SCULLY

I think I took a Constructive Problem Solving course when I first joined the Bureau.

STONECYPHER

Did you play the game where you can't use any negative words?

KINSLEY

I couldn't believe how hard it was not to use the word "but."

MULDER

I'm having the same problem right now.

Scully manufactures a painful smile as Stonecypher turns around.

STONECYPHER

Have you been to a team seminar, Agent Mulder?

MULDER

No. I always develop a severe hemorrhoidal condition about this time of year.

KINSLEY

Well, it builds muscles you didn't even know you had.

STONECYPHER

Communication. That's the key.

She says this pointedly to Mulder who only stares at her. His eyes going from her to: (X)  
(X)

THEIR POV - THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

The highway is blocked by a POLICE CHECKPOINT manned by state troopers and county police. Behind them, a line of VOLUNTEERS sweep across the road, into the forest on the other side.

7 EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY - THE N.D. SEDAN

Comes to a stop beside a STATE TROOPER manning the checkpoint.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

TROOPER

Sorry, folks, but it'll be a few minutes.

KINSLEY

What's going on, Officer?

TROOPER

Got a little situation is all.

Before anyone can react to this, they're reacting to:

MULDER

He can't grab the door handle fast enough. Exiting abruptly. Mulder's gone, the door slamming closed.

RESUME KINSLEY, STONECYPHER

(X)

reacting with surprise.

KINSLEY

(to Scully)

Where's he going?

(X)

CAMERA PANS TO SCULLY, who knows but isn't saying.

CUT TO:

8 STEADICAM LEADING MULDER

8

Sweet relief. Taking a giant breath of fresh air.

MULDER

Thank you, Jesus.

But as he's walking, in no particular direction but away -- he's accosted by A WOMAN.

MRS. ASEKOFF

(very distressed)

Are you from Search and Rescue?

MULDER

No. I'm sorry. I'm just catching a breather.

MRS. ASEKOFF

They said they'd have word for us -- about what happened to my husband -- I need somebody to tell me what's going on --

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

MULDER

Hold on. Just slow down. I don't know what you're talking about.

MRS. ASEKOFF

My husband, Michael, was teaching our son to shoot.

MRS. ASEKOFF

He said the dog got spooked. And that he heard gunshots -- now they say they found a bloody jacket -- but they won't tell me anything about my husband. They won't even let me talk to my son --

Mulder looks past the distraught women, to:

LOUIS

being questioned by the Troopers.

RESUME MULDER

Weighing what he sees, what he's being told.

MULDER

Let me see if I can find out who's in charge here.

On Mrs. Asekoff, looking after him:

(X)

CUT TO:

9 THE CAR

9

Where Stonecypher and Kinsley and Scully are standing by the side of the road, next to the car which has been pulled over. They are watching Mulder, who they see not moving toward them, but away from them into the woods.

STONECYPHER

Now where's he going?

Stonecypher looks impatiently at Scully, who starts down toward where Mulder now is moving out. (The people involved in this operation move about in the middle distance.)

Stonecypher watches Scully a moment, then turns to:

ANGLE TO INCLUDE KINSLEY

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

Who's wandered over to where he's found a tree stump.

KINSLEY

Hey, Stonecypher. Look at this.

She comes over, not exactly in the mood for any more diversions.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE TREE STUMP

Sawed off, with red arrows on the rings marking milestones in history (1521 - Ponce De Leon lands searches for Fountain of Youth; 1776 - Declaration of Independence; 1941 - U.S. Declares War on Japan, etc.) (X)

KINSLEY

This tree was here 20 years before Ponce De Leon landed.

Stonecypher pays it only a moment's attention.

STONECYPHER

We're going to be late for the wine and cheese reception.

CUT TO:

10 EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

10

ANGLE OVER TROOPERS standing in a loose circle around Search and Rescue leader MICHELE FAZEKAS, who is knelt down looking at something on a stretch of rocky ground. She looks up on:

TROOPER #2 (O.S.)

Officer Fazekas...?

(X)

Fazekas looks up. Michele's sun-lined face and strong build attest to years spent in the outdoors. She stands now, moving toward:

ANGLE TO INCLUDE MULDER

Moving toward her from where he's accosted the Trooper. (From here we cannot see the road, but the direction Mulder's coming from should give us a sense, whether through geography or matching the movement of personnel coming in and out of the woods, that these two sites are connected.)

FAZEKAS

Yes, can I help you?

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

MULDER

My name's Fox Mulder. I'm an  
FBI agent.

FAZEKAS

FBI? Who called you guys out?

MULDER

No one. I got stopped at your  
roadblock. Sounds like you've  
had a shooting.

Mulder's straightforward approach forces Fazekas to answer the  
question, though she is cautious, not completely comfortable  
doing so.

FAZEKAS

Shots were reported, but we have  
no evidence of anyone being shot.

MULDER

What do you have evidence of?

(X)

Fazekas takes a beat. She wants to remain in control of this  
situation -- not get thrown on the defensive.

(X)

(X)

FAZEKAS

A survey team working these  
woods didn't report in last  
night. We found one man's  
bloodied jacket, pretty torn up.  
This morning, a boy got  
separated from his father.

(X)

(X)

MULDER

Separated by what?

FAZEKAS

(hedging)

It looks maybe like some kind of  
animal attack.

MULDER

What kind of animal?

FAZEKAS

I'm not sure yet.

Mulder holds her with a steady stare, sensing that she is  
withholding something from him. She points into the distance.

(CONTINUED)



10 CONTINUED: (2)

10

FAZEKAS

I followed good tracks for the two surveyors, but then the trails became confused as they move into the brush. There was a third set of tracks leading away I couldn't identify.

MULDER

Couldn't identify as the surveyor's?

FAZEKAS

As man or animal.

Mulder takes an interested pause in reaction to this. As:

ANGLE TO INCLUDE SCULLY

Approaching from the same direction Mulder had.

SCULLY

Mulder --

MULDER

Just give me a minute, Scully.  
(back to Fazekas)  
What about the boy's father?

FAZEKAS

I tracked him all the way to where he fired the shots...

She moves back to where she had been kneeling before. Mulder follows, trailed by Scully.

FAZEKAS

(pointing to a section of ground)  
Ground's rocky, but from the depressions in the underlying soil I can tell you that he entered the bushes over here where I pick up another set of tracks. Two distinctly different tracks that, from the way the ground's upset, may be where the man was attacked.

MULDER

Other than that, no sign of him?

She shakes her head no.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (3)

10

MULDER

You have panther in these woods?

FAZEKAS

There's panther. Bear.

MULDER

And these tracks looked nothing like either?

FAZEKAS

No, sir.

Fazekas' look betrays her concern about the lack of good answers.

MULDER

You know a good motel in the area?

SCULLY

Mulder --

FAZEKAS

Excuse me, but I think we can handle this very well on our own. Thank you.

And Fazekas moves off, joining the Troopers who have been watching this conversation. Mulder kneels to inspect the section of ground Fazekas was just going on about.

SCULLY

Mulder... we've got this conference -- they're waiting --

He shoots her a look. She knows what it means.

MULDER

How do I say this without using any negative words...

(X)

SCULLY

(she knew it)

You want me to tell them you're not going to be attending this year's teamwork seminar.

MULDER

But don't let me stand in the way of your good time.

Mulder rises, moving into the brush. Leaving Scully with that old wearied look on her face. Watching:

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED: (4)

10

MULDER

As he tromps off into the brush. In search of... who knows what.

