

THE X-FILES

"Brand X"

Written by

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Directed by

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CAST LIST

Agent Fox Mulder
Agent Dana Scully

Windbreaker Man
Second Windbreaker
A.D. Skinner
Denise Scobie
FBI Agent
Dr. Jim Scobie
Security Man
Daniel Brimley
Dr. Peter Voss
Lead Council
Ashman/Darrel Weaver
Complaining Man
Hotel Manager
Anne Voss
Dr. Libby Nance
Attendant
Manager
Doctor

Omitted

Cigarette-Smoking Man	(X)
Hotel Manager	(X)
Windbreaker Man	(X)
Attendant	(X)

SET LIST

EXTERIORS

SCOBIE HOUSE
MORLEY TOBACCO COMPANY
VOSS HOUSE
SKID ROW HOTEL (EXCELSIOR)
*MORGUE
SERVICE STATION
*ASHEFORD MEDICAL CENTER (STOCK)

INTERIORS

SCOBIE HOUSE
 /LIVING ROOM
 /BEDROOM
 /BATHROOM
MORLEY TOBACCO CO.
 /LOBBY
 /CONFERENCE ROOM
 /RESEARCH LAB
VOSS HOUSE
 /GARAGE
 /LIVING ROOM
 /ENTRYWAY
MORGUE
SKID ROW HOTEL
 /WEAVER'S ROOM
 /ADJOINING ROOM
 /HALLWAY
BRIMLEY'S SEDAN
ENTOMOLOGY LAB
HOSPITAL
 /SURGERY BAY
 /HALLWAY
 /MULDER'S ROOM
 /ER
MINI-MART
MULDER'S OFFICE

(X)

OMITTED:

SKINNER'S CAR (X)
X-RAY ROOM - HOSPITAL (X)
UPSCALE HOUSE (X)
UNIVERSITY CAMPUS (STOCK) (X)
EXT. ASHEFORD MEDICAL CENTER (STOCK) (X)

- PREVIOUSLY FORSYTH COUNTY HOSPITAL
- PREVIOUSLY FORSYTH COUNTY MORGUE

TEASER

FADE IN:

1 ON A WISPY CURL OF SMOKE

1

Spiraling upward against a black sky, sinuous, hypnotic, almost alive. We CRANE DOWN to reveal that smoke is emanating from a brick chimney. We are:

EXT. SCOBIE HOUSE - NIGHT

We continue MOVING DOWN the exterior of an upscale house, revealing the manicured lawn and wide, curving driveway. A LEGEND reads: WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA, 9:47 P.M.

As we settle on the house, a MAN IN A DARK BLUE WINDBREAKER steps INTO C.U., on alert, eyes sweeping the deserted street. He looks over, giving a nod as we RACK to: (X)
(X)

A SECOND WINDBREAKER MAN patrolling the back yard in the distant b.g. Second Windbreaker keys his walkie-talkie: (X)
(X)

SECOND WINDBREAKER
Radio check. Perimeter is clear. (X)
(X)

2 INT. SCOBIE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

2

As we cut inside to reveal A.D. WALTER SKINNER standing in a nicely appointed den. He's on the other end of this walkie-talkie conversation. He glances at his watch.

SKINNER
Copy that. Give me a check every ten.

Skinner turns to a beleaguered couple: DOCTOR JIM SCOBIE and his wife DENISE, both in their 40s.

SKINNER
Make yourselves comfortable, folks. Watch television or get some rest... try to put your minds at ease... (X)
(X)

As he talks, Skinner drifts to the windows, looks outside. He closes all the shutters.

SKINNER
... just stay away from doors and windows, if you would.

DENISE SCOBIE
Do we have to ask you if we can use the bathroom? I feel like I'm a prisoner in my own home. (X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

CONTINUED

2 CONTINUED:

2

SKINNER

I apologize for the imposition,
but my job is to protect you.
As of this evening, keeping you
safe is the FBI's top priority.

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

DENISE SCOBIE

For how long? A week? A month?
Then what?
(to her husband)

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

Jim, don't do this, please. You
don't have to testify. It's not
worth it. These people have a
long reach. They're powerful.

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

DR. SCOBIE

(indicating Skinner)
So is the federal government.

(X)
(X)
(X)

DENISE SCOBIE

But what if it's not enough?

(X)
(X)

Her husband looks at her a beat, his mind made up.

(X)

DR. SCOBIE

I have to do this.

(X)
(X)

He takes her hand, trying to comfort her. She rises.

(X)

DENISE SCOBIE.

I'm going to bed.

(X)
(X)

As she goes, Doctor Scobie lets out a ragged COUGH into his
fist. A windbreakered AGENT enters the room carrying a glass of
water. He hands the water to the doctor, who nods thanks and
sips it.

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

DR. SCOBIE

Nine a.m.?

SKINNER

Grand jury convenes at nine --
we'll leave here seven-thirty.

(off his nod)

If you need anything, I'm right
outside the door.

Skinner exits, leaving Dr. Scobie. He COUGHS again -- a nasty,
wet cough.

(X)
(X)

He catches his breath, takes another drink of water, then sets
down the glass. As he wipes through frame, we PUSH PAST him to:

(X)

CONTINUED

2 CONTINUED: (2)

2

THE WATER GLASS

Sitting on an end table. We PUSH IN CLOSER to see... a tiny SWIRL OF BLOOD is seeping down into the clear liquid.

As we PUSH CLOSER, we see a small, SQUIRMING BEETLE in the glass. It floats on its back in the drop of blood, legs waving frantically. Off this unsettling sight...

CUT TO:

3 INT. SCOBIE HOUSE - BEDROOM - HOURS LATER

3

All is dark and quiet as we TRACK through the bedroom, past a digital clock -- 4:13 a.m. -- to find Denise Scobie sleeping fitfully. She rolls over to find the other side of the bed empty. As she rouses out of her slumber:

DENISE SCOBIE

Jim?

There's no answer. She sits up now, more alert, glancing around the bedroom. She notices -- a LIGHT coming from under the closed door to the master bathroom.

Denise gets out of bed. Crosses to the door and KNOCKS faintly.

DENISE SCOBIE

Are you feeling alright?

No answer. She gives the door another faint RAP, then tries the knob. The door is unlocked. However, when she tries to open it, it gives a couple of inches, then stops. It's as if something heavy is wedged against the other side.

Denise's expression changes as she realizes what this heavy weight must be. Her eyes show panic.

DENISE SCOBIE

Jim?!

(toward the far door)

Mr. Skinner?! Mr. Skinner! --

The sound of FEET RUNNING, getting louder. Denise tries to shove the door open, but she's not strong enough.

ANGLE ON SKINNER

Racing into the bedroom, pistol drawn, followed by the other Agent. Skinner calls through the bathroom door.

CONTINUED

3 CONTINUED:

3

SKINNER
Doctor Scobie? --
(to Denise)
Step back, please --

DENISE SCOBIE
Jim! --

The Agent gently holds Mrs. Scobie back. Skinner puts his shoulder to the door, applies pressure (doesn't try to kick it in). The door opens wider and wider, until:

4 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

4

Skinner manages to enter the bathroom. He pulls up short, looking down to see:

SKINNER'S POV - DOCTOR SCOBIE

Lies slumped on the bathroom floor, facing away from camera. He's lying right up against the door. Skinner hunkers down and takes hold of his shoulder, turns him over to reveal:

Scobie's eyes are open wide. Below them, the flesh from the dead man's nose to his throat has been STRIPPED AWAY, leaving behind an open-mouthed, grinning rictus of naked bone and stringy tendon.

RESUME SKINNER

His gaze going from the body to a horrified Denise Scobie -- a woman he feels he's failed. Off Skinner's stunned expression:

(X)
(X)

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

5 OMITTED (X) 5

A6 EXT. SCOBIE HOUSE - DAY (X) A6

Despite the early hour, the house and street are a beehive of activity. N.D. Sedans and Sheriff's cars are parked here. (X)
(X)

6 INT. SCOBIE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - SKINNER 6

Looks grim. He's not a happy man -- nor one who's had any sleep. He stands near the entrance to the living room, holding a file folder and talking into his cell phone.

SKINNER

Yes. At the time, I was in another part of the house.

We get the impression from the long silences that Skinner is getting his ass chewed by a superior -- it's an ass-chewing he takes stoically. He glances behind him at...

... Denise Scobie, who sits red-eyed and shell-shocked in the living room, staring off into space. A FEMALE AGENT gets her to her feet and escorts her out. As Denise passes Skinner, she stares up at him, her expression distraught and accusing.

He means to hold her look, but drops his eyes. Into the phone:

SKINNER

Yes, sir. I will have answers for you.

