

THE X-FILES

"Wetwired"

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Directed by

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April 3, 1996

"Wetwired"

CAST

Agent Fox Mulder
Agent Dana Scully
Joseph Patnik
First Officer
Second Officer
X
Dr. Stroman
1st Kid
2nd Kid

Byers (X)
Langly
Frohike
Motel Manager
Helene Riddock (Non-speaking) (X)
Mrs. Scully
A.D. Walter Skinner
Coroner
Dr. Lorenz
Duty Nurse
Cigarette Smoking Man

April 3, 1996

"Wetwired"

SET LIST

EXTERIORS:

TREE FARM
PATNIK'S HOUSE
 /DRIVEWAY
PARKING LOT OFF THE MALL
MIRADOR HOTEL
 /PARKING LOT
SUBURBAN BACKYARD
NEIGHBORHOOD STREET
MARYLAND COUNTY ROAD
MORGUE
MRS. SCULLY'S HOUSE
FBI HEADQUARTERS
D.C. STREET

INTERIORS:

PATNIK'S HOUSE
 /KITCHEN
 /DEN
 /WALK-IN CLOSET
MULDER'S CAR
FBI HEADQUARTERS

 /MULDER'S OFFICE (X)
 /SKINNER'S OFFICE
MARYLAND STATE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL
 /HOSPITAL ROOM
MIRADOR MOTEL (X)
 /MULDER'S ROOM
 /SCULLY'S ROOM
RENTAL SEDAN
RIDDOCK'S HOUSE
 /LIVING ROOM
LONE GUNMEN OFFICE
MRS. SCULLY'S HOUSE
MULDER'S APARTMENT
MORGUE VIEWING ROOM
NORTHEAST GEORGETOWN MEDICAL CENTER
 /HALLWAY
 /HOSPITAL ROOM
SAFE HOUSE
 /LIVING ROOM
 /KITCHEN
TOWN CAR

"WETWIRED"

1 EXT. TREE FARM (SUBURBAN MARYLAND) - NIGHT

We hover above the neatly-ruled acres of trees. It's a beautiful night, and there's no one around for miles. A LEGEND reads: BRADDOCK HEIGHTS, MARYLAND, FEBRUARY 27, 1996. 10:16 PM.

We begin to pick up on the CHUNK-SHUSH... CHUNK-SHUSH of a shovel. It grows louder as we ease down through the pine branches. We hear labored breathing. Someone is working fast.

We CRANE DOWN to reveal...

A MIDDLE-AGED MAN

head down, digging away like Mike Mulligan. Sweat and dirt fly. The man -- JOSEPH PATNIK -- tosses the last scoop of earth and drops the shovel with a clang, then jumps up out of:

THE SHALLOW GRAVE

he's just finished. We hold on the grave as he hurries out of frame. He's on the verge of tears, muttering to himself.

PATNIK (O.S.)

All right, you bastard --

RED COWBOY BOOTS

lie splayed akimbo in the grass. Patnik grabs the ankles and STRUGGLES to drag a heavy body through frame...

PATNIK (O.S.)

Evil, rotten... son of a...

... until we can see the dead man's FACE: It's hard and cruel... very distinctive. Thick eyebrows arch over heavy eyelids. Drying blood mats the hair over where the skull was shattered. (X)

PATNIK

who looks like a doughy, balding accountant -- and perhaps is -- grunts as he rolls the body into the grave. He staggers to his feet and takes a deep, satisfied breath. He glances around for witnesses, then begins shoveling dirt to fill the hole.

PATNIK

There you go... There you go...

IN THE BOTTOM OF THE GRAVE

the dead man's extraordinarily cruel face haunts us even as DIRT gets tossed haphazardly over it.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

PATNIK (O.S.)
... Your killing days are OVER.

As one last big shovelful of dirt covers the dead man's face entirely, we:

CUT TO:

2 INT. PATNIK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Moonlight filters in through the windows. The knob turns quietly and the backdoor opens -- Patnik eases into the dark house. He leans his muddy shovel against the counter, then goes to work at the sink.

He scrubs the dirt from his hands and forearms. Drying blood swirls down the drain.