RESUME SCULLY

As she watches him for a moment, then has to smile. At Mulder's clever extrication from what they both knew would be a miserable time. Shaking her head as she moves back to deliver the news.

CUT TO:

11 OMITTED

12 EXT. ASEKOFF HOUSE - NIGHT

12

With a LEGEND to establish. It's a fairly new tract home, carved out what was formerly forested wilderness. Much of which still looms behind it. The BLUE LIGHT of a television glows from an upstairs bedroom window.

13 INT. ASEKOFF HOUSE - LOUIS' ROOM - NIGHT - A TELEVISION

13

Plays "The Invisible Man," the part where Claude Rains unbandages himself. CAMERA ADJUSTS to show Louis asleep in bed as Mrs. Asekoff enters, looking over her sleeping son, worried for him. And for herself. CLICKING OFF the television. When:

LOUIS

(in the darkness)

He's not coming back, is he?

MRS. ASEKOFF

Why do you say that?

LOUIS

'Cause dad's a good shot. If he'd hit what he was aiming at, he'd be home by now.

MRS. ASEKOFF

You be brave now, Louis. We've got to both be brave. We'll know more in the morning. Now you go to sleep.

And she exits the room, shutting the door behind.

CUT TO:

14 INT. ASEKOFF HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - MRS. ASEKOFF 14

Comes from downstairs, turning off lights as she crosses through the room, CAMERA FINDING:

THE DOG

Unnoticed by its master, staring out sliding glass doors into the back yard. Quietly growling.

CUT TO:

15 CLOSE - AN ACTIVE-MATRIX DISPLAY 15

Depicting a mountain lion attacking a coyote, with accompanying text. Followed by more graphic images of animals attacking animals. We're:

INT. MOTEL - NIGHT

Mulder sits in front of a LAPTOP COMPUTER, scrolling through the images we've just seen. When there's a knock at the door.

MULDER

It's open!

ANGLE ON DOOR

It opens and Agent Scully is revealed, holding a round tray carrying a screw top half-bottle of cheap wine, two plastic goblets and cheese squares cut from foil wrapped cheese wheels found in mini-bars the world over.

MULDER

Who cut the cheese?

SCULLY

Since we aren't going to make it to the conference...

MULDER

Par-tay.

She closes the door, moves to the bed, setting the tray down.

SCULLY

(unscrewing the wine)

However, I must remind you this goes against the Bureau's policy on male and female agents consorting in the same motel room while on assignment.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

MULDER

Try any Tailhook crap and I'll kick your ass.

She smiles, pours wine in a plastic goblet. Walks it to him. He doesn't take it, gesturing instead to the laptop screen.

MULDER

Pop quiz, Scully. What animal will attack the strongest, leaving the weakest to escape? (before she can answer)

The answer is none. From what I see, not one of the more than 4,000 species native to North America takes the strong when the weak is vulnerable.

SCULLY

What does that have to do with anything?

MULDER

I think whatever attacked this kid's father may not have been an ordinary predator.

SCULLY

Mulder, I thought this was a ploy to get out of that conference.

MULDER

I think what we stumbled on here might be more than the local authorities realize. The scenario described by the boy sounds more to me like a primitive culling technique.

SCULLY

Practiced by who?

MULDER

Tribes in Irian Jaya and Timor.

SCULLY

We're in Western Florida, Mulder. The closest thing to primitive down here is living in a beachfront retirement condo.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

MULDER

These woods are as old as anything in the South, Scully. And there's over eight hundred square miles of them. No telling what could be living out there.

Scully is still holding the wine goblet as Mulder begins slipping his shoes on, tying them.

SCULLY

Where are you going?

MULDER

Something I want to check out.

Mulder stands, Scully staring at him, shaking her head.

SCULLY

Mulder, sometimes I think some work on your communication skills wouldn't be such a bad thing.

MULDER

I'll be back soon and we'll build a tower of furniture.

He's out the door without further explanation. Off Scully:

CUT TO:

16 INT. ASEKOFF HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - THE DOG

16

Barks insistently at the sliding door. Mrs. Asekoff enters the moonlit room, pulling a robe around herself.

MRS. ASEKOFF

Bo? What is it?

Mrs. Asekoff looks outside, unable to see anything but the empty yard. Still, the dog continues to growl.

LOUIS (O.S.)

Mom?

Mrs. Asekoff turns, talking into the darkness.

MRS. ASEKOFF

It's alright, Louis. Go to sleep.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

But as she turns back we see that Mrs. Asekoff thinks it's anything but alright. CAMERA PUSHING IN SLIGHTLY. Then, uncertainly, she unlocks the door. Letting Bo run outside. (X)  
After a moment, she follows him out, closing the door behind her. (X)

17 EXT. ASEKOFF HOUSE - BACK YARD - NIGHT

17

The dog has disappeared.

MRS. ASEKOFF

Bo?

Mrs. Asekoff moves deeper into the yard. Suddenly, she hears a rustling. A NOISE coming from the bushes.

MRS. ASEKOFF

Bo? Where'd you go?

But there is no response. Only a further rustling.

ANGLE FROM WITHIN BUSHES

Mrs. Asekoff edges to the bushes, leans down --

MRS. ASEKOFF

Michael... honey, is that you?

As her face gets very CLOSE TO CAMERA, she suddenly jumps back.

CLOSE - THE DOG

Bo is just inside the bushes, panting, a frightened look in its eyes -- the same look Michael Asekoff saw in the woods.

RESUME - MRS. ASEKOFF

Recovering. Then reaching for Bo's collar.

MRS. ASEKOFF

Come on, Bo, let's go back in --

As her hand nears the dog, it bares its teeth, SNAPPING AT HER. (X)

Mrs. Asekoff recoils.

MRS. ASEKOFF

Alright then, you'll just spend the night there.

18 ANGLE FROM INSIDE HOUSE

18

Mrs. Asekoff moves back toward the house. Reaching for the handle to the sliding glass door -- finding it LOCKED.

CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN on Mrs. Asekoff looking back at Bo, realization dawning that she's been locked out by whatever he's afraid of -- by whatever's now inside the house with her son.

She starts banging loudly on the glass. Making noise.

MRS. ASEKOFF

Louis! Louis!

19 INT. ASEKOFF HOUSE - LOUIS' ROOM - CONTINUOUS - LOUIS

19

Bolts up out of bed.

MRS. ASEKOFF

(o.s.)

Louis! Louis!

Pulling aside his covers, Louis gets out of his room, moving to the hallway. Hearing his mother's BANGING.

LOUIS

Mom!

Turning at the sound of a floorboard creaking in the hall.  
Turning to see:

(X)

HIS POV - RED EYES

(X)

Stare back at him from the darkness of an open door.

(X)

CAMERA PUSHING IN ON LOUIS

(X)

Fear pumping through him, he SUDDENLY BOLTS, running down the stairs.

(X)

ANGLE UP ON STAIRS

As Louis flies down the steps, PASSING CAMERA at the base of the stairs.

CREATURE POV - FOLLOWING LOUIS

(X)

Moving down the steps, turning down another hall, GAINING ON LOUIS, who occasionally looks behind him, terrified by what's pursuing him.

(X)

(X)

(X)



20 INT. ASEKOFF HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

20

Louis reaches the door, moving to slide through the rubber flap (X)  
of the DOGGY DOOR.