The call gets abruptly ended from the other end. Skinner clicks off and tucks away his phone, faintly relieved to see:

REVERSE - MULDER AND SCULLY

Entering the front door. They take note of Denise as she is escorted past them out of the house. Mulder and Scully join Skinner.

MULDER

Rough night?

SKINNER

It's shaping up to be a rougher morning. Follow me.

CONTINUED

6 CONTINUED:

6

Skinner leads them down a hall toward the master bedroom.

7 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

7

We PULL BACK ahead of Skinner, Scully and Mulder, bringing us into this room. Scobie's body has been removed -- the large bathroom is empty and there's nothing much to see. As it did last night, the bathroom window stands open six inches.

REDWOP POWDER has been dusted on the door and the sink, revealing many red FINGERPRINTS.

(X)
(X)

SKINNER

Fingerprints everywhere... but as they all belong to the deceased and his wife, they don't help us.

SCULLY

This is where the body was found?

She indicates the floor. Skinner nods. Mulder looks around.

MULDER

What can you tell us about him?

SKINNER

Dr. James Scobie, age 44. R&D biochemist with Morley Tobacco. If he were alive, as of...

(X)

(checks his watch)

... twenty-six minutes ago, he'd be giving testimony against his former employer before a federal grand jury.

SCULLY

Testimony concerning what?

(X)

SKINNER

Not even his wife or lawyer know the specifics -- only that it concerned research he had been involved in. Potentially, extremely damaging to Morley. Enough so that Scobie had received death threats.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

(a beat)

(X)

Given the high-profile nature of the case, the Director charged me with ensuring Dr. Scobie's protection.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED:

7

Skinner is quiet, well aware of his role in the failed mission. (X)

SCULLY

You're thinking someone made (X)
good on the threats -- that this (X)
is a corporate hit? (X)

SKINNER

Maybe, only I don't see how (X)
someone could have gotten in (X)
here. Or what killed him. (X)

Skinner opens his folder, offers them a digital COLOR PRINT, (X)
taken earlier that morning. Scully and Mulder react visibly to: (X)

THEIR POV - THE CRIME SCENE PHOTO (X)

It gives us a fresh glimpse of dead Dr. Scobie on the bathroom (X)
floor, the flesh of his nose and lips gone. (X)

MULDER AND SCULLY (X)

Study the grotesque image, as thrown by it as Skinner was. (X)

MULDER

You can't blow the whistle with (X)
a mouth like that. (X)
(X)

SCULLY

It's as if the flesh were (X)
somehow stripped or eaten away. (X)
(considering) (X)
Possibly, an assailant could. (X)
have used a strong acid. Thrown (X)
it on the victim. (X)

Skinner nods, finding Scully's theory reasonable. Mulder looks (X)
less convinced. (X)

MULDER

Mrs. Scobie was in bed. Twelve (X)
feet away. She heard nothing? (X)
(X)

SKINNER

No. No one did. (X)
(X)

MULDER

If it were acid in the face, (X)
he'd be screaming bloody murder, (X)
don't you think? (X)
(X)

CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED: (2)

7

SKINNER

The fact remains, someone got to him.

(X)
(X)
(X)

Mulder shrugs, doubtful. Scully checks the open bathroom window. (X)

SCULLY

Possibly through here. Was this window open?

(X)
(X)
(X)

Skinner nods. Mulder steps over and tries to lift it higher as a means of illustrating that six inches is as high as it goes. (X)
(X)

MULDER

It's got a pin lock. No one could fit through here.

(X)
(X)
(X)

Skinner -- his patience stretched -- shoots a look at Mulder. (X)

SKINNER

We're looking at all possibilities here, Agent.

(off Mulder's look)

We need answers. There's not a lot of time and we'll be going up against one of the biggest corporations in America. The Director himself has personally instructed me to close this case as swiftly as possible. I trust I can count on your help.

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

Mulder nods, a bit surprised -- in his mind, that's what he's doing. (X)
(X)

MULDER

Of course.

(X)
(X)

SKINNER

(turns to Scully)

I'd like you to perform the autopsy. The body's at the county morgue.

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

SCULLY

I'll get right on it.

She exits the bathroom. Skinner and Mulder follow her out.

8 INT. LIVING ROOM - SCULLY

8

Heads for the front door, passing AGENTS who come and go. She turns back to her boss, sympathetic to the night he's had.

SCULLY
Call if you need me.

She exits. Mulder keeps going into the living room, taking a cruise through the place. Skinner follows.

Mulder stops and looks left and right, all around.

MULDER
Huh.

SKINNER
What?

MULDER
No ashtrays. Dr. Scobie and his wife don't smoke?

SKINNER
Not that I witnessed.

Skinner wonders what it matters. Mulder shrugs.

MULDER
A tobacco employee who doesn't smoke. Isn't that kind of like a GM executive who drives a Ford?

Skinner doesn't see that it's relevant. Ultimately, Mulder doesn't, either. He continues scanning the room.

MULDER
If this was a hit, it seems unnecessarily high-profile. It calls attention to itself.

SKINNER
That could be the point: to intimidate potential witnesses.
(checks his notes)
Scobie had a supervisor at Morley -- a Doctor Peter Voss. I want to talk to him.

MULDER
Mind if I tag along?

(X)
(X)

Skinner agrees, moves off to speak to an Agent in b.g. Mulder stays where he is. Something has caught his eye. He moves to the side table where Dr. Scobie's glass sits, forgotten (it

(X)

CONTINUED

8 CONTINUED:

8

should be partially obscured behind a lamp or plant or something).

MULDER'S POV - THE WATER GLASS

Sits half-empty. Scobie's blood has slightly PINKENED the water. And at the bottom of the glass... we see the tiny, dead BEETLE. (X) (X)

CLOSE - MULDER

Holds the glass up to the light, looking at the beetle through the rose-tinted water. Off his curious look:

CUT TO:

9 EXT. MORLEY TOBACCO CO. (STOCK) - DAY

9

A grand corporate edifice, all black glass and steel, befitting a Fortune 500 company. A LEGEND reads: MORLEY TOBACCO COMPANY, CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS.

10 INT. MORLEY TOBACCO CO. - LOBBY - DAY

10

We take in a stark and stately lobby. Skinner and Mulder enter the building. They head for a kiosk manned by a dark-suited SECURITY MAN wearing a small earpiece. (X)

SKINNER

We're here to see Doctor Voss.

SECURITY MAN

Do you have an appointment?

As answer, Skinner flips his FBI ID. The man doesn't bat an eye.

SECURITY MAN

Do you have an appointment?

Skinner stares down at him a beat, opens his badge once more... and holds it a good deal CLOSER to the man's face.

SKINNER

I'm sorry, did you miss this the first time around?

The stone-faced man looks from the badge to Skinner and Mulder, not about to give in. Nor is Skinner. But then --

BRIMLEY (O.S.)

Gentlemen? I can help you.

CONTINUED

10 CONTINUED:

10

Skinner and Mulder turn to see a raw-boned man, DANIEL BRIMLEY, approaching. His conservative suit doesn't hide his ex-military bearing. His attitude is professional, but not unfriendly.

BRIMLEY

Daniel Brimley, head of corporate security.

(quiet)

You're here concerning the death of Dr. Scobie, I take it.

SKINNER

We are.

BRIMLEY

We were all extremely sorry to hear about it. Jim has a lot of friends in this building.

MULDER

Really? No hard feelings he was about to turn federal witness against your company?

Brimley returns Mulder's gaze like a man who has nothing to hide.

BRIMLEY

Nobody was happy about Jim's decision, but the timing of his death couldn't be worse. The media already views us as the "evil empire." This will only lower their opinion, if that's even possible.

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

(off their looks)

(X)

Look, we're a big company that pays a lot of taxes -- and we produce a completely legal product. We've got nothing to be ashamed of.

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

SKINNER

So you'd have no problem with us speaking to Doctor Voss?

(X)
(X)
(X)

BRIMLEY

Whatever we can do to help.

(X)

He holds an arm out like an usher, ready to escort them to the elevators. Off Skinner and Mulder, faintly surprised by this:

CUT TO:

11 CLOSE ON - A PHOTO ID BADGE

11

Clipped to the lapel of a corduroy sport coat -- the name is "DR. PETER VOSS." We TILT UP to find a man in his late 40s, thoughtful and sad-eyed. He's seated in the middle of a long conference table. He stares past us, looking a bit lost.

VOSS

Could you, uh... could you pass along my sincerest condolences to Jim's wife Denise?

As he says this, we PULL BACK to reveal... eight or ten TOBACCO LAWYERS flank him on both sides. We are:

INT. MORLEY TOBACCO - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Skinner and Mulder sit across from Voss, alone on their side of the table save for Brimley, who stands deep in b.g. behind them.

Skinner nods to the scientist. He and Mulder eye the phalanx of attorneys with faint wariness.