ON PATNIK FROM BEHIND

as he washes up -- a faint SQUEAK causes him to pause... to slowly, fearfully look over his shoulder. His eyes widen on:

PATNIK
No...

THE CRUEL-FACED MAN

whom we thought was dead. He's not -- he seems very much alive as he stands in the doorway into the living room. He's dressed differently, in casual shirt and khakis. He smiles... a smile that makes our skin crawl.

PATNIK (O.S.)
NO! --

WIDE ON ROOM

as Patnik grabs the shovel, SWINGS with all his might. Just as the flat of the blade connects with Cruel-Face's head, we:

MATCH CUT TO:

3 EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

WHHUMMP! -- A CAR TRUNK LID

is slammed HARD by Patnik's two hands. But not hard enough -- the lid doesn't latch. It rises open, revealing a quick glimpse of Cruel-Face. Once again he's bloodied and dead. He doesn't quite fit in the small car's trunk.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

WIDE TO INCLUDE

Patnik batting a dead knee out of the way, cursing as he struggles to latch the trunk. He makes a fair amount of noise -- it echoes around the otherwise silent neighborhood. An offscreen dog starts barking.

Patnik realizes he's being watched. He whirls around to see:

IN HIS NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBOR'S WINDOW

The partial silhouette of a WOMAN staring out at him aghast. She holds a cordless phone to her ear. She speaks into it frantically, as if her life depended on it.

RESUME WIDE

as several LIGHTS go on in the windows of the dark houses immediately surrounding Patnik's home. Patnik is breathing faster now -- hearing the SIRENS that are fast approaching. He shades his eyes from the HEADLIGHTS that wash over him.

TWO POLICE CRUISERS

SCREECH into view, pulling in the driveway behind Patnik's car -- blocking it in tight. OFFICERS climb out of each cruiser, their hands easing toward their holsters. Initially as they approach they are completely SILHOUETTED by their headlights.

FIRST OFFICER

You there! Step away from the trunk! --

PATNIK

slowly raises his hands, giving up. Then he sees something that makes his eyes widen... grow angry.

PATNIK'S POV

The first officer is none other than... Cruel-Face. WHIP-PAN to the second officer: He's Cruel-Face too!

RESUME WIDE

Patnik goes berserk -- tackles the nearest officer, tries to gouge his face. The second officer joins in, pulling Patnik off his partner (during all this we don't see the cop's faces).

The second officer JOLTS Patnik with a stun gun. Patnik's body stiffens, collapses to the asphalt. He rolls onto his side. His eyes work to focus...

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

PATNIK'S POV

We're looking up from the ground at the first Cruel-Face cop. As he looms over us there's a brief burst of DISTORTION -- then we realize that Cruel-Face has turned into a NORMAL COP.

FIRST OFFICER
Damn amp-head! --

The second officer looms into view -- he's NORMAL now, too. He reaches to lift open Patnik's car trunk (it never did latch).

SECOND OFFICER
Oh lord. Jimmy, check this out --

THE FIRST OFFICER

is already yanking a handcuffed Patnik to his feet. He glances over his shoulder into the trunk, closes his eyes briefly.

PATNIK

struggles to see. He catches a glimpse... stifles a sob.

PATNIK
Oh god --

IN THE CAR TRUNK

scrunched to fit, lies a pretty, middle-aged WOMAN. Her long hair flows out over a taillight. The side of her head is bloody, but her eyes are closed, her expression serene. (X)
(X)
(X)

PATNIK (O.S.)
Sarah... SARAH! --

Off this, we... GO TO MAIN TITLES.

ACT ONE

- 4 EXT. PARKING LOT OFF THE MALL - WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT
HIGH, WIDE ANGLE

A lone n.d. sedan sits under a street lamp in the rainslicked parking lot. Under another light at the far end of the lot, TWO MEN are engaging in what looks suspiciously like a drug deal. As the transaction is made and the men go their separate ways, a LEGEND reads: WASHINGTON D.C., FEBRUARY 29, 1996.
2:12 AM.

CLOSER ON CAR

The CAPITAL DOME reflects in the rain-wet window, through which we see Agent Mulder huddled in the front seat. When, suddenly, a shadow eclipses the reflection of the capital. Someone is approaching the car.