21 EXT. ASEKOFF HOUSE - NIGHT - LOUIS

21

Pulls himself out of the doggy door, only to be stopped by  
SOMETHING WHICH CATCHES HIM, PULLS HIM HARD out the other side.

Louis SCREAMS until he finds himself face to face with: AGENT  
MULDER. Who holds him until he stops.

MULDER

What is it, Louis?

LOUIS

(terrified)

It's in the house!

Off his continuing horror, we:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

22 INT. ASBKOFF HOUSE LOUIS BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING (17:22)

A LIGHT TURNS ON. Scully enters, searches the room. Looking at the TV, pressing the eject button on the VCR.

CUT TO:

23 ANGLE ON STAIRS

Where Scully comes down into a room where SHERIFF ASBKOFF is at work. Seeing:

MULDER

Through a doorway, talking to Louis and Mrs. Asbkoff at the kitchen table. Mulder catches sight of Scully now, excuses himself and moves toward her.

NEW ANGLE IN LIVING ROOM

Where Mulder joins Scully.

SCULLY  
How's the boy?

MULDER  
Still scared out of his mind.

SCULLY  
I may have some insight into this invisible creature he said was chasing him.

She hands Mulder the "Invisible Man" cassette. Mulder stares at it blankly, then looks at Scully blankly, too.

MULDER  
Invisible Man was invisible.

SCULLY  
Right.

MULDER  
He says the creature that chased him had glowing red eyes.

Scully gives Mulder one of her long-suffering looks.

MULDER  
I want you to take a look at this...

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

NEW ANGLE FROM THE BACK DOOR AREA

Mulder leads Scully over to the sliding glass door.

MULDER

Mrs. Asekoff told me she'd gone outside with the dog, but when she came back to the house the door was locked from inside.

SCULLY

And...?

LOW ANGLE ACROSS TILED FLOOR

As Mulder's face comes into frame.

MULDER

Got tracks here on the floor.

After a moment, Scully bends into frame. Sighting across the same tracks, which have left a thin, muddy imprint.

SCULLY

Where?

MULDER

Here, here and here. Thin layer of dried mud smeared against the tile. Tracked in from outside.

SCULLY

Could be from the dog --

MULDER

No. See the ball of a large foot? I count five toes here.

SCULLY

You said it wasn't human.

MULDER

I'm not saying it is. Weight distribution's all wrong. People walk heel to toe. This creature uses only the ball of its foot.

SCULLY

(a beat)

You're putting me on.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (2)

23

MULDER  
(proud smile)  
My dad and I were in Indian  
Guides.

SCULLY  
(frowning)  
Well, if it's not a man, and  
it's not an animal -- what the  
hell is it?

As she says this, A PAIR OF LEGS enter frame. Mulder looks up at:

MICHELE FAZEKAS

The Search and Rescue woman, standing above them.

FAZEKAS  
I guess I'm a little late to  
this dance.

RESUME LOW ANGLE

Fazekas kneels into frame, making this a tight THREE SHOT.

MULDER  
I've found some tracks.

Fazekas eyes them carefully before offering:

FAZEKAS  
Same as I saw before.

SCULLY  
Where was this?

FAZEKAS  
In the woods.  
(still eyeing them)  
Weight distribution's strange.  
They would appear human, but  
whoever left this uses the balls  
of his feet more like an animal.

Mulder shoots a quick glance to Scully, who meets it.

SCULLY  
Which would make them what?

FAZEKAS  
(a troubled beat)  
I can't say I can give you an  
answer to that question.

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED: (3)

23

MULDER

Looks more troubled than vindicated by this. Feeling eyes watching him. The eyes of:

MRS. ASEKOFF

She leads Louis back up the stairs. Her emotion bubbles to the surface.

RESUME MULDER, GROUP

Mulder turning back.

MULDER

Whatever it is, it's attacked three grown men, presumably in full daylight, disposing of its prey without detection. And it wasn't shy last night about leaving the woods to try again.

(pointedly)

You've got a predator with low visibility and a high degree of motivation. And it's got an advantage you can't take away: the entire Appalachian National Forest.

FAZEKAS

Then how do you stop it?

MULDER

By identifying it. By finding it before it finds someone else.

(X)  
(X)

Off Fazekas, confronted with the truth of this:

CUT TO:

24 AN INFRARED IMAGE ON A SCREEN

24

An electronic field on an LCD screen.

MAN'S VOICE

It's called a FLIR.

WIDEN TO REVEAL JEFF GLASER, 20s, punk hair and piercing. He's standing with Mulder, who's holding the Etch-a-Sketch sized device. We are:

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

EXT. EDGE OF WOODS - DAY

GLASER

... for Forward-Looking Infra-  
red. They were developed for  
chopper pilots in Vietnam.  
Detects body heat at three  
hundred yards.

Mulder takes the device.

MULDER

Pretty sophisticated for  
government issue.

GLASER

I'm not SA`R, actually. They  
just use me and my equipment  
when people get really lost.

(X)

RESUME SCREEN

Where A HUMAN IMAGE has appeared on it. CAMERA PANNING OFF  
SCREEN to Michele Fazekas. Approaching, small backpack in hand.  
And holding onto her attitude of professional differences with  
Mulder.

FAZEKAS

Jeff's our local tech head. Some  
people prefer searching with  
dogs, but I prefer another pair  
of hands if I get in trouble.

(then:)

We ready to go here?

They all turn to see:

ANGLE TO INCLUDE SCULLY

Standing a short distance away on her cell phone.

FAZEKAS

(to Mulder)

Once we start in you can put  
your cell phones away.  
Only communication in these  
woods is with short-wave radios.  
So stay close, maintain visual  
contact. If you get lost,  
initiate aural contact -- that  
means holler.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2)

24

FAZEKAS (cont'd)

If nobody responds, sit down,  
don't move, I'll find you.  
Don't go looking for me. It all  
sounds obvious, but folks still  
get lost.

NEW ANGLE

Scully is hanging up her cell phone, moving to Mulder. As they  
start after Fazekas, Glaser.

SCULLY

Local PD has all their resources  
looking for a transient, a  
drifter who's wanted for a  
double homicide in Gadsden,  
Alabama. They were amused when  
I told him what we were doing.

MULDER

This wasn't a drifter. It may  
even be two individuals.

SCULLY

Why do you say that?

MULDER

This thing lured that woman out  
of her house last night to  
separate her from her son.

SCULLY

For what purpose?

MULDER

If your enemy is greater in  
number, the way to defeat him is  
to deplete his ranks.

SCULLY

What enemy is that?

MULDER

Encroaching development. That's  
what I suspected when I went to  
check on Louis and his mother.

SCULLY

(a beat)

This is about a housing tract?

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (3)

24

MULDER

That survey team was staking out a new hundred thousand acre plot. Civilization is pushing fast into these woods. Something out here is pushing back.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE FAZEKAS AND JEFF GLASER

Moving single file up ahead. Entering the woods.

CUT TO:

25 SHOT - SOMEONE'S POV - LOOKING THROUGH DISTANT BUSHES

25

Someone watching the single-file foursome, unseen in the woods.

TIME CUT TO:

25A EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

25A

Fazekas makes a path through the brush. Reaching down every dozen yards or so to plant a SMALL WHITE STONE -- marking their trail.

Glaser is next in line, holding his FLIR. Scully moving to catch up with him. They've traveled some distance in the woods.

SCULLY

Anything?

GLASER

No. Nothing. Not even wildlife.

SCULLY

Isn't that a little strange?