VOSS

How's she holding up?

MULDER

(a beat)

I believe she'll find some comfort in learning why her husband died.

SKINNER

Dr. Voss, can you enlighten us as to what Dr. Scobie intended to tell the grand jury? We know it had to do with company research.

The Lead Counsel answers for Voss. He's polite, but icy.

LEAD COUNSEL

I'm sorry. Dr. Voss would be in violation of his employment confidentiality clause in answering that question.

(X)

(X)

Skinner shoots a cool glance at the lawyer, then turns his attention back fully to Voss.

SKINNER

Dr. Scobie was your friend?

VOSS

Yes.

CONTINUED

SKINNER

He worked closely with you.

VOSS

Yes, he did. Fourteen years.

SKINNER

Yet you demoted him five weeks ago. You took him off a particular project. Can you tell me why that happened?

The Lead Counsel interrupts Voss before he might answer.

LEAD COUNSEL

As before, Dr. Voss would be in violation of his confidentiality clause in answering questions regarding the details of his work here at Morley.

(X)
(X)
(X)

(off Skinner's stare)

We spend 100 million dollars a year on research and development to stay ahead of our competitors. I'm sure you understand that our cooperation cannot extend to divulging corporate secrets.

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

SKINNER

I'm not sensing any "cooperation" whatsoever. In fact, I'm one more non-answer away from getting a federal warrant and searching this entire building.

The Lead Counsel's face goes tight.

LEAD COUNSEL

Then this meeting is over.
(to Voss)

Doctor...

The lawyers all rise. Dr. Voss pushes back his chair to rise, too -- maybe a little reluctantly. Before he can:

MULDER

Can you tell me what this is, Doctor?

Mulder slides a small EVIDENCE BAGGIE across the table to Voss. It contains the dead BEETLE.

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

Voss pauses, studies it. The lawyers glance to one another, wondering what this is about. Skinner eyes Mulder. He's wondering, as well.

Mulder is focused solely on Voss. Looking for a reaction.

Voss doesn't give one... though he does stare down at the bag for maybe a half-beat too long.

VOSS

It's a tobacco beetle. Its larvae feed on the leaf of the tobacco plant.

(looks to Mulder)

Why?

Mulder studies the man, playing things close to the vest.

MULDER

I found it at Doctor Scobie's house.

VOSS

You'll find them everywhere around here. I'm sure there are a dozen in the grille of your car right now.

The Lead Counsel doesn't quite know what to make of this line of questioning -- or whether or not he should put a stop to it.

LEAD COUNSEL

Can I ask where you're going with this, Agent?

Mulder shifts his attention to the man. In his best legalese:

MULDER

I'm sorry. I'd be in violation of FBI confidentiality in answering that question. Due to the sensitive nature of our investigation.

The Lead Counsel stares coldly, ushers Dr. Voss to his feet and toward the door. Brimley stands his ground, considering Mulder.

Off Mulder, satisfied... and Skinner, eyeing him:

CUT TO:

12 EXT. VOSS HOUSE - NIGHT

12

We establish a fine older house in a quiet, upscale neighborhood. A Volvo sedan or somesuch motors into frame, turns into the driveway as the garage door opens for it.

13 INT. VOSS HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

13

The Volvo pulls into the open garage -- and we see that Doctor Voss is behind the wheel, alone in the car. He shuts down the engine and sits motionless for a moment. It's been a rough day.

The Doctor gets out of the car, reaches in for his briefcase. As he does, he's startled by the SCRAPE of a SHOE behind him. He turns to see:

A GAUNT MAN

Standing just outside the open garage door, in partial SILHOUETTE. He steps closer, into the light, and we make out his features: nicotine-stained teeth, yellows fingertips and a sickly complexion. We'll call him ASHMAN. (X)
(X)

ASHMAN

Evening.

(X)

Voss squints, then recognizes the man.

VOSS

What are you doing here?

ASHMAN

I ran out of smokes. Me and Dr. Scobie had an arrangement, as you know, and uh...

Ashman shrugs -- "que sera sera."

ASHMAN

... Doctor Scobie ain't around. So, I figure my arrangement with him sli-iides on over to you.

Voss eyes this man for a beat, worried that he's here -- praying no one will witness this. Voss opens his car trunk, pulls out:

CLOSE - TWO SHRINK-WRAPPED STACKS OF CIGARETTES

(X)

The individual packs of which are in plain, white packaging. No brand or logo. He hands them to Ashman, who isn't impressed. (X)
(X)

ASHMAN

This won't hold me.

CONTINUED

13 CONTINUED:

13

VOSS

I'll bring you more. Just don't
come back here.

Ashman studies him.

(X)

ASHMAN

Seems everybody's acting funny
around me all of a sudden.
Telling me not to talk, to stay
away from their houses. I
figure if I elect to oblige, it
ought to be worth something.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

Voss reads the man's suggestion. He dips into his wallet, gives
the man what he has.

(X)

(X)

VOSS

It's all I have on me. Take it.

(X)

(X)

Ashman counts his new money, unimpressed with it, too.

(X)

ASHMAN

Too bad about Dr. Scobie. I bet
people are wondering how he
died. Been working on my own
theory, up in the old noggin'.
(taps his head)
Maybe I'll share it with you
someday.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

Voss doesn't want this to go any further.

(X)

VOSS

Please leave.

(X)

ASHMAN

Yeah. Don't wanna wear out my
welcome. We'll be seeing a lot
of each other, I expect.

(X)

He smiles, exits. Off Voss, unnerved:

CUT TO:

14 INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

(X)14

Scully's protective glasses reflect the oogy (though hard to
make out) sight of Scobie's opened-up chest and throat.

MULDER (O.S.)

Smoke 'em if you've got 'em.

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED:

14

Scully lifts her head, turns to see... Mulder and Skinner entering the morgue behind her.

SKINNER

What have you found?

SCULLY

The tissue damage to Dr. Scobie's mouth extends down his trachea and into his lungs. His alveoli look like corned beef.

(X)

Skinner and Mulder look. They see what she's talking about.

SKINNER

What about this being the result of some sort of corrosive agent?

SCULLY

That's not the case. No acids are present, no caustics -- this damage isn't the result of any kind of chemical reaction. His airways have just been more or less reamed out.

(off their silence)

I can tell you what killed him. Strictly speaking...

MULDER

What?

SCULLY

Hypoxemia. The inability to transfer oxygen from the lungs to the bloodstream.

(X)

(X)

(X)

SKINNER

He choked to death.

(X)

(X)

She shrugs -- "more or less." Skinner looks to the corpse.

(X)

SKINNER

But this damage: however it was accomplished, someone did do this to him.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

MULDER

Not necessarily.

(X)

(X)

(off Skinner's look)

(X)

There weren't any signs of struggle in the room. I don't think anyone else was ever there.

(X)

(X)

(X)

CONTINUED

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

SKINNER (X)
Where are you going with this? (X)

MULDER (X)
Maybe this wasn't a homicide. (X)

Skinner waits impatiently for Mulder to elaborate. Mulder takes (X)
the baggie out of his pocket -- the one with the dead BEETLE in
it. He shows it to Scully.

MULDER (X)
You looked at the body, Scully. (X)
Did you find any of these? (X)

SCULLY
A bug?

MULDER
A tobacco beetle.

SCULLY
Where might I find one of those?
(off Mulder's shrug)
In this man's lungs? No. I
didn't find anything like that.
Were you expecting me to?

SKINNER (X)
Killer bugs, Agent? That's what (X)
I'm supposed to tell the (X)
Director? (X)

MULDER (X)
I don't know. But based on Dr. (X)
Voss' reaction to this, I think (X)
it's the thing to investigate. (X)

Off Skinner and Scully, wondering: (X)

CUT TO:

15 EXT. SKID ROW HOTEL - NIGHT

15

A last-gasp dive -- one small step from living in the street.

CUT TO:

16 CLOSE ON - A MAGAZINE COVER - A PHOTO

(X) 16

Of a magnificent, pillared estate shaded by magnolia trees. The (X)
magazine title reads: "Southern Home." PULL BACK to reveal: (X)

CONTINUED

16 CONTINUED:

16

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

(X)

A transient we'll call COMPLAINING MAN. He suddenly looks up, irritated. Notices WISPS OF SMOKE coming through the AIR VENT high up on the wall. He RAPS on the wall.

(X)

(X)

(X)

COMPLAINING MAN

(X)

Hey. Hey, you over there. You know you can't smoke in here!

(X)

(X)

INTERCUT WITH:

A17 CLOSE ON - AN OVERFLOWING ASHTRAY

(X) A17

As nicotine-stained fingers bring a smoldering cigarette to a pair of lips to reveal:

(X)

(X)

INT. ADJOINING HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS - ON ASHMAN

(X)

Sitting in another tiny room, lit by the glow of a black-and-white TV bolted to the dresser. N.D. programming plays.