- 5 INT. MULDER'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

As he's given a start by X, who pulls the door open and slides in. Mulder straightening, checking his watch.

X
Sorry for the late hour.

MULDER
I figured it must have been important.

X is obviously edgy, tense.

(X)

X
Are you sure you weren't followed?

MULDER
It's just you, me and the drug dealers.

X scans the parking lot.

X
This area has always been known for its criminal element.

MULDER
Particularly when Congress is in session.

X gives Mulder the thinnest of smiles, removes a folded NEWSPAPER from his pocket. Hands it to Mulder.

(X)

(X)

(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

MULDER

What's this?

X

Something you'll want to follow.

INSERT NEWS STORY -- The headline reads: BRADDOCK HEIGHTS MAN
KILLS WIFE, FOUR OTHERS.

MULDER

Follow where?

X

That's all I can tell you. (X)

MULDER

(irritated)

Yeah. I know the drill. But
I've been sitting here for almost
three hours. I need something
more.

X

I may have given you too much
already. I'm risking exposure.
Now more than ever. (X)

MULDER

Why? What's changed? (X)

X

(grave)

They know you have a source,
Agent Mulder. (X)

MULDER

How do they know? (X)

X leaves the question unanswered. He reaches for the door
handle.

X

You came upon this news story
yourself. That's all you'll tell
your partner. (X)

MULDER

I trust my partner with my life. (X)

X

I don't trust her with mine. (X)

X holds Mulder's gaze for a cold moment. He exits the car.
Off Mulder's troubled look, we: (X)

CUT TO:

6 OMITTED

7 INT. MULDER'S OFFICE - MORNING - CLOSE ON COMPUTER SCREEN (X)

which displays a photo and statistical information on Joseph Patnik, the murdering man in the Teaser.

WIDER TO REVEAL MULDER (X)

Studying this information as Scully opens the door, enters. (X)

MULDER

Hey.

SCULLY

Hi. What are you working on? (X)

MULDER

Multiple homicide. Take a look. (X)

Mulder hands her the newspaper from the night before. Scully peruses the headline. (X)
(X)

SCULLY

What's your interest in this? (X)

MULDER

This man Patnik murdered five people, all of whom he insists were the same man. (X)

SCULLY

Delusional episodes frequently culminate in violent behavior. (X)

Mulder hits a command on the keyboard, sending the daisy wheel printer across the room into noisy action. Getting up to retrieve his pages.

MULDER

Except this man had no history of mental illness. Neither did Melissa LeFante, a babysitter in the same town. Two weeks ago, she attacked the two children she was watching. She told the police she thought they were wolves. (X)

Scully considers this. (X)

SCULLY

And police found no other motive for their attacks? (X)

MULDER

None so far. (X)

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

SCULLY (X)
(intrigued)
How'd you find out about this?

Mulder hesitates. (X)

MULDER (X)
It came from an outside source.

SCULLY (X)
Who?

MULDER (X)
I can't tell you that, Scully.

Scully is taken aback by his secrecy. (X)

SCULLY (X)
Why not?
(off his silence)
Mulder, how am I supposed to help
you investigate this case if you
won't tell me everything you
know?

MULDER (X)
I'm telling you everything I can.

Mulder rises, grabs his suit jacket off its hook. He moves (X)
toward the door, looks to see if she's following -- she's not. (X)

MULDER (X)
Are you coming?

Scully sighs, a frustrated look on her face. As she steps past (X)
him out the door, we... (X)

CUT TO:

8 A TV MONITOR 8

Playing CNN's Headline News opening titles. CAMERA ADJUSTING
to reveal Patnik, the killer from the Teaser. He sits in a
chair watching the tube, his expression dull, blank.

DR. STROMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
He'd been in lockup, but it
became clear that he was going to
hurt someone. Or himself.

We are:

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY - MULDER AND SCULLY

stand with DR. STROMAN (40ish, sober) in a spartan resident's room. A LEGEND appears: FREDERICK COUNTY PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL, BRADDOCK HEIGHTS, MARYLAND. (X)
(X)
(X)

DR. STROMAN

They called me down from D.C. to try and develop a clear diagnosis for the court...

MULDER

Have you?

DR. STROMAN

I wish I could say yes.