GLASER

Yeah. This forest is usually alive with sound. I'm not like an expert, but I've never seen it like this before.

They walk a little farther, Scully scanning the woods.

SCULLY

Sure is beautiful, though.

(CONTINUED)



25A CONTINUED:

25A

GLASER

That's what happens. People get to looking around. Next thing they know, something eats them.

SCULLY

What do you think killed those men?

GLASER

(shrugs)

Nature is populated with creatures either trying to kill something they need to survive, or trying to avoid being killed by something that needs them to survive. If we become blinded by the beauty of nature we may fail to see its cruelty and violence.

SCULLY

Walt Whitman?

GLASER

No. "When Animals Attack" on the Fox network.

He moves past. Scully stares after him, following behind. She passes, too. Followed by Mulder, pulling up the rear. PASSING CAMERA.

CAMERA DRIFTING OVER to find A SMALL WHITE STONE, one left by Fazekas. After several moments A GNARLED HAND -- blistered and cracked, like the hidden root we saw in the Teaser -- moves quickly into frame, taking away the marker. Erasing the path back to civilization.

CUT TO:

26 EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

26

HIGH ANGLE - SHOOTING THROUGH THE TREES

CAMERA DESCENDS through the massive pines, revealing the search party. They've been hiking for some time, perspiration beading on their faces. As Fazekas, Glaser, Scully and finally Mulder pass through frame, we go:

CLOSE - A FLIR SCREEN

BEEPS a low signal, showing a RED DOT where a heat source -- a living being -- is in the vicinity. WE PAN UP QUICKLY to:

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

26

GLASER  
I've got something. About  
twenty yards ahead.

WHIP PANNING TO FAZEKAS

FAZEKAS  
Where? I don't see it.

WIDE TO INCLUDE MULDER AND SCULLY

GLASER  
It's just sitting there.

Everyone is staring out into the woods, the brush. Mulder and Scully both unholstering their weapons.

CLOSE - THE FLIR

The BEEP suddenly quickens, the RED DOT moving rapidly toward the edge of the screen.

RESUME

GLASER  
It's on the move!

Fazekas breaks into a run, the others following:

(X)

CAMERA MOVES WITH THEM

They sprint through the brush, LEADING and TRAILING ANGLES showing the undergrowth whipping past them.

CLOSE - GLASER

Coming to a stop.

GLASER  
Wait. There's two of them!

THE FLIR SCREEN

The RED DOT in front of them has divided into TWO -- each as big as the original. Taking DIVERGENT PATHS.

RESUME SCENE

GLASER  
(watching his FLIR)  
They're moving in opposite  
directions. There -- and there.

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (2)

26

Glaser is pointing. Fazekas takes off in one direction, Scully following. Mulder taking off in the other, Glaser trailing him.

NEW ANGLE - FAZEKAS AND SCULLY

Come toward camera, moving fast through the brush, no longer in sight of Mulder and Glaser. (Note: The rest of the act should play as parallel action.)

CUT TO:

27 OMITTED

27

27A WIDER - MULDER AND GLASER

27A

Move through the increasingly rough terrain, trying to catch sight of whatever it is.

MULDER

Where is it?!

GLASER

Twenty yards in front of you.

MULDER'S POV

There is movement in the brush twenty yards ahead. Movement that appears to stop at a point.

MULDER

Moves in on this position, gun pointed. Stopping, but seeing:

MULDER

I don't see it!

Glaser comes running up behind him with the FLIR. Winded.

GLASER

Now it's gone. I don't know where it went.

Off their consternation:

CUT BACK TO:

28 SCULLY AND FAZEKAS

28

Running fast through the trees, exiting a section of thicket and low brush, when, suddenly --

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

FAZEKAS

STOPS in her tracks. Scully comes up behind her, winded.

SCULLY

What is it?

Fazekas scans the woods around them.

FAZEKAS

I don't know.

SCULLY

It's trying to separate us, pull us away from the others.

Scully stands with both hands on her weapon, ready. Then:

SCULLY

Mulder!!

They both listen, but get no answer.

SCULLY

Let's go back.

Michele stands listening a moment longer -- she'd love to catch this thing -- but then she heeds Scully, turns and starts back through a clearing. Scully falling in behind her. Glancing backwards, ready to shoot whatever might be waiting to surprise them.

NEW ANGLE

As the two women MOVE TOWARD CAMERA, passing a tree.

As they move off, we HOLD ON a tree behind them. CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN on its gnarled, cracked bark. Until we see a pair of RED EYES open. Then blink.

CUT TO:

28A MULDER AND GLASER

28A

Moving out of the section of low brush they were searching.

MULDER

Scully!!

SCULLY

(o.s., distant)  
Over here!!

(CONTINUED)

28A CONTINUED:

28A

The two men follow the sound of her voice.

RESUME FAZEKAS, SCULLY

They've entered a new section of low brush, moving through it. Michele in f.g., Scully ten yards apart in the b.g. When:

Fazekas is YANKED DOWN HARD, right out of frame. Her body disappearing completely from view.

Scully reacting to this. Bolting toward her position. TOWARD CAMERA.

SCULLY

Michele!!

Coming to the position where Fazekas just went down.

SCULLY

Michele!!

Scully draws her gun, adrenalin pumping.

(X)

CLOSE - SCULLY

Unable to see any sign of Fazekas, Scully begins moving in a circle, CAMERA DOLLYING COUNTERCLOCKWISE, trying to keep her back from being turned in any direction for more than a few seconds. Shouting:

SCULLY

Mulder! I need help! Mulder!

Her cries echoing in the forest as we:

29 OMITTED  
THRU  
32

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

33 EXT. THE WOODS - DAY - MULDER AND GLASER

33

Run through the brush, following the sound of Scully's voice.

MULDER

Scully!

SCULLY

(o.s.)

Mulder! Over here!

NEW ANGLE - SCULLY

Turns as Mulder and Glaser appear through the trees. As they enter the underbrush where she's standing. Where Michele was pulled under.

MULDER

What happened?

SCULLY

(charged)

I don't know.

GLASER

Where's Fazekas?

SCULLY

She was walking beside me. She was right over here... and then she was just gone.

Glaser is directing his FLIR in all directions.

GLASER

I'm getting no reading.

SCULLY

What the hell is going on?

MULDER

They separated us. That was on purpose. They divided us up so they could go after her. She was the leader, and presumably the strongest. They take the strongest first.

GLASER

Take them where?! It doesn't make sense. You can't just disappear out here --

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

Glaser looks to Mulder for some kind of response, but Mulder doesn't exactly agree.

MULDER  
(soberly)  
You're right. We've got to find her.

GLASER  
How're we going to do that?

MULDER  
I don't know. Form a line and start beating the bushes. Maybe you'll pick up a signal.

GLASER  
Hey -- how do we know they're not going to try to take one of us?

MULDER  
We'll stay close together.

GLASER  
We need help. We need manpower.

Scully is pulling out her cellphone.

GLASER  
That's not going to work out here. We gotta go back.

She's dialing it anyway.

GLASER  
Listen to me --

MULDER  
-- The longer we wait, the less chance we have of finding her.

GLASER  
This is nuts. This is loony tune, man. We gotta get out of these woods before it gets dark.

MULDER  
Go ahead, then.

Glaser stares at Mulder, not anticipating this.

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

MULDER  
Give me the FLIR and go on back.

GLASER  
(softening)  
We've got to go together.

MULDER  
We've got to find her.