(X)

Ashman glances over to the wall between the rooms. He sucks in a slow lungful of filtered mother's milk, exhales.

(X)

17 OMITTED

(X) 17

Complaining Man sees more SMOKE wafting in through the vent. He rises, pissed. POUNDS the wall.

(X)

(X)

COMPLAINING MAN

(X)

How many times I gotta say it?

(X)

No Smoking! You hear me? --

(X)

ASHMAN

(X)

America, man. E Pluribus, uh...

(X)

He can't remember the rest. Screw it -- he takes another puff.

(X)

Complaining Man lets loose a RACKING COUGH. When he recovers:

COMPLAINING MAN

I'll get you kicked out, you sonofabitch! You think I'm kidding?! I'll do it!

Complaining Man COUGHS again -- a deep, phlegmy cough. He waves at the SMOKE hanging over him.

COMPLAINING MAN

Law's on my side!

(X)

CONTINUED

A17 CONTINUED:

A1

Complaining Man suddenly lets out a HACKING, RETCHING COUGH, covering his mouth with his hand. He looks to his fingers, noticing them flecked with BLOOD.

ASHMAN

Lifts his head slightly upon hearing the faint THUMP of a body hitting the floor in the other room. He very obviously doesn't know what this sound was... and doesn't care, either. He returns his attention to his TV show.

LOW AND CLOSE - ON THE DECK (X)

A TOBACCO BEETLE skitters by. Now another one, and another. We TRACK an inch over the floor, see ten beetles, fifty, a hundred. We FIND... (X)

... Complaining Man lying dead. His lower face is EATEN AWAY like Scobie's was, only not quite as much -- it's early yet. (X)

BEETLES skitter over his face and body, running to and fro. Off this disturbing sight: (X)

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

18 ON SEVERAL SCURRYING BEETLES

18

Crawling across a white sheet. LEGEND: 5:16 A.M. Skinner's latex-gloved hand brushes them away as we REVEAL we are: (X)

INT. ADJOINING HOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING - ON SKINNER (X)

Crouching next to the shrouded corpse of Complaining Man, lifting the sheet to peer down at his ravaged face. (X)

REVERSE ANGLE - MULDER AND SCULLY (X)

Enter the room behind him. Scully hunkers down to look at the body. Mulder glances from it to the scurrying bugs. (X)

MULDER (X)
Guests check in, but they don't (X)
check out. (X)

SCULLY (X)
Judging from the condition of (X)
the body, I'd say he was killed (X)
in the same manner as Dr. Scobie. (X)

SKINNER (X)
Except that this man's no (X)
whistle blower. (X)

He holds up the victim's wallet. (X)

SKINNER (X)
Thomas Gastall. Out-of-date (X)
Massachusetts driver's license, (X)
food stamps and... a certificate (X)
of completion for a court- (X)
ordered anger management class. (X)

Mulder's attention is diverted (we don't see by what). He moves toward a corner of the room. Scully continues: (X)

SCULLY (X)
What did Morley Tobacco have (X)
against a transient from (X)
Massachusetts? (X)

MULDER (X)
Probably nothing. (X)

SKINNER (X)
What are you suggesting, Mulder? (X)

CONTINUED

18 CONTINUED:

18

MULDER

That Scobie wasn't a corporate hit, despite the timing of his death. I don't think he was murdered. Neither was this man. (X)

SKINNER

Then what killed them? (X)

Mulder finally succeeds in catching a LIVE BEETLE in an evidence bag. He holds up the wriggling beetle for them to see. (X)

SKINNER

Mulder, we didn't find these insects in Scobie's bathroom. (X)

MULDER

We found a partially-open window -- through which they could have escaped. (X)

Skinner looks to Scully for her opinion. She offers:

SCULLY

It's a long shot, but it could be some form of contagium. Maybe an insect-borne bacterium... (X)

(beat)

Which means there could be other victims in this building. (X)

Off Mulder and Skinner, considering: (X)

CUT TO:

19 INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING - A MAN'S KNUCKLES

19

RAP on a hotel room door. We ADJUST to reveal Mulder standing before this door, waiting. He RAPS again.

MULDER

FBI --

The door opens a bit and ASHMAN appears, peering past the night chain. Mulder badges him. (X)

MULDER

Sorry to wake you. (X)

ASHMAN

You didn't wake me. Come on in. (X)

CONTINUED

19 CONTINUED: 19

Ashman undoes the chain. (X)

20 INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS 20

Mulder takes in the small, dingy room. He notes the overflowing ashtray, moves on.

MULDER (X)
We're investigating a death in (X)
the room next to you. A man (X)
named Thomas Gastall. Did you (X)
know him? (X)

Ashman absently takes out a cigarette. Tamps the tobacco. (X)

ASHMAN (X)
Knew his voice. He yelled a lot. (X)

MULDER (X)
Yelled? (X)

ASHMAN (X)
Said I smoked too much. Whatcha (X)
gonna do, man? It's a free (X)
country. E Pluribus, uh... (X)
(a beat; re: his cig) (X)
You mind? (X)

Mulder may, but he doesn't object. Ashman flips open a Zippo (X)
and lights up. He BLOWS SMOKE toward the ceiling. We watch it (X)
lazily DRIFT over Mulder. (X)

MULDER (X)
You don't seem very surprised (X)
about his death. (X)

Ashman blows smoke rings, nonchalant. (X)

ASHMAN (X)
Guess his number came up. Just (X)
glad it wasn't me. (X)

Mulder gives him a look. (X)

MULDER
What's your name?

ASHMAN (X)
Darrel Weaver. (X)

CONTINUED

20 CONTINUED:

20

MULDER

Mr. Weaver, did you see or hear anything unusual last night?

(X)
(X)
(X)

Ashman -- DARREL WEAVER -- considers Mulder carefully.

(X)

WEAVER

Little Korean fellow down the hall. Dresses like Wonder Woman. But that's every night.

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

MULDER

Other than that?

(X)

Weaver gives Mulder a knowing look.

(X)

WEAVER

Say, there wouldn't happen to be any reward money involved? I could use an extra buck or two.

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

MULDER

The FBI would appreciate your voluntary cooperation. That's how it usually works.

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

WEAVER

Ain't that always the way?

(X)
(X)

Weaver draws in a lungful of filtered mother's milk. Exhales.

(X)

WEAVER

Nope. My mind's drawing up a blank. But if I happen to remember anything, I'll be sure to contact the proper authorities.

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

Off Mulder, giving Weaver a last sidelong look, then exiting through the drifting cigarette smoke:

(X)

CUT TO:

21 INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - EARLY MORNING

21

Mulder steps out of Weaver's room. Weaver stares out inscrutably after him, then closes his door.

Mulder heads for Scully and Skinner, who appear down the hall.

MULDER

Anything?

CONTINUED

21 CONTINUED:

21

Scully shakes her head. (X)

SKINNER (X)

Two victims in less than 24 (X)
hours and we're no closer to an (X)
answer. (X)

SCULLY (X)

Medically, about all I have to (X)
go on at this point is Mulder's (X)
bug. It's at least worth (X)
looking into. (X)

MULDER (X)

Good. You should do that. (X)

Mulder starts toward the exit. Skinner calls after him. (X)

SKINNER

Where are you going?

MULDER

See about something else that's (X)
been bugging me. (X)

He exits. Off Scully and Skinner, looking after him:

CUT TO:

22 EXT. VOSS HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

22

Early Saturday morning, and quiet on the block. Mulder buzzes (X)
the doorbell. After a beat, the door opens, revealing ANNE (X)
VOSS. Her daughter, LILLY, 5, crowds at her knees. (X)

MULDER (X)

Mrs. Voss? Fox Mulder. Is your (X)
husband home? (X)

Before she can answer, Peter Voss appears behind them in an old (X)
sweatshirt and jeans. He's not happy to see Mulder, but he (X)
covers for his family's sake. (X)

VOSS (X)

It's okay, honey. I'll just be (X)
a minute. (X)

ANNE VOSS (X)

Sure thing. (X)

Anne steps away. Voss watches her go, then closes the door, (X)
stepping out onto the porch to join Mulder. (X)

CONTINUED

22 CONTINUED:

22

VOSS (X)
I shouldn't be speaking to you (X)
without our lawyers. (X)

MULDER (X)
I understand your reluctance to (X)
talk. You have a nice family... (X)
(beat) (X)
... A lot to lose. (X)

Voss reacts to Mulder crossing the line. (X)

VOSS (X)
This has nothing to do with my (X)
family. (X)

MULDER (X)
I don't think it's wrong that it (X)
does. Only, your friend Jim (X)
Scobie was willing to take the (X)
risk. His conscience obviously (X)
told him it was worth it. (X)