SCULLY

Has he been sedated?

DR. STROMAN

I've got him on heavy Thorazine. But it only seems to knock him down a notch or two.

MULDER

He seems pretty manageable to me.

DR. STROMAN

It may be some form of Organic Delusional Syndrome, possibly due to chronic methamphetamine abuse. I don't know. But he's prone to outbursts. (X)

ANGLE TO FAVOR PATNIK IN F.G.

MULDER

Who called you down here?

DR. STROMAN

A Dr. Kahn from the department of Social Health Services.

MULDER

Can we talk to him?

DR. STROMAN

I don't think he's in today --

But he is cut short by a sudden outburst from Patnik who begins, yes, HOWLING. Or rather yelling in fear and horror, focused on the TV. Mulder and Scully react, as does Dr. Stroman, who steps to the door. Calling for: (X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

DR. STROMAN

(X)

Orderly!

Mulder and Scully watch as TWO BEEFY ORDERLIES stride into the room and quickly overpower Patnik, who is now out of his seat. He continues carrying on, still focused on the TV set. Mulder and Scully turn to see what has incited him.

ANGLE TO INCLUDE TV MONITOR

(X)

Where a NEWS ANCHOR is doing a story on an accused Bosnian war criminal LLADOSLAV MIRISKOVIC -- the SAME CRUEL-FACED MAN we saw in the Teaser -- whose picture is featured in a supered box. And who, according to the anchor, has been accused of killing over 400 civilians in the town of Shchav in what was formerly Yugoslavia.

RESUME MULDER AND SCULLY

Their curious, baffled reactions to this. Off which we:

CUT TO:

9 EXT. PATNIK'S HOUSE - DAY

Mulder and Scully exit their n.d. sedan at the curb and head toward the front porch. A CABLE TV TRUCK rolls slowly down the street behind them, passing in and out of frame.

SCULLY

(X)

Mulder, if there's something about this case you're not telling me --

MULDER

(X)

You know everything I know.

SCULLY

(X)

Except who told you about it. This outside source, Mulder -- what's his interest in this case? What does he want us to uncover?

MULDER

(X)

I don't know.

SCULLY

(X)

Then you don't know if we're being used.

Mulder turns to face her, speaking quietly.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

MULDER
If you don't feel comfortable
working under these
circumstances, I'll understand if
you want to step away.

(X)

Mulder steps ahead of her as he mounts the stairs to Patnik's
front door. Scully, dissatisfied, follows him.

(X)

(X)

CUT TO:

10 A PICTURE OF PATNIK AND HIS DECEASED WIFE SARAH

1

in happier times. Smiling for the camera in a framed photo.
CAMERA SLIDES TO REVEAL Mulder and Scully entering the front
door. Mulder dropping the streamer of crime scene tape he's
peeled from the door. When THE SOUND OF A WOMAN SCREAMING puts
them on red alert. Both of them instinctively pull their
weapons.

CUT TO:

11 INT. DEN - DAY - ANGLE ON DOORWAY

1

Where Mulder's head ducks in, then pulls back. Then ducks
again again more slowly as he steps into the doorway, seeing:

A GIANT SCREEN TV

across the room, past a sofa. On it is DIE HARD.

REVERSE ON MULDER AND SCULLY, OVER THE TOP OF THE SOFA

As they step into the room, lowering their weapons as they see
who's watching this giant TV set. Who we see, too, as the
CAMERA ARMS DOWN and REVEALS TWO 13 YEAR-OLD BOYS reclining on
opposite ends of the couch, using chocolate chip cookies to
scoop ice cream from half gallon containers. Bags of cookies,
cans of coke, bags of tortilla chips are on the coffee table.

The kids just about jump out of their skin when they hear:

MULDER
Isn't this a school day?

They drop the ice cream and cookies like criminals dropping
their weapons, on their feet in a blink.

1ST KID
We didn't cut.

2ND KID
We got a pass.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

MULDER

A pass to watch movies and eat
these people's food?

Both boys shift their weight, hang their heads sheepishly.

1ST KID

No.

2ND KID

Are we in trouble now?

SCULLY

How'd you get in here?

1ST KID

Through the window. They leave
it open for the cat.