GLASER  
We stay here, they may not find  
any of us --

Scully's been trying her cell phone through this. No luck. She gives up now, pressing the end button one last time.

SCULLY  
Mulder, he's right.

Mulder turns to Scully, surprised.

SCULLY  
We weren't prepared for this.  
We've got no way to tell anybody  
where we are. We didn't bring  
food and Michele was carrying  
our only water.  
(beat)  
I think we should find her, too.  
But I think the risks with that  
are foolish.

Mulder looks from Scully to Glaser. Outvoted.

MULDER  
Alright, we go.

Glaser nods, relieved. Until Mulder looks to him.

MULDER  
You lead the way.

Off Glaser's face, we:

CUT TO:

34 EXT. THE WOODS - DAY

34

TRACKING WITH GLASER as he moves forward along a cleared trail, his eyes glued to the FLIR screen. PANNING OFF HIM, FINDING Scully and Mulder walking not far behind.

(CONTINUED)



34 CONTINUED:

34

SCULLY

I don't have much faith that device will do us any good.

MULDER

All it's done so far is work to separate us.

SCULLY

But whatever it was we chased showed up on screen at first.

MULDER

What does that tell you?

SCULLY

Nothing. Except that we're headed in the right direction.

MULDER

Maybe it can regulate its body temperature. You know any animal that can do that?

SCULLY

Ticks. I've heard they can halt their metabolism for up to 18 years, essentially going into suspended animation -- until something warm-blooded appears.

MULDER

That's very interesting.

SCULLY

Why is that interesting?

Mulder is silent. For too long. Long enough for Scully to turn back to him.

SCULLY

Mulder...?

MULDER

Thirty years ago something terrorized the town of Point Pleasant, West Virginia, for over a year, killing farm animals and terrorizing the populace. Witnesses described them as primitive-looking men with piercing red eyes.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2)

34

MULDER (cont'd)  
What came to be known as "moth  
men."  
(off her look)  
I've got an X-file on it, dating  
back to 1952.

SCULLY  
Filed next to what, The  
Cockroach That Ate Cincinnati?

NEW ANGLE

Glaser has stopped walking, staring about into the woods. As  
Mulder and Scully catch up from behind.

GLASER  
This isn't the way.

SCULLY  
What do you mean?

GLASER  
Michele always marks her route  
with little white stones.

MULDER  
This is the same trail.

Mulder moves past Scully, stepping in front of Glaser. Scanning  
the woods ahead.

MULDER  
This is the way we came.

GLASER  
I haven't see one of her stones  
for twenty minutes.

MULDER  
That's because you've been  
watching that screen like a five  
year old on Saturday morning.

GLASER  
I'm telling you we're on the  
wrong trail. Somehow we got off  
the track.

Everyone looks around now, trying to get their bearings.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (3)

34

GLASER

Aw man, this is not happening.  
This is not happening!

CLOSE ON SCULLY

Something catching her attention. In the brush off the path, off the side of the trail.

SCULLY'S POV

In the distance, something TEARS through the underbrush -- and then STOPS. It makes no noise, even though it moves quickly.

RESUME SCULLY

SCULLY

Everybody stand still. There's something out there.

RESUME GROUP

MULDER

Where?

SCULLY

Forty or fifty yards out.

MULDER

Jeff?

GLASER

(staring at FLIR)  
Nothing.

SCULLY

I saw it.

They stand stock still for several moments.

GLASER

Hear that?

SCULLY

The woods have gone silent again.

WAIST LEVEL ANGLE PAST MULDER AND SCULLY

Both cautiously unholstering their weapons. CAMERA RISING as they do, RACKING to the underbrush in the distance.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (4)

34

ANGLE ON THEIR FACES

Staring out into the brush when -- THEY REACT to a noise -- BEHIND THEM. Doing a panicked about-face. CAMERA RACKING past them to the brush behind them now, where SOMETHING IS MOVING quickly through the brush.

GLASER

(watching his FLIR)

I got it. I got it on my screen.

MULDER

Where?

(X)

CLOSE - THE FLIR SCREEN

(X)

Shows something crouching thirty yards off, somewhat obscured by the brush.

(X)

(X)

RESUME

(X)

GLASER

Thirty meters. Just sitting there.

(X)

(X)

A tense beat, then Mulder makes a decision. To take the battle to the enemy. Stepping off the trail into the brush.

GLASER

What are you doing?!

SCULLY

Talk to him, Jeff.

GLASER

This is not a good idea.

SCULLY

(quiet intensity)

Talk to him!

GLASER

Go to your right.

TRACKING BACKWARDS, LEADING MULDER

His gun raised high, both hands on it. As he adjusts right. Moving deeper into the brush.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (5)

34

LOW ANGLE - THROUGH THE BRUSH

In the distance we see Mulder moving TOWARD CAMERA. CAMERA RISING and DRIFTING OVER to find a tree in close f.g. Where RED EYES blink on the twisted bark of its BACKSIDE. Then an ARM moves away from the trunk -- a human figure beginning to unwrap itself from the tree.

CLOSE ON FLIR SCREEN

Where THE ONE FIGURE is visible on the screen. PANNING UP TO GLASER, SCULLY in profile. Glaser suddenly reacting to:

GLASER  
It just disappeared.

RESUME SCREEN

Where the heat spot was a moment ago is now blank. (Or, if possible, FADING TO NOTHING.)

ON MULDER

He's stopped now, not far from the tree we've established. When he reacts to:

HIS POV - THE BRUSH (SPFX)

Where a CREATURE with a body like a man but a face that looks almost animal, crouches several yards away, just below bush level. Absolutely motionless -- nearly impossible to distinguish from its surroundings -- but its red eyes blink. And blink again.

REVERSE ON MULDER

Seeing the creature, he starts marching toward it. DIRECTLY TOWARDS CAMERA. Gun aimed -- Prompting:

THE CREATURE (SPFX)

Darts from its hiding place, moving into the brush in a zig-zag pattern. (As it darts, we see only the outline of its body. A chameleon, ITS SKIN CHANGES to match its b.g., until it can no longer be seen. Until it just becomes movement in the bush.)

RESUME MULDER

FIRING AT THE CREATURE. BOOM, BOOM, BOOM ---

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (6)

34

ANGLE OVER SCULLY

The creature is moving away from Mulder -- MOVING THROUGH THE BRUSH toward her, in a zig-zag pattern. Now she, too, begins FIRING at it. BOOM, BOOM --

REVERSE OVER BUSHES TO SCULLY

Where the creature keeps coming toward her -- as she fires again -- BOOM, BOOM! Until:

The disturbance in the bush stops, several yards away. Scully holding her fire, but also holding her aim.

SCULLY

Mulder --

REVERSE ON MULDER

Standing in the same position as Scully, aimed and ready.

MULDER

Did you hit it?

SCULLY

I don't know. It just stopped.

MULDER

Where's Glaser?

NEW ANGLE ON SCULLY

She ventures a look to her side, where Glaser stood just moments earlier -- but where he no longer stands. (This should be done as one shot -- REVEALING that Glaser is no longer there. Allowing us to:

CUT TO:

35 OMITTED

35A EXT. THE WOODS - A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY - GLASER

35A

Sprints toward camera, in a full-on panic. No longer heeding his FLIR, he is simply running as fast as he can through the waist-high brush. Running PAST CAMERA, away from us when -- THWUNK! He's pulled out of frame forcefully. Disappearing from view. We HOLD on the now-empty wilderness for a moment, then:

CUT BACK TO:

36 EXT. THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS - MULDER

36

Moving toward Scully now. His gun still aimed and ready. Moving through the bush to the spot where the creature stopped. About ten yards from Scully. But he sees nothing.