VOSS (X)
What do you want, Agent Mulder? (X)

MULDER (X)
We found another body. A Thomas (X)
Gastall. He died the same way (X)
Scobie did. (X)

Voss takes a beat. Tries to maintain his composure. (X)

VOSS (X)
I'm very sorry about that. What (X)
does it have to do with me? (X)

Mulder shows him the TOBACCO BEETLE in the evidence bag. (X)

MULDER (X)
We found these all over him. I (X)
believe they're what killed both (X)
men. (X)

VOSS (X)
The tobacco beetle is an (X)
herbivore. It eats tobacco -- (X)
hence the name. (X)

MULDER (X)
Maybe these don't. (X)

CONTINUED

22 CONTINUED: (2)

22

VOSS (X)
(a beat) (X)
I'm really not required to talk (X)
to you, am I? (X)

MULDER (X)
Why are you hiding behind your (X)
lawyers, Doctor? How many (X)
people have to die before you do (X)
the right thing? (X)

Voss drops his eyes, goes inside. Off Mulder, watching him go: (X)

23 INT. VOSS HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - MULDER

23

Is seen in the distance, through curtains, getting in his car and driving off. We're in the POV of:

DR. VOSS

Who peeks out at him. No relief comes from Mulder's departure. Voss looks troubled. A PHONE RINGS, startling him slightly.

VOSS
I'll get it --

He picks up a nearby cordless handset, clicks it on.

VOSS
Hello.

BRIMLEY (V.O.)
What did he want?

Voss is confused momentarily. Confusion gives way to unease. He moves to the window again, peers out right and left. He sees:

HIS POV - A DARK SEDAN

Is parked a few doors down the street. It's inconspicuous -- except for now, when we're looking for it.

CLOSE - VOSS

Stares out, outraged, still with the phone to his ear. He keeps (X)
his voice low so his wife (off in another part of the house) (X)
won't hear.

VOSS
Are you spying on me? -- (X)

INTERCUT WITH:

A24 INT. BRIMLEY'S SEDAN - CONTINUOUS

A2

Brimley sits in his parked car, holding a cell phone to his ear.

BRIMLEY

I'm not spying on you, Peter,
I'm looking out for you. What
did he want?

VOSS

I don't report to you, Brimley.
Why are you watching me?

(X)
(X)
(X)

BRIMLEY

(cold steel)
What did he say?

(X)
(X)
(X)

Voss hesitates, reacting to Brimley's tone.

(X)

VOSS

There's been another death.
Downtown.

Brimley looks grim. This definitely isn't good news.

BRIMLEY

How did it happen?

(X)
(X)

VOSS

I don't know.
(off the silence)
This has gone far enough. We
should come forward. I should.

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

BRIMLEY

Do you hear what you're saying,
Peter? I want you take a
moment. Think about what really
matters to you. What's most
important.

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

Voss holds the phone to his ear, face tight.

(X)

BRIMLEY

The best thing for you to do
right now is sit tight and
relax. You don't need to talk
to anybody.

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

(beat)

Now tell me where I can find
Darrel Weaver.

(X)
(X)
(X)

VOSS

Weaver? Why?

(X)

CONTINUED

A24 CONTINUED:

A2

BRIMLEY

This was my mistake. I'll clean it up.

(X)
(X)
(X)

Voss doesn't like the sound of this.

(X)

VOSS

(lying)

I don't know where he is --

(X)
(X)
(X)

The line goes dead. Voss looks up as Brimley's car pulls away down the street. Off Voss, a sickened feeling rising in him:

(X)
(X)

CUT TO:

25 OMITTED
THRU
27

25
TH
27

A26 INT. MORGUE - DAY - A TOBACCO BEETLE

(X)A2

Fills frame, magnified umpteen times -- looking like something out of a horror movie or a nightmare. Ideally, it is still ALIVE and bracketed into place so that it WIGGLES its head and legs, trying to get free. Over this:

DR. LIBBY NANCE (O.S.)

This doesn't make sense...

(X)

We reveal we're in the MICROSCOPE POV of:

(X)

DR. LIBBY NANCE

A young, studious entomologist. She stares down at the beetle, worried, through a binocular microscope. We ADJUST to reveal Scully and Skinner standing behind her, awaiting her opinion.

(X)

(X)

SKINNER

What doesn't make sense?

(X)

Dr. Nance lifts her eyes from the microscope, turns to them.

DR. LIBBY NANCE

It's a *Con oderus lividus*. A tobacco beetle. The adult phase of the tobacco wireworm. Only, I've never seen one exactly like this.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

SCULLY

What's different about it?

CONTINUED

A26 CONTINUED:

A2

Doctor Nance offers the eyepiece. (X)

DR. LIBBY NANCE
Physical differences. Minor, (X)
but definitely notable.
Deviations in the mandibles, the
antennae, the body segmentation.

Scully peers through the microscope, takes her word for it.

SKINNER
What could those deviations mean?

DR. LIBBY NANCE
I'm not sure I understand the
question.

SCULLY
Do they indicate differences in (X)
the beetle's life or (X)
reproductive cycles? Maybe in
its feeding patterns?

Dr. Nance doesn't quite see where Scully is going with this. (X)

DR. LIBBY NANCE
It's conceivable. But it's (X)
nothing I can tell just by (X)
looking at it. (X)

SCULLY
What if such deviations arose (X)
from genetic engineering? (X)

Dr. Nance gives Scully a look. Skinner does, too. (X)

DR. LIBBY NANCE
Engineerin g the bugs themselves? (X)

SCULLY
No. I was thinking of another (X)
possibility -- "transgenomics." (X)

Dr. Nance considers it. Skinner isn't familiar with the word. (X)

SKINNER
Which is...? (X)

SCULLY
It's a form of DNA manipulation. (X)
Alterations made on the genetic (X)
level. (X)

CONTINUED

A26 CONTINUED: (2)

A2

DR. LIBBY NANCE

It is pretty widely known that (X)
 the tobacco companies have been (X)
 pouring money into that type of (X)
 research -- changing the tobacco (X)
 plant itself in order to make it (X)
 heartier, give it more nicotine, (X)
 or less nicotine, make it (X)
 naturally menthol-flavored... (X)
 you name it. (X)

SKINNER

"Super tobacco." (X)

SCULLY

Which possibly could have (X)
 created super bugs. (X)
 (beat) (X)
 The real question is, could they (X)
 have become dangerous to humans? (X)
 (X)

Dr. Nance has no answer for that. Off Scully and Skinner, (X)
 looking to one another:

28 INT. SKID ROW HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY

28

We frame Thomas Gastall's closed hotel room door -- yellow
 "POLICE LINE" tape seals it. We hear a faint, o.s. RAPPING.

We PAN to find Voss in b.g., RAPPING on Weaver's door one room
 down. He can't help but stare our way at the police tape, sick
 worry in his eyes.

CLOSER - DR. VOSS

Looks over his shoulder, not wanting anyone to see him here. He
 hisses low through the door.

VOSS

Mr. Weaver... Mr. Weaver --

WEAVER (O.S.)

If it isn't the good doctor?

Voss quickly turns to see, down the hall:

REVERSE - DARREL WEAVER

Approaching with a relaxed smile on his face. Voss steps
 forward, indicates the cordoned-off door to Gastall's room.

CONTINUED

28 CONTINUED:

28

VOSS

What happened here? --

WEAVER

Well, you tell me. You're the one with the Ph.D. -- I'm just the big ol' guinea pig.

Weaver unlocks his room and enters.

29 INT. WEAVER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

29

Voss follows Weaver in, shuts the door behind them.

VOSS

You have to leave town.

WEAVER

What, and give up all this?

He motions expansively around this cramped little dump. We assume he's kidding -- but with Weaver, you're never quite sure.

WEAVER

Me not do my part for science? You and me are gonna win the Noble Prize.

VOSS

Nobel. Here, take it. It's everything I have in the bank.

Voss hands him a fat Cradock Marine Bank envelope. Weaver tears it open, finds a thick stack of new HUNDREDS. Well, alright.

WEAVER

How much is here?

VOSS

Four thousand.

(X)

WEAVER

Hmm. It ain't much. But I guess it's a start.

(X)

(X)

Weaver tucks it in his jacket.

VOSS

I'm not kidding. You have to get out of here.

(X)

(X)

CONTINUED

29 CONTINUED:

29

Weaver pulls out a pack of the BLANK WHITE CIGARETTES Voss gave him earlier. (X)
(X)

WEAVER

Why? I got me a pretty good (X)
thing going here. Cash money (X)
and all the coffin nails I can (X)
suck down. (X)

He slips one between his lips. Voss looks uncomfortable -- measurably more so as Weaver flicks his LIGHTER, dances the flame near the cigarette, just inches from lighting it. He's enjoying the doctor's reaction.