Scully looks to Mulder. What now?

MULDER

Okay. Maybe you should go on
back to school.

Both boys don't hesitate, head back to the window.

MULDER

Front door.

The boys do an about-face, head out quickly. Mulder watches
them go. Scully moves off, checking out the rest of the room. (X)

MULDER

scans the immediate area, then takes a step toward the TV, (X)
intending to turn it off. He hesitates as the image of DIE (X)
HARD suddenly turns to SNOW, accompanied by LOUD STATIC. (X)

Mulder looks around, a quizzical expression on his face. His (X)
gaze falls on the window. Out of which, he sees: (X)

MULDER'S POV OUT WINDOW

The cable truck that drove past Mulder and Scully is parked out (X)
front by a UTILITY POLE. A CABLE MAN finishes his work at the (X)
top of the pole, then starts to climb down.

REVERSE ON MULDER

noting this. (X)

SCULLY (O.S.)

Mulder...

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

Her voice turns his attention to the far end of the room where: (X)
ANGLE ON SCULLY

Standing in front of a large walk-in closet, the doors of which she's got swung open. Inside are shelf after shelf, row upon row of VIDEO CASSETTES.

12 INT. WALK-IN CLOSET

Scully enters and Mulder trails, scanning the rows of plastic cassette cases, neatly labeled.

SCULLY

There must be over a thousand tapes in here.

MULDER

Anything good?

Scully gives him a quick, sharp look. What does he mean by good?

SCULLY

All I see are recordings of news shows. All dated and in chronological order.

Mulder is looking at the other wall of tapes.

MULDER

That's what these are. I think this whole collection is recordings of CNN broadcasts.

SCULLY

That's what Patnik was watching in the hospital when he went all wiggly. (X)

Scully pulls a random tape off the shelf, presenting it to Mulder.

SCULLY

What if there's some connection between what he saw and what he did? (X)

As Mulder takes her meaning -- and steels himself for a long night of videotape viewing, we:

CUT TO:

13 INT. MULDER'S ROOM - MIRADOR MOTEL - NIGHT 1

A PILE OF SUNFLOWER SHELLS

six hours' worth -- overflows a motel ashtray. A man's fingers add to it, dropping yet another empty shell.

WIDEN TO INCLUDE MULDER

sitting up in bed, munching sunflower seeds. On the TV in front of him, CNN COVERAGE speeds by at fast-forward. Mulder fights to keep his eyes open.

The VCR winds to a halt -- the tape he's watching has come to an end. Mulder gets up, stretches, steps over a huge pile of VIEWED TAPES to press "eject" on the VCR.

Mulder haphazardly tosses this last tape onto the overflowing pile as he exits the room.

CUT TO:

14 INT. SCULLY'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT 14

Scully opens the door for Mulder, who enters.

MULDER

I just watched thirty-six hours of Bernard Shaw. I'm ready to kill somebody too.

SCULLY

Mulder, I want to show you something. (X)

Scully leads Mulder into the room, passing an identical VCR set-up, on which she also has been watching a mountain of Patnik's tapes. She picks up three specific tapes.

SCULLY

These tapes are dated February 21st, 23rd and 25th -- each corresponds to a night that Patnik committed a murder.

MULDER

What's on the tapes?

SCULLY

Among other things? A one-hour special report on the atrocities in Bosnia -- a report that prominently features Lladoslav Miriskovic -- (X)

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

MULDER

The same man that started Patnik screaming in the psych ward.

1
(X)

SCULLY

I'm guessing that when I review the tapes for the night Patnik killed his wife, I'll find the report there as well.

(X)

MULDER

You think that because Patnik saw this war criminal on TV he was somehow inspired to kill these people?

SCULLY

Recent studies have linked violence on TV to violent behavior...

MULDER

Those studies are based on the assumption that Americans are empty vessels ready to be filled with any idea or image you feed them. And then go out and act on them.

SCULLY

The causal connections are there, Mulder.

MULDER

Studies have shown causal connections between cow flatulence and the depletion of the ozone. What you're talking about is pseudo-science used to make political book.

SCULLY

Mulder, I think it's clear that these programs somehow triggered Patnik's violent behavior.

(X)

MULDER

How?