MULDER

How many shots did you fire?

SCULLY

(counting in her head)  
Six, I think. Maybe seven.

MULDER

Is that your only clip?

SCULLY

Yeah.

MULDER

Don't shoot unless you're sure you'll hit it. It may be trying to spend our advantage.

SCULLY

What the hell is it, Mulder?

MULDER

Whatever it is, it's smarter than we are. At least out here.

(X)

ANGLE OVER MULDER TO SCULLY

Mulder has been standing in the same place during this, pivoting in place with his gun at the ready. Now he takes a step, moving to join Scully, when: HE'S SUDDENLY YANKED DOWNWARD.

ANGLE OVER SCULLY -- TO MATCH ACTION

Mulder being yanked downward, disappearing into the underbrush. Exactly as Fazekas had been.

SCULLY

Mulder!!

And she takes off into the bushes without hesitation, right into the heart of the danger. Running through the brush, CAMERA FOLLOWING HER all the way to where Mulder was dragged down.

SCULLY

Mulder!!

But when she gets to the spot she stops -- seeing no Mulder.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

SCULLY

Mulder!!

Scully whirling around in panic. Seeing nothing, until:

SCULLY'S POV

Five meters away, Mulder pops up like a jack-in-the-box. Flailing at the brush. Trying to run toward Scully, blood coming from shreds in his clothes.

MULDER

Scully!!

RESUME SCULLY

Running to Mulder, FIRING into the bushes near him. BOOM, BOOM.

NEW ANGLE - SCULLY

Meeting Mulder head on. As he collapses next to her in the bush. As she whirls now, ready to kill this motherfucking thing. But the attack doesn't come. Allowing:

ANGLE DOWN TO MULDER -- SCULLY'S POV

Mulder sits at her feet, his right arm held in at his chest, bloodied from the shoulder down across his chest. He's breathing hard, focused on nothing but his pain. In shock, as she knows.

RESUME SCULLY

Weapon still at the ready. In the worst possible situation. (X)

VERY WIDE ON THIS

The forest still. Silent. Beautiful. And deadly.

DISSOLVE TO:

37 THE EVENING SKY

37

A pale moon glows faintly above the treetops, signaling the last moments before day turns to night.

EXT. THE WOODS - A CLEARING

CLOSE ON A SMALL PILE OF KINDLING. As two rocks are being struck against each other. Producing the feeblest of sparks.

ANGLE ON SCULLY

(CONTINUED)



37 CONTINUED:

37

Striking the rocks one last time, then stopping in futility.

SCULLY

You were an Indian Guide. Help me out here.

CAMERA FINDS Mulder on the ground nearby, back against a fallen tree trunk. His arm and chest now dressed with wrappings made from strips of Scully's jacket. He shivers slightly, his legs pulled into a ball. His hands drawn up into his armpits.

MULDER

Maybe you should run to the store and get some matches.

SCULLY

I would but I left my wallet in the car.

She drops the rocks to the ground, moves over and takes a seat near Mulder. Removing her gun, then removing the clip.

MULDER

What are you doing?

Scully removes a single bullet from the clip, starts working it in her fingers.

SCULLY

If I can separate the shell from the casing maybe I can get the powder to ignite.

(X)

MULDER

And maybe it'll start raining weenies and marshmallows.

SCULLY

Do I hear a note of negativity?

MULDER

Yes. Actually.

Scully reaches over, feels Mulder's hand. Mulder puts his hand back up into his armpit, but the shivering continues.

SCULLY

You need to get warm, Mulder. Your body's still in shock.

Scully continues working on the bullet.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

37

MULDER

(after a moment)

I once heard the best way to regenerate body heat is to get into a sleeping bag naked with someone else.

SCULLY

If it starts raining sleeping bags maybe you'll get lucky.

SCULLY

Mulder, have you ever thought seriously about dying?

MULDER

Once. When I was at the Ice Capades.

SCULLY

When I was fighting my cancer, I was angry at the injustice of it -- its meaninglessness. And then I realized that was the struggle: to make sense of it. To give it meaning. It's the same with life.

MULDER

Nature is indifferent to when we live or die. If you're lucky you've got seventy five, eighty years. If you're especially lucky you get a hundred. If you're extraordinarily lucky you don't have to wear diapers to the symphony.

SCULLY

I guess it's like Las Vegas. The house always wins.

MULDER

But without Siegfried and Roy.

Scully smiles, then, with much effort, finally loosens the slug from its casing.

SCULLY

Ta da.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (3)

37

Mulder watching her now as she pours the powder in a spot right under the kindling. Picking up the two rocks and beginning to strike them again. Methodically. Determined.

MULDER

When you were a kid, did you identify with Betty or Wilma?

SCULLY

I identified with Betty's bustline.

MULDER

I hear you.

SCULLY

But I could never have been married to Barney. Kids were cute, though.

MULDER

But where are they today?

Suddenly the gunpowder FLARES UP, creating an intense sparkler light. But only for a brief, spectacular moment. Then it dies out, the fire UNLIT.

Scully stares at the kindling. Then turns to Mulder.

SCULLY

Mothmen? Really?

MULDER

But there seems to be only two of them.

Scully drops the rocks, moves back over to her position next to Mulder. Except now she puts her arm around him. Trying to warm him. Mulder balls up next to her. In her other hand, she has her handgun, finger on the trigger. Ready.

MULDER

One of us has to stay awake, Scully.

SCULLY

You sleep, Mulder.

MULDER

You start getting tired, you wake me.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (4)

37

SCULLY

I'm not going to fall asleep.

Silence. Then some more silence.

MULDER

Sing something, Scully.

SCULLY

No, Mulder.

MULDER

That way I'll know you're awake.

SCULLY

Mulder, you don't want me to sing. I can't carry a tune.

MULDER

They're out there, Scully. Waiting for us to weaken.

SCULLY

Well, we're not going to.

More silence. Then:

SCULLY

Jeremiah was a bullfrog... was a good friend of mine. I never understood a single word he said, but I helped him drink his wine...

MULDER

Chorus.

WIDE ON SCENE

Scully and Mulder sitting in the clearing. CAMERA BEGINS TO DRIFT away from the clearing as her small, tentative voice echoes through the trees and brush, into the vast night...

SCULLY

Joy to the world... all the boys and girls. Joy to the fishes in the deep blue sea... joy to you and me...

... CAMERA STILL MOVING through the branches and darkness... finally coming to a stop. Where Two pairs of RED EYES blink open. Watching. Waiting.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (5)

37

38 OMITTED

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

39 EXT. THE WOODS - THE CLEARING - DAY - CLOSE - MULDER

39

Lies asleep, a few morning birds singing o.s. He suddenly awakes with a start to find:

WIDER

He is alone. He's startled into alertness.

MULDER

Scully.

SCULLY

(o.s.)

Over here.

(X)  
(X)  
(X)

Then seeing:

HIS POV -- SCULLY

Moves through the brush, her weapon at the ready.

MULDER

What are you doing?

SCULLY

Looking for something to eat. I found wild berries.

MULDER

I wouldn't go far, Scully.

SCULLY

You never left my sight.

She's moving toward Mulder, wading through the waist-high brush, when suddenly she DROPS FROM VIEW. As if yanked from below.