WEAVER

Although lately, I'm starting to (X)
think this particular brand
doesn't do anyone else any
favors, health-wise.
(off Voss' silence)
Is that what you're thinking
too? Would it bother you if I
lit one up?

Voss reaches for the pack, but Weaver pulls his hand away. Voss, not a strong man on the best of days, resorts to pleading.

VOSS

Please -- let me destroy them.
I'll give you any other kind of
cigarette you want. As many as
you want.

WEAVER

But I'd really walk a mile for
these, Doc. They satisfy.

Weaver finally clicks off his lighter, never having lit up. He moves to the door, holds it open for Voss.

WEAVER

Toodles.

Voss starts to lose it. (X)

VOSS

You don't understand. Morley is (X)
a multi-billion dollar global (X)
corporation. You think they're (X)
going to let you endanger that? (X)
They'll kill you first. (X)

Weaver gives him a shrug. (X)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

WEAVER
Sounds like a Darrel Weaver
problem to me.

Voss very reluctantly leaves. Off Weaver, smiling after him:

30 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

30

We're in SOMEONE'S POV, watching as Voss exits Weaver's room. Voss slips away like a whipped dog, disappearing down the far end of the hall. We ADJUST TO REVEAL...

... We were watching this through BRIMLEY'S eyes. He stands coolly out of sight around a corner in f.g.

PUSHING IN CLOSE - BRIMLEY

Off him, intently surveilling Weaver's room:

(X)

CUT TO:

31 INT. MORGUE - DAY - LOW ANGLE - MORNING

(X) 31

Wears protective glasses and autopsy garb. She's staring down intently at something just past us o.s. -- something which has her looking as close to queasy as Dr. Scully ever gets.

Skinner appears behind her. He stares down at what she's staring at, trying to downplay his own distasteful reaction.

(X)

(X)

SKINNER
What are we looking at?

(X)

(X)

SCULLY
Thomas Gastall's left lung and
bronchus.

(X)

(X)

(X)

SKINNER
I guess we know now where the
beetles came from.

We reveal they're looking down at:

A REMOVED HUMAN LUNG (ONE LOBE)

Which sits sliced open atop a stainless steel tray. The entire lobe is swarming with wriggling TOBACCO WIREWORMS. They crawl in and out of the pink tissue.

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED:

31

SCULLY AND SKINNER

Continue to stare down at this alarming, nauseating sight. Behind them, Mulder enters the room. It's a subtle change, but he doesn't look too hot. A bit pale. Scully glances at him.

SCULLY

Mulder, where have you been? (X)

MULDER

Talking to lawyers from Justice. (X)
Trying to get a look at Morley's (X)
files (X)

SCULLY

Well, get a look at this. (X)

Mulder sees the wriggling worms. It's not a sight he enjoys. He nods and turns away, walks over by the counters in b.g.

SCULLY

They're the larval stage of the tobacco beetle. Somehow they ended up... nesting in Thomas Gastall's lungs.

MULDER

Yeah.

SKINNER

What doesn't make sense is why (X)
Scobie's lungs didn't show this (X)
same condition. (X)

SCULLY

They did exhibit massive tissue damage. I assume that first body was discovered further along in the insects' life cycle.

(beat)

The larvae must pupate inside the lungs. Once they mature into beetles, they exit the body en masse.

SKINNER

That would explain the condition of the face and throat. Only, how do they get into the lungs to begin with?

Scully doesn't know. In b.g., Mulder COUGHS hard into his hand.

CONTINUED

31 CONTINUED: (2)

31

This gets the attention of Scully and Skinner -- they both look to Mulder. Oddly, he just stares down into his hand.

SCULLY

Mulder..?

Mulder looks up at them, shaken -- doesn't speak. Seeing the expression on his face, Scully eases closer.

Mulder slowly opens his hand, shows it to them. His palm is flecked with bright BLOOD.

Scully and Skinner are shocked by this. Off Mulder, COUGHING AGAIN, more violently now...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

32 INT. ASHEFORD MEDICAL CENTER - SURGERY BAY - DAY - SCULLY (X) 32

Wears surgical scrubs and a mask that doesn't hide her concern. She stands back, observing something intently. In the f.g., we see a flurry of motion, hear the CLINK of steel instruments. All this is accompanied by a continuous SUCTIONING SOUND.

We PAN OFF Scully to see she's watching a CLOSE CIRCUIT MONITOR, (X) displaying: A fiber-optic camera view of the inside of a human (X) lung. We PAN OVER further to reveal a team of SURGEONS, working (X) with haste and precision over:

MULDER

Lying unconscious on an operating table. A NARROW VACUUM WAND has been inserted down his throat into his lungs, and is being carefully manipulated by one of the surgeons.

We FOLLOW the wand's translucent tubing, seeing INCH-LONG SHAPES suction past inside. The tubing is connected to a large, glass reservoir, slowly filling with mucous and SQUIRMING WIREWORMS.

CLOSE - SCULLY

Consumed with worry. Unable to watch anymore, she slips out.

33 INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS 33

Skinner paces. He turns as he sees Scully approaching, taking off her mask.

SKINNER

How is he?

Her expression tells him it's a toss-up.

SCULLY

They're using a surgical vacuum designed to treat cystic fibrosis -- so far, they're having some success at clearing his lungs.

SKINNER

But..?

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED:

33

SCULLY

It's only a stopgap. For every larval-stage worm in his lungs, there's probably a dozen eggs which have yet to hatch.

SKINNER

Eggs.

Scully nods, her dismay at this thought a match for his.

SCULLY

Nearly microscopic -- thousands of them. The pulmonary tissue is riddled with them, and they'll continue to hatch. We're just buying time.

Skinner considers.

SKINNER

How did this happen? These eggs -- how did they get in his lungs?

SCULLY

Possibly, they were inhaled.
(thinks a beat)

Smoke.

Scully looks to her boss, suddenly gets it.

SCULLY

The tobacco beetle lives out its life cycle on and around the tobacco plant -- that's where it lays its eggs. If the genetically-altered beetles we found did that, their eggs may have survived processing into cigarettes...

SKINNER

... And been carried into Mulder's lungs as smoke.
(off her nod)

But Mulder isn't a smoker.
Neither was Scobie.

(X)
(X)

SCULLY

Maybe they were around someone who was.

(X)

CONTINUED

33 CONTINUED: (2)

33

Off Skinner, knowing who he needs to talk to -- again:

CUT TO:

34 INT. MORLEY TOBACCO - RESEARCH LAB - DAY

34

We're in a greenhouse of sorts, TRACKING LOW by a mini-forest of healthy TOBACCO PLANTS. LEGEND: MORLEY TOBACCO, AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH DIVISION.

We keep TRACKING along these rows of plants as a pissed-off Skinner strides into view, trailed by two windbreakered FBI AGENTS. They move quickly down the tobacco aisles, finding:

VOSS AND LEAD COUNSEL

Waiting in the back of the lab, near a wall of locked file cabinets. The Lead Counsel moves up to intercept Skinner, who shoves an OFFICIAL-LOOKING DOCUMENT into his hand. Lead Counsel gives it a cursory once-over.

LEAD COUNSEL

I know you have a warrant but you still have to go through me. Dr. Voss' confidentiality agreement is, legally, still in affect --

SKINNER

(cutting him off)
One of my agents is dying of the same thing that killed Dr. Scobie. If I find out you withheld information that could've saved him...

LEAD COUNSEL

We stand by our contention that any and all information is proprietary, and is therefore the sole property of the Morley Tobacco --

Skinner gets in his face.

SKINNER

Listen to me, you little weasel. This isn't about Morley or your precious research. It's about saving someone's life!

Voss suddenly cuts in:

CONTINUED

34 CONTINUED:

34

VOSS

That's exactly what we were
trying to do.

(X)
(X)
(X)

The Lead Counsel steps up.

(X)

LEAD COUNSEL

Doctor Voss. I'm advising you
not to speak --

(X)
(X)
(X)

VOSS

I have to speak. It's gone on
long enough.

(X)
(X)
(X)

Voss turns his gaze to Skinner.

(X)

VOSS

We were trying to create a safer
cigarette. Redesigning the
tobacco plant. Removing
carcinogens on the gene level.

(X)
(X)
(X)

(beat)

I don't even smoke, myself --
neither did Jim Scobie. But we
both knew people were never
going to stop, no matter how
unhealthy it is. So why not
engineer a cigarette that's
actually good for you?

(X)
(X)

SKINNER

That wouldn't describe this one,
Doctor.

Voss sadly shakes his head, agreeing. He's quiet for a moment.

VOSS

We failed to consider how
altering the plant could alter
what feeds on it.

SKINNER

The tobacco wireworm.