(X)

SCULLY

His doctor suggested amphetamine abuse. That coupled with the disturbing images he was watching might have pushed him over the edge.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

Mulder shakes his head.

(X)

MULDER

(X)

I agree television has something to do with this, Scully -- just not the way you think it does.

SCULLY

(X)

Then how do you explain it?

MULDER

(X)

I can't. Not yet.

Mulder moves to exit the room.

(X)

SCULLY

(X)

Where are you going?

MULDER

(X)

To get some sleep. You look like you could use some, too.

SCULLY

(X)

(nods)

I just want to get through the rest of these tapes.

Mulder nods as he tiredly exits the room.

(X)

CUT TO:

15 INT. SCULLY'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT - HOURS LATER

15

CLOSE - TELEVISION

CNN-type news footage speeds by on fast-forward. CAMERA CIRCLES AROUND to reveal:

SCULLY

the remote in her hand, staring tiredly at the TV. Scully yawns, rolls her head around her neck -- she needs a break. She presses the PAUSE button on the remote. She rises, grabs her ICE BUCKET and heads for the door.

16 EXT. MIRADOR MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

16

The Mirador is an old-fashioned roadside motor court, with rooms that open onto the parking lot.

Scully moves down the breezeway to the vending machine alcove. She fills her bucket with ice, fishes in a pocket for change. As she decides on a soda from the machine... the sound of a CAR DOOR CLOSING draws her attention to the parking lot.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

SCULLY'S POV - MULDER'S RENTAL CAR

is parked in the distance. MULDER is dimly visible in the driver's seat. The engine is off.

RESUME SCULLY

who is puzzled to see him in the car at this late hour. She takes a step toward him when:

HER POV - A MATCH FLARES

in the darkness of the passenger seat, indicating Mulder is not alone. Now we realize he is engaged in conversation with someone whose face we can't yet see.

SCULLY

hesitates, her curiosity becoming suspicion.

At that moment, a motel guest's MINI-VAN starts up nearby. Its headlights switch on, sidelighting Mulder's car -- revealing the passenger as:

THE CIGARETTE-SMOKING MAN

He exhales, listening to Mulder, who's speaking quickly, intensely. We can't hear the conversation -- but we distinctly see Mulder hand CSM a VIDEOTAPE like the ones Mulder and Scully were watching. (X)
(X)
(X)

SCULLY

stares transfixed, amazed by the incongruity of this scene. Amazed and deeply disturbed.

The mini-van chunks into gear. It pulls forward out of its parking space, heading toward the lot exit. As it passes Scully, it LIGHTS HER BRIGHTLY, forcing her to quickly step back out of sight behind a nearby pillar.

BEHIND PILLAR

Scully is breathing fast, her mind racing -- trying to understand what she just saw. We hear the mini-van pass out of the lot and off into the night.

We hear a second vehicle exit the lot as well. Scully waits another beat, then peeks around the pillar to find:

MULDER'S CAR

quickly receding into the darkness, the red glow of its taillights vanishing to a single point in the night.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

SCULLY

takes a few steps into the now-silent parking lot. Off her look of wide-eyed confusion and fear, we:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

16A INT. SUBURBAN KITCHEN - MORNING - ANGLE ON SOAPY WATER (X)

16

a woman's hands enter frame, encased in yellow Playtex gloves. They scrub breakfast dishes with a plastic brush. A LEGEND reads: MARCH 1, 1996, 9:48 AM.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL HELENE RIDDICK (42)

plain-jane, but works hard to make the best of what she's got. As she cleans the dishes, we are aware of a TELEVISION playing in the living room behind her -- we only see a slice of it through the open kitchen door. It looks like a game show is playing ("The Price Is Right" would be nice).

Helene listens to the television while concentrating on her work.

HER POV - SOAPY WATER (SPFX)

Suddenly, the soap bubbles CHANGE... subtly at first. They take on faint rainbow colors, like gasoline on water. Individual bubbles seem to distort -- to grow, then shrink.

CLOSE - HELENE

blinks her eyes, reacts to this sight. She glances around the kitchen at:

RESUME POV - AROUND THE ROOM (SPFX)

faint traces of COLORED LIGHT zip along the straight edges of the room -- up the cabinets, across the stove, etc.