ANGLE ON MULDER

He can't believe his eyes for a moment. Then he's struggling to get to his feet. Doing so painfully, as:

MULDER

Scully!!

RESUME SCULLY ANGLE

As Mulder runs painfully into the bushes.

MULDER

Scully!!!

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

Stopping when he hears:

SCULLY  
(faintly, from o.s.)  
Mulder! Mulder, I'm down here.

Mulder ambles through the bush, following the sound of her voice.

MULDER  
Where?!

CUT TO:

40 ANGLE UP -- LOOKING THROUGH A HOLE OF SUNLIGHT

40

As Mulder's face appears. Looking down at:

INT. A SMALL CAVE - CONTINUOUS

SCULLY  
I fell through a hole.

MULDER  
Are you alright?

Scully lies on the ground, face smudged with dirt. She is illuminated only by a shaft of light coming from the hole nine feet above her.

SCULLY  
Yeah. I landed in soft dirt.

Scully is getting up now, shaking off the fall.

INTERCUT WITH:

MULDER

MULDER  
What's down there?

Scully turns, startled to find herself face to face with:

FAZEKAS

Her body lashed to a thick pole which has been planted in the ground. Her dead eyes staring at nothing. Shocked, Scully backpedals, colliding with:

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

ANOTHER BODY - MICHAEL ASEKOFF (LOUIS' FATHER)

Like Fazekas, his body is lashed elaborately to a mast, with strips of worn hide leather.

MULDER (O.S.)  
Scully...?

Scully turns to see more poles -- some empty, others bearing bodies: the two surveyors and several others we don't recognize, in varying states of decay. The oldest (and most numerous) look like they've been down here for dozens of years, maybe longer.

SCULLY  
I found Michele.

ANGLE UP ON MULDER

Peering into the darkness.

MULDER  
Is she alive?

RESUME SCULLY

Moving back to Fazekas, reaching cautiously to touch her, when FAZEKAS BLINKS. As if she's in some kind of pre-conscious, pre-death state.

SCULLY  
Yes. But I don't know for how much longer.

NEW ANGLE - LOW PAST SCULLY UP TO MULDER

As Scully steps into the circle of light coming from above.

SCULLY  
We've got to get her out of here, Mulder.

MULDER  
Is there a way out?

Scully looks around at the dirt chamber she's in.

SCULLY  
I'm in some kind of chamber.  
With tunnels leading in and out.  
Like some kind of network.  
(more)

(CONTINUED)



40 CONTINUED: (2)

40

SCULLY (cont'd)  
(then:)  
Mulder --

MULDER  
Yeah...?

NEW ANGLE ON SCULLY

Drifting in slowly on her face.

SCULLY  
There's something down here.

SCULLY'S POV

In the darkness of one of the tunnels leading off the chamber, in what we must feel is still a safe distance, are TWO RED EYES. They blink. Then blink again.

RESUME LOW ANGLE UP ON SCULLY

Looking for her gun on the floor, where she fell.

SCULLY  
I don't have my weapon.  
(searching more)  
I can't find my gun, Mulder.

CUT TO:

40A EXT. BRUSHY AREA AT THE TOP ENTRANCE TO CAVE

40A

Where Mulder is knelt down, looking into the hole.

MULDER  
I'm going to drop mine down.

Mulder unholstering his weapon in a hurry, dropping it into the hole. AS CAMERA RISES up over him, so that our view is skimming the tops of the bushes leading off into the forest. Where we see MOVEMENT. The same underbrush disturbance which has signalled the appearance of the creature. Moving toward Mulder in line. Then stopping abruptly when:

(CONTINUED)

40A CONTINUED:

40A

Mulder stands up into frame. He's heard the disturbance -- and now he sees it -- as the creature makes a quick zig through the underbrush. Then a zag. Closing in on Mulder from fifteen meters.

ANGLE ON MULDER

CAMERA DRIFTING IN on his face. Just as it did on Scully. As we:

CUT TO:

41 OMITTED

42 RESUME SCULLY - WIDE ON CHAMBER

42

With Mulder's gun in hand now, pointing it into the indistinct darkness, where she saw the eyes. When:

MULDER'S BODY FALLS INTO FRAME from above. Landing hard on the soft dirt next to where Scully stands. It almost scares her out of her skin.

SCULLY

What are you -- are you okay?

MULDER

Don't mind me.

Mulder is pulling himself up off the floor -- painfully. As Scully is reaching a hand to him now, to help him up. When:

MULDER

Scully --

NEW ANGLE

Out of the darkness the Creature RUSHES at them. Scully wheeling on Mulder's warning. Firing FIVE FAST SHOTS at it. Knocking the creature down and backwards, where it collapses in the darkness.

WIDE REVERSE ANGLE ON SCULLY

Standing with the gun still drawn. Mulder still on the ground next to her. They are motionless for a moment. Ready for anything. But there is nothing but silence.

Scully keeps the weapon pointed now, as she ventures forth. Taking careful steps to:

LOW ANGLE LOOKING UP

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

As Scully enters frame, weapon pointed at:

## THE CREATURE

Though the light is dim down here (lifting its "modest places") (X)  
 she sees clearly for the first time that it is that has been (X)  
 stalking them. Its skin is leathery, almost bark-like; hair  
 matted down -- it is a man who has been living like an animal.

## RESUME SCULLY

Chest still heaving from adrenaline rush. As Mulder enters frame  
 beside her now, the worse for wear himself.

SCULLY

Look...

## THEIR POV (SPFX)

As they stare down at the fallen creature, its skin is changing (X)  
 to match the dirt. Even in death. Becoming the color of dirt  
 itself, so that it can barely be seen.

## RESUME MULDER AND SCULLY

Watching in amazement. As Mulder lifts a handgun up into frame. (X)

MULDER

Found your gun.

As we:

DISSOLVE TO:

42A CLOSE ON THE POLE WHICH HELD FAZEKAS

42A

She has been cut down now, the pole more clearly seen. Well  
 enough to read the words: "AD NOCTUM". Carved into the wood.

We hear the sound of Mulder and Scully's labor o.s. as CAMERA  
 PANS DOWN to the bodies of Fazekas and Louis' father. Both have  
 been laid carefully on the dirt floor. Both are stirring  
 slightly, though only slightly. (Just to let us know they are  
 alive -- barely.)

CAMERA CONTINUING TO PAN to center cave where Mulder and Scully  
 are helping each other carry one of the rigid, almost mummified  
 bodies that had been lashed to the other poles. Carrying it head  
 and foot... and stacking it atop a pile of similar bodies.  
 Building a ladder, as it were, to the hole above them.

(CONTINUED)

42A CONTINUED:

42

SCULLY  
If they could see us now.

MULDER  
Go team.  
(looking up)  
Twenty more bodies and we win  
the honey-baked ham.

They are moving to take another body off a pole, when:

KINSLEY  
(o.s., distant)  
Agent Mulder! Agent Scully!

SCULLY  
It's Kinsley.

MULDER  
(shouting)  
Down here!

SCULLY  
Down here!

After several moments, Kinsley and Stonecypher's face appear looking down into the hole.

KINSLEY  
What are you doing down there?

Mulder and Scully look at each other. How to say it?

MULDER  
We've got injured people down  
here.

SCULLY  
We need a ladder.

KINSLEY  
Right away.