VOSS

After a few generations, its
eggs became resistant to harsh
conditions: high temperatures,
extreme PH levels, low
moisture...

CONTINUED

SKINNER

The eggs could survive the tobacco curing process.

VOSS

Exactly. At first it didn't seem to be a problem. The cigarettes were safer. We recruited test smokers, conducted a focus group. There were no problems. Not at first.

SKINNER

Then what happened?

The Lead Counsel interrupts:

(X)

LEAD COUNSEL

(X)

(a warning)

(X)

Doctor --

(X)

Skinner silences him with a look. Voss continues:

(X)

VOSS

(X)

A few months in, things went bad. We had four test subjects...

(X)

(X)

(X)

(a beat; trying to hold back his emotions)

(X)

(X)

(X)

Three of them died.

(X)

SKINNER

(X)

That's what Scobie was going to testify about?

(X)

(X)

VOSS

The company wanted us to stay quiet. I thought we could correct the problem. Jim didn't.

(X)

He looks toward the rows of green tobacco, a tortured man.

SKINNER

You said only three died. Who was the fourth?

(X)

(X)

VOSS

A man named Darrel Weaver. If I knew how he survived, I could help your agent.

(X)

(X)

(X)

Skinner looks to Voss, realizing:

(X)

34 CONTINUED: (3)

34

SKINNER

Weaver was at the motel.

(X)

Off Voss' look, confirming it:

(X)

CUT TO:

35 INT. WEAVER'S ROOM - DAY - THE DOOR

35

BOOTS OPEN, kicked in by Skinner, followed by his two agents and Voss. Skinner stands ready, his pistol aimed. He cautiously sweeps the room. (X)
(X)

HIS MOVING POV - THE ROOM

An unmade bed, scattered fast food containers. We round a corner to REVEAL:

BRIMLEY

Gagged and bound to a chair. His head is slumped -- a trace of dried BLOOD shows on his scalp where he was cold-cocked.

RESUME SKINNER

He crosses to Brimley, scans the rest of the room -- Weaver is gone. Skinner lifts Brimley's head. He's alive, barely. (X)

VOSS

He told me he wanted to get to Weaver.

(X)

(X)

(X)

SKINNER

Looks like Weaver got to him first.

(X)

(X)

Skinner works to untie the gag knot. Brimley comes to, enough to see Skinner -- his eyes more panicked than comforted. Skinner pulls off the gag.

SKINNER

Mr. Brimley. Can you hear me?

(X)

CLOSE - BRIMLEY

Tries to speak. He opens his mouth and lets out a faint GURGLE. But now, out come...

... BEETLES swarming out of his mouth! They crawl across his lips, up his face. His face is quickly COVERED by the insects.

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED:

35

SKINNER

Backs off a step as the others react. Off Skinner's look of horror: (X)

CUT TO:

36 INT. A DARK SEDAN

36

Eases by right past us. As it pulls to a stop, its rear bumper CLOSE in f.g., we read a MORLEY EMPLOYEE PARKING sticker affixed to it. We recognize the car as Brimley's. We are:

EXT. SERVICE STATION - NIGHT

We're at a combination gas stop and mini-mart. Brimley's sedan is pulled up to the pumps. (X)

WEAVER (X)

steps out of the car, sucking on a smoldering butt. He crushes it out. Pulls out a BLANK WHITE PACK and sees: (X)

CLOSE ON - THE PACK (X)

Only one cigarette left. (X)

RESUME WEAVER (X)

Shaking it out, tossing the crumpled pack. He starts to light up. Suddenly notices: (X)

A "NO SMOKING" SIGN (X)

Posted on the pumps. He disregards the sign as he lights up anyway and slouches toward the mini-mart.. (X)

37 OMITTED
AND
38

(X) 37
ANI
38

39 INT. MINI-MART - CONTINUOUS

(X) 39

Weaver enters and eyes the malt liquor. Not seeing his brand, he calls out to the BORED MANAGER, who sits behind the counter flipping through a hotrod magazine. (X)

WEAVER (X)
Mickey's Big Mouth? (X)

CONTINUED

39 CONTINUED:

39

MANAGER (X)
(not looking up) (X)
In the cooler. (X)

Weaver pulls out Brimley's wallet. Fishes in it for a \$20. (X)
Tosses it on the counter. (X)

WEAVER (X)
Why don't you grab me some. (X)

The Manager eyes the \$20. A beat. Then he drags his sorry, (X)
slacker butt from behind the counter and fetches the beer. (X)

ANGLE ON WEAVER (X)

He snags a fistful of items from the display racks -- chips, (X)
motor oil, air fresheners -- just because he can. He sets them (X)
on the counter. (X)

WEAVER (X)
I'll take these too. (X)

His gaze drifts to the CIGARETTE CARTONS just above his head, (X)
stacked in the over-counter display. (X)

MANAGER (X)
Total's twelve seventy-seven. (X)
Anything else, Mr. Rockefeller? (X)
Carton of cigarettes? (X)

WEAVER (X)
Don't have my brand. (X)

ANGLE ON THE MANAGER (X)

As he makes change from the \$20, his head is turned by a RADIO (X)
SQUAWK from outside. He looks out to see: (X)

THROUGH THE GLASS - A SHERIFF'S CAR (X)

Which has pulled up behind Brimley's sedan. A couple of (X)
DEPUTIES are slowly climbing out, eyeing the car. (X)

RESUME THE MANAGER (X)

Turning back, surprised, to find -- Weaver is gone. No sign (X)
that he was ever there at all. (X)

CUT TO: (X)

40 OMITTED
AND
41

(X) 40
AN.
41

42 CLOSE ON - MULDER'S HAND

42

Lying atop the bed sheet, a HOSPITAL I.D. BRACELET on his wrist. Scully's hand comes INTO FRAME, settling on Mulder's. We are:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mulder is asleep, post-surgery. Scully stands at his bedside, a youngish DOCTOR checking the chart behind her

(X)
(X)

Mulder wakes up, groggy. He sees Scully, sees her hand atop his. He manages a weak smile -- he can barely speak.

MULDER

Uh-oh... must be bad...

Scully smiles. Squeezes his hand.

SCULLY

How do you feel?

MULDER

Like I was attacked by a Dustbuster.

DOCTOR

It looks like the deep suction worked. It bought us some time.

(X)
(X)
(X)

MULDER

Time for what --

(X)
(X)

COUGHING shakes Mulder, makes him tense up with pain. Scully presses a gentle hand to his chest, tries to hold him still so he doesn't hurt himself worse. Deep concern shows in her eyes.

(X)

SCULLY

There's someone we're looking for who may be able to help you -- whether he wants to or not.

(X)

(off Mulder's look)

The man who infected you in the first place. A Morley test subject named Darrel Weaver.

MULDER

Mr. "E Pluribus."

Scully doesn't know what that refers to.

CONTINUED

42 CONTINUED:

42

MULDER

I should have known it was him. (X)
He reeked of cigarettes the way (X)
few people do. (X) (X)

SCULLY

Weaver seems to have some sort (X)
of tolerance or immunity. Once (X)
we find him, I'm hoping we can
figure out a way to treat you --

A LOUD ELECTRONIC WAIL makes her jump -- a pulmonary monitor (X)
ALARM. Mulder isn't breathing. The Doctor rushes to Mulder's (X)
side, taken aback.

DOCTOR

His oxygen level is dropping. (X)
This shouldn't be happening. (X) (X)

Scully takes charge. She checks Mulder's carotid pulse and (X)
airway. (X)

SCULLY

Weak pulse, no respiration. (X)
He's coding! Give him O2 -- (X) (X)

A Nurse slaps an oxygen mask over Mulder's mouth as Scully scans (X)
the monitors. Mulder's vitals are dropping. She sees -- (X)

HER CLOSE POV - MULDER (X)

Through the clear plastic of his oxygen mask, we see a LONE (X)
BEETLE scurry into view. (X)

Off Scully, swallowing her horror -- working to save Mulder: (X)

FADE OUT:

43 OMITTED
AND
44

43
ANI
44

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

45 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT - MULDER

45

Is seen in the distance through a glass window. Inside his ICU room, he lies unconscious, though stabilized -- not right at death's door, as he was when we saw him last. He's being tended to by the Nurse. We find we're in the POV of...

SCULLY

(X)

Who stares in through the glass, thoughtful and grim. She raises an MRI sheet, uses the overheads as backlight as she peers through it. She's crestfallen at what she sees.

(X)

The young DOCTOR stands beside her, quietly consulting.

(X)

DOCTOR

We've got him stabilized for the moment -- but he could arrest again at any time.

(points to MRI)

Of course, you see why.

On the MRI, we glimpse a faint swirl of WIREWORMS, their bodies ghostly transparent in Mulder's lungs.