HELENE

looks faintly confused -- though not nearly as bewildered as we would expect. Behind her, the room appears normal. A faint tinkle of FEMALE LAUGHTER draws her attention to the window above the sink. She looks out to discover:

RESUME POV - IN THE DISTANCE

the source of the laughter: a BLONDE WOMAN straddles a DARK-HAIRED MAN in a HAMMOCK. Her blouse is open as she leans down to passionately kiss him.

RESUME HELENE

a look of shock gives way to DARK ANGER.

CUT TO:

16A CONTINUED:

16A

CLOSE - A CLOSET

(X)

swings open. Yellow Playtex-covered hands bat aside clothes on hangers, reach to the back of the closet to retrieve... A TWELVE-GAUGE PUMP SHOTGUN.

CUT TO:

17 INT. SCULLY'S MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

17

We can see a few hotspots of morning sun sneaking through the gaps in the thick, closed curtains -- but otherwise it's pretty dark in here.

(X)

(X)

Scully sits alone in the dark in her standard-issue motel chair. Her thoughts are a million miles away. Finally a loud RAP at the door startles her, causes her to stir.

MULDER (O.S.)

Scully? --

SCULLY

(beat)

I'll be right out.

MULDER (O.S.)

There's been another murder.

Mulder's footsteps recede. Off Scully's troubled face...

CUT TO:

18 INT. RENTAL SEDAN - MORNING

18

The door opens, and Scully slides into the passenger's seat. She's alone in the car. While she waits for Mulder she glances at the pop-out ashtray... eases it out into view.

THE ASHTRAY

is clean as a whistle -- no cigarette butts, no ashes.

RESUME WIDE

as Scully quickly shuts the ashtray -- and Mulder slides into the front seat beside her, pushing the keys into the ignition.

MULDER

It happened less than an hour ago. It seems to match our pattern --

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

SCULLY

(abrupt)

The car's been moved. Did you
take the car last night?

Mulder has to think for a second to answer this non sequitur.

MULDER

Uh. No... yeah... not last
night, but this morning. I went
out to get a paper. Why?

Scully shakes her head. Her tone softens a little.

SCULLY

Nothing. I just, uh...

(shrug)

Let's see this crime scene.

Mulder looks over at Scully -- sees something is amiss. He
looks concerned, but decides not to push it. As he slides the
car into gear:

(X)
(X)
(X)

CUT TO:

19 EXT. SUBURBAN BACKYARD - MORNING

1

CLOSE ON A TUFT OF LAWN GRASS

that is sticky with drying BLOOD -- a single patch of red in a
sea of bright green. Splot... splot... a slow, steady drip of
blood is falling. We TILT UP to show the source of the drip:
The bottom of a hammock which is sagging mightily under the
weight of...

... a dead middle-aged MAN -- he's bald, NOT the dark-haired
man we saw before. He looks like he was caught napping --
literally. His T-shirt is blown out in the front from a twelve-
gauge shotgun. The familiar murder weapon lies nearby. All
through this scene, an OFFSCREEN DOG is BARKING MADLY.

(X)
(X)
(X)

WIDE TO REVEAL SCULLY

(X)

studying the carnage. In the background two POLICEMEN stand
guard at the fenceline, dealing with the small crowd of
NEIGHBORS. Mulder approaches her.

(X)
(X)
(X)

MULDER

I just finished talking to the
detective in charge. The
shooter's name is Helene Riddock,
age 42. They took her to the
County lock-up.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

1

SCULLY

What happened?

MULDER

Mrs. Riddock claims she looked out her window and saw her husband Victor in the hammock with a blonde.

(X)

Mulder turns and points Scully's attention to:

(X)

THE BARKING DOG

we've been hearing through the entire scene -- a beautiful GOLDEN RETRIEVER that's tugging hard at her yard chain.

(X)

RESUME WIDE

SCULLY

THAT blonde?

(X)

A crooked smile can't help but creep across Mulder's face.

(X)

MULDER

Apparently, he was just taking a nap with his dog. Mrs. Riddock swears she saw her husband and a blonde woman in the hammock.

(X)

SCULLY

She shot her husband because she thought he was cheating on her?