CUT TO:

43 OMITTED

43A EXT. BRUSHY AREA AT THE TOP ENTRANCE TO CAVE 43A

Kinsley runs back. Stonecypher peers into the hole. WIDEN to reveal A DOZEN uniformed search and rescue PERSONNEL searching the woods with them. CAMERA CONTINUES TO RISE, ascending into the trees, as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

44 EXT. REST AREA - DAY (X) 44

CLOSE ON STROBING POLICE LIGHTS. CAMERA ADJUSTS to REVEAL they belong to AN AMBULANCE which, as we continue to ADJUST we see it being hustled to by PARAMEDICS carrying a wire litter. (X)

NEW ANGLE ON THIS (X)

Where we see the litter carries a semi-conscious Michele Fazekas, hooked up to an IV, wearing a cervical brace. Covered otherwise by a thermal blanket. (X)

Michele is loaded into the ambulance and the doors are closed. One of the Paramedics slaps the side of the vehicle and it roars off, REVEALING: (X)

A SECOND AMBULANCE (X)

Where Michael Asekoff is being carried in a similar fashion, in a wire litter, on an IV. Walking next to him, though, are his wife and his kid, Louis. Before he's put in the vehicle he reaches out his hand to his kid, squeezing it. Then he's loaded into the ambulance and the doors are slammed closed. (X)

As Louis and his mother watch the ambulance pull away, Mrs. Asekoff turns and walks over to: (X)

WIDE ON STONECYPHER AND KINSLEY (THIS WILL BE MULDER'S POV) (X)

Standing a short distance away from Louis and his mom, with SEVERAL SAR OFFICERS. On reaching them, Mrs. Asekoff shakes their hands, thanking them. But the distance is such that we cannot hear exactly what she is saying. (X)

As she finishes her thanks, moving back to her son, Agent Kinsley is on the move. Moving toward: (X)

MULDER (X)

He stands at the tree stump exhibit which was established back in Act One. His wound has been properly bandaged. He's fixed on the stump now, as Kinsley approaches. (X)

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

KINSLEY (X)  
 Well, we just got all the thanks (X)  
 when you did all the work. (X)

MULDER (X)  
 On the contrary, Agent Kinsley. (X)  
 If it weren't for you we'd never (X)  
 have gotten involved in this. (X)

KINSLEY (X)  
 Oh... (X)  
 (then confused) (X)  
 Really...? (X)

MULDER (X)  
 You see this? (X)

KINSLEY (X)  
 Yeah. I pointed it out to Agent (X)  
 Stonecypher on the drive down. (X)

Mulder is intent on it, though Kinsley's not sure why. (X)

MULDER (X)  
 There was something in the cave (X)  
 Agent Scully fell into; an (X)  
 inscription. Ad Noctum. (X)

KINSLEY (X)  
 Ad Noctum. That's Latin -- (X)

MULDER (X)  
 Meaning "into darkness." It's a (X)  
 warning. The Spanish (X)  
 conquistadors used to carve (X)  
 warnings into the posts they (X)  
 lashed the natives on. (X)

Kinsley thinks about it a second. (X)

KINSLEY (X)  
 So who are you saying wrote it? (X)

MULDER (X)  
 Ponce De Leon came looking for (X)  
 the Fountain of Youth over four (X)  
 hundred and fifty years ago -- (X)

KINSLEY (X)  
 -- you mean, you think these... (X)  
 you think that body, the one (X)  
 Agent Scully shot... (X)  
 (more)

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (2)

KINSLEY (cont'd)  
(then:)

No.

MULDER  
After 400 years in the woods  
might they not have adapted  
perfectly to their environment?

KINSLEY  
You're just making that up.

MULDER  
Why would I do that?

KINSLEY  
Cause... you work on the X-  
files. You just want to write  
off your motel.

Mulder smiles, sees Stonecypher approaching.

STONECYPHER  
Search and Rescue's still been  
unable to find Jeff Glaser, or  
the second predator you reported.

MULDER  
They may never find the one, or  
the other.

STONECYPHER  
I don't understand, Agent  
Mulder... why would they have  
come after the boy in the house  
that night?

MULDER  
I think these predators have  
been in these woods a long time.  
That whatever threatened their  
territory was perceived as enemy.

STONECYPHER  
But that would mean they'd come  
after any one of us who'd been  
into the woods. Wouldn't it?

Mulder is listening to these words. CAMERA PUSHING IN SLIGHTLY. (X)

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (3)

44

MULDER

Where's Agent Scully?

(X)

(X)

STONECYPHER

She got a lift back to the motel. To pack up both your things.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

Mulder is on the move now, breaking into a run toward their rental car, off in the distance. Off:

(X)

(X)

KINSLEY AND STONECYPHER

(X)

Watching him, uncomprehending. We:

(X)

CUT TO:

(X)

(X)

(X)

44A OMITTED

THRU

44B

45 INT. MOTEL - DAY

45

We HEAR a key being inserted into a lock, then the door opens. Scully enters the room, the only light coming from a space in the heavy curtains. She's got just a light shirt on, her weapon holster showing, as she puts her own, already-packed suitcase down on the bed.

(X)

(X)

(X)

She moves to the bathroom, turning the light on inside. Packing Mulder's toiletries. CAMERA DRIFTS back into the room, settling in a shadowy corner where we see... nothing.

(X)

CUT TO:

46 INT. N.D. SEDAN - MULDER

46

Driving fast up the two-lane highway we established in Act One. (X)

47 OMITTED

THRU

48



49 INT. MOTEL - SCULLY

49

Moves out of the bathroom, dropping Mulder's toiletry bag into an open suitcase on the bed. As she moves to the closet, pulling his clothes off hangers, CAMERA HOLDS on the DARKNESS INSIDE THE CLOSET. Where we expect to see red eyes blink -- but we don't. As we:

(X)  
(X)  
(X)  
(X)

CUT TO:

49A EXT. MOTEL - DAY

(X)49A

As the rental car slides into the parking lot. Mulder throws the door open, getting out without even bothering to close it. Running for:

(X)  
(X)  
(X)

CLOSE ANGLE ON MOTEL ROOM DOOR

(X)

Where Mulder rushes to the door -- finding it LOCKED. Mulder beats on the door now, pounding on it with his fist.

(X)  
(X)

MULDER

(X)

Scully!!!

(X)

CAMERA ADJUSTING AROUND

(X)

As he pounds again. RACKING TO SCULLY who pokes her head out of the door just down the way.

(X)  
(X)

SCULLY

(X)

What?

(X)

Mulder's body slumps in relief.

(X)

SCULLY

Mulder, what is it?

(X)

Mulder doesn't answer. Just starts toward her.

(X)

CUT TO:

49B INT. MOTEL - MULDER'S ROOM - DAY - CONTINUOUS

(X)49B

Mulder enters past Scully, surveying the room. Then moving to the bed where the two suitcases are packed. Lifting them up off the bed and moving back to the door, where Scully watches him, still confused about what all the commotion was over.

(X)  
(X)  
(X)  
(X)

MULDER

Let's get out of here.

(X)

(X)

She nods, still a little confused.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

49B CONTINUED:

SCULLY

(X)

Okay.

(X)

She takes her own suitcase from him, exits frame. Leaving Mulder (X)  
to stand just inside the door, taking one last suspicious look (X)  
around. Before he steps out and closes the door behind himself. (X)

Leaving us in the empty room for a few beats before CAMERA (X)  
DRIFTS DOWN to the floor, drifting down and down until we are at (X)  
floor level, looking under the bed. Where: (X)

A PAIR OF RED, GLOWING EYES APPEAR. They blink. And we: (X)

FADE OUT (X)

THE END

(X)