SCULLY

There's more now than there were six hours ago.

DOCTOR

They're beginning to block the flow of blood. Our best bet is to go back in there.

SCULLY

The suction procedure?

(X)

The Doctor shakes his head.

DOCTOR

I think this time we have to crack the chest.

Scully considers, keeps staring at the MRI.

SCULLY

No.

DOCTOR

No?

CONTINUED

45 CONTINUED:

45

SCULLY

He's too weak for thoracic surgery -- you'd kill him on the table. Also --

(points to MRI)

-- The largest cluster is around the pulmonary artery. Even if he were stronger... it's too risky.

(X)

The Doctor looks to Scully.

(X)

DOCTOR

I don't know what our other options are. This man you're looking for -- you may never find him.

(X)

(X)

(X)

Scully considers it, aware of the consequences.

(X)

SCULLY

I say for the time being, we wait.

DOCTOR

Agent, that will definitely kill him. Sooner or later.

He says this gently, not being a prick about it. Scully turns to stare in through the glass at Mulder. Off her, worried sick:

(X)

(X)

CUT TO:

A46 INT. VOSS HOUSE - NIGHT

(X) A4

Anne Voss opens her front door to reveal Skinner and several FBI AGENTS. Skinner shows his badge as the agents push in past her, already setting up shop.

(X)

(X)

(X)

ANNE VOSS

What is this? What's going on?

(X)

(X)

SKINNER

Mrs. Voss, I'm A.D. Walter Skinner. May I speak to your husband?

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

ANNE VOSS

He's not here. I thought he was at the lab.

(X)

(X)

Skinner reacts, concerned.

(X)

CONTINUED

A46 CONTINUED:

A41

SKINNER (X)
He told me he was going home. (X)
(to one of his agents) (X)
Try Dr. Voss at work. (X)

ANNE VOSS (X)
I've been trying. For the last (X)
hour. There's no answer. (X)

Off Skinner, his fears confirmed, wiping frame: (X)

CUT TO:

46 INT. MORLEY TOBACCO - RESEARCH LAB - NIGHT - SKINNER (X) 46

Enters the darkened research lab, his pistol raised. He moves (X)
cautiously down the dark rows of tobacco, on alert. As he (X)
approaches the end of one aisle, he sees:

DOCTOR VOSS (X)

Sitting in a pool of light from a desk lamp, nervous, fidgeting. (X)

VOSS (X)
He's behind you. (X)

Skinner spins, leading with his weapon, to see Darrel Weaver (X)
emerge from the shadows. (X)

SKINNER (X)
Stop right there! (X)

WEAVER (X)
Why? You going to shoot me? (X)

SKINNER (X)
If I have to. (X)

Weaver tamps a pack of WHITES, cracks them open. Shakes one out (X)
and puts it between his lips. (X)

WEAVER (X)
That's where you're wrong. You (X)
need me... need me to save your (X)
boy. (X)

Skinner tenses up as -- PPPPHHTT! -- Weaver strikes a match. (X)

SKINNER (X)
Put that out. (X)

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED:

46

WEAVER

You know, they say these (X)
things'll kill you. But it (X)
don't have to be that way. You (X)
gotta figure, the first car (X)
killed a buncha people before (X)
they perfected it. It's all (X)
part of the... scientific (X)
process. (X)

Weaver starts to bring the flaring match toward the cigarette in (X)
his mouth. (X)

SKINNER

Mr. Weaver, I will shoot you! (X)

WEAVER

No, you won't. (X)

He lights the cigarette, taking a deep drag. Blows out a cloud (X)
of smoke. Skinner takes an involuntary step back. (X)

WEAVER

See, I'm a regular damn. (X)
scientific marvel. They're (X)
going to study me. Write all (X)
sorts of scientific papers. I (X)
might even be the cure to (X)
cancer. Me -- Darrel Weaver. (X)

Skinner hesitates, letting his weapon sink a little. (X)

WEAVER

You ain't gonna shoot me. (X)

Weaver smiles -- thinks he has him. He starts to walk toward (X)
the door. (X)

WEAVER

Toodles... (X)

BLAM! -- Weaver takes a hit in the shoulder and goes down. The (X)
burning cigarette tumbles to the floor. (X)

LOW ANGLE - SKINNER (X)

Lowers his smoking gun, heads our way. We ADJUST to find the (X)
deadly cigarette lying in f.g. -- Skinner's SHOE comes down on (X)
it, gives it a twist and crushes it out. (X)

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED: (2)

DARREL WEAVER

Lies on the floor, holding his bleeding shoulder and staring up at Skinner in stunned surprise.

SKINNER

Stares grimly down at the man, holsters his pistol. Off him, and Voss behind him, looking relieved:

CUT TO:

47 INT. HOSPITAL - ER - NIGHT - SWINGING DOORS

BURST open. PARAMEDICS roll in a gurney carrying Darrel Weaver, who's still conscious, though barely. Skinner is with them. He sees:

ANGLE - SCULLY AND THE DOCTOR

Hurrying up the hall to intercept them. Scully sees Weaver's been shot.

SKINNER

I had to shoot him. He was trying to get away. How's Mulder?

SCULLY

Not good.

She turns her attention to Weaver, checks him out. He has an oxygen mask on his face and compression bandages on his shoulder.

SCULLY

(to Nurse)

We need blood work on this man --

The woman nods. Scully looks at Weaver's shoulder wound...

...her gaze travelling down to his HAND. She notices something. She takes Weaver's hand --

SCULLY

Wait.

The Paramedics stop pushing the gurney. Skinner looks to Scully, wondering what she sees -- they all do. Scully is staring closely at:

CONTINUED

47 CONTINUED:

47

CLOSE PUSH IN - WEAVER'S HAND (X)

We see the YELLOWED SKIN of nicotine-stained fingertips. (X)

SCULLY (X)
Get me 10 cc's of methyl (X)
pyrrolidine. (X)

DOCTOR (X)
(puzzled) (X)
Pure nicotine? (X)

SCULLY (X)
I think it could save Mulder's (X)
life. (X)

Off Scully, her theory crystallizing: (X)

CUT TO:

A48 INT. MULDER'S OFFICE - DAY (X) A48

A LEGEND tells us it's: TWO WEEKS LATER. Scully enters to find (X)
Mulder sitting at his desk, sorting through a backlog of (X)
paperwork. He's still weak and talking hoarsely, but he looks (X)
a hell of a lot better. (X)

SCULLY (X)
Good to be back? (X)

MULDER (X)
Beats the alternative. (X)

SCULLY (X)
Morley Tobacco's subpoenaed all (X)
of our records on the case. (X)

MULDER (X)
(shaking his head) (X)
Still trying to make a safer (X)
cigarette. What about Weaver? (X)

SCULLY (X)
He's being held in the hospital (X)
ward at Raleigh Correctional. (X)

MULDER (X)
I hope you told him it's a non- (X)
smoking facility. (X)

Scully smiles. Mulder studies her, appreciative. (X)

CONTINUED

A48 CONTINUED:

MULDER

So, nicotine itself was keeping him alive.

(X)
(X)
(X)

Scully nods.

(X)

SCULLY

Weaver's fingertips were stained yellow with it. He's a four pack a day smoker -- far heavier than any member of the focus group who died. I'm just sorry I didn't think of it sooner.

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

(off his look)

(X)

Nicotine is extremely poisonous. In fact... it's one of the oldest known insecticides.

(X)
(X)
(X)

MULDER

(gets it)

Good for killing wireworms.

(X)
(X)
(X)

SCULLY

Once we put enough of it in your system, it worked like a sort of chemotherapy -- although it almost stopped your breathing.

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

MULDER

That's not all it did.

(X)
(X)

Scully looks to him, wonders what he means. Mulder reaches into his pocket. Pulls out an unopened pack of Morleys.

(X)
(X)

MULDER

Bought these on the way in to work.

(X)
(X)

SCULLY

You're not going to start smoking.

(X)
(X)
(X)

MULDER

(shrugs)

They say the addiction is more powerful than heroin.

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

SCULLY

(a warning)

Mulder...

(X)
(X)
(X)

Mulder surrenders. Tosses the cigarettes into the trash.

(X)

CONTINUED

A48 CONTINUED: (2)

A4

SCULLY
Skinner's waiting for us up in
his office. (X)
(X)
(X)

MULDER
I'll be there in a minute,
Scully. (X)
(X)
(X)

Scully exits. Mulder just sits there for a beat. He looks to
the trashcan: (X)

HIS POV - THE PACK OF MORLEYS (X)

Just lies there, its pristine red-and-white label beckoning. (X)

RESUME MULDER (X)

Fighting the temptation of the Siren's call. Off his indecision: (X)

FADE OUT.

48 OMITTED
THRU
51

48
THI
51

THE END