MULDER

No. This isn't even her husband. Her husband's a long-haul trucker. He's been out of town for ten days. This is a Mr. John Gillnitz -- her next door neighbor. She didn't even have the right backyard.

(X)

Mulder points past her, turning her attention to:

(X)

THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR

which is a drab affair on the other side of the fence.

MULDER (O.S.)

Helene Riddock and her husband live there.

(X)

RESUME

(X)

Mulder waits for a reaction from Scully, but none is forthcoming. She simply stares at the Riddock house.

(X)

(X)

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED: (2)

MULDER (X)
Scully?

Scully turns to Mulder. (X)

SCULLY (X)
Let's check it out.

Scully starts off, leaving Mulder to follow. (X)

CUT TO:

20 INT. RIDDOCK'S LIVING ROOM

A BIG TV SCREEN

fills the frame. A faux Hummel porcelain figurine rotates on a lazy susan. We hear a bit of the sales pitch: It's only \$89.99 on the Home Value Network!

PULL BACK TO REVEAL

The SAME porcelain figurine -- in the flesh, so to speak -- sitting on the coffee table in front of the TV. Mulder looks around the room at the various other TV mail-order items. There's quite a few that he and Scully have to carefully navigate.

MULDER (X)
A thing of beauty is a joy
forever...
(re: surroundings)
What do you think Scully?

Scully kneels down to open the cabinet underneath the TV.

SCULLY (X)
I think television plays a large
part in both these murderer's
lives.

MULDER (X)
But not necessarily television
violence -- unless you consider
bad taste an act of violence.

Scully finds what she's looking for: A haphazard pile of VHS (X)
tapes with handwritten labels (the kind of stockpile most
people would have -- not all filed and organized like the ones
at Joseph Patnik's home).

SCULLY (X)
More tapes...

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

She takes one off the top and slides it into the nearby VCR, cues it up. (X)

Mulder's attention wanders with the low, distant RUMBLE of a truck. He moves off to the living room window, parts the frilly curtain to peer out at:

THE NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

bordering the front yard. The same cable truck we saw outside Patnik's house in Act One slows to a stop by a utility pole a couple of doors up. We realize the tap cable from this pole extends right to us, to the roof of the Riddock's house.

RESUME ON THE LIVING ROOM

as Mulder stares out at the truck. He heads for the door.

MULDER

Hang on a second --

Scully watches him leave, briefly wondering at his sudden exit. Returning her attention to the videotape that's playing, she fast-forwards through a soap opera, commercials...

21 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET

Mulder is cutting fast across the Riddock's front yard. He raises a hand, calls out to the familiar cable truck driver.

MULDER

Excuse me... Hey --

The driver doesn't seem to hear him. Without looking back -- and without having done any work -- he climbs back into his cab. The cable truck rolls down the street at a leisurely pace. Mulder runs a dozen yards after it, but it leaves him behind.

Mulder finds himself standing beside the lone utility pole that the truck had parked beside. He looks up at it.

CUT TO:

22 INT. RIDDOCK'S LIVING ROOM - SCULLY

is holding the TV remote, fast-forwarding through one of Helene Riddock's tapes. Through the window behind her we see the utility pole, and nothing but blue sky behind it. Into frame rises... Mulder, gingerly climbing the handholds.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

Scully sees him out of the corner of her eye. Does a double-take. As Scully exits...

CUT TO:

23 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - AT THE TOP OF THE POLE

Mulder is not particularly enjoying himself up here, but he makes it to the top of the thirty-foot pole. Here he finds the cable TV main line and the tap-off down to the Riddock's. He holds on white-knuckle tight with one hand, frees the other to examine the tap-off BOX more closely. (X

DOWN AT THE BASE OF THE POLE

Scully and a couple of the POLICEMEN squint up at Mulder.

SCULLY

Mulder... What are you doing?

RESUME TOP OF POLE

Inside the rain-proof box, Mulder's fingertip runs across a small bundle of thin cylinders -- VIDEO TRAPS. His finger stops on one that, unlike all the others, looks different... brand new. It hasn't been exposed to the elements for very long. His eyes narrow on it. He starts to unscrew it. (X

MULDER

I'm coming down.

BACK ON THE GROUND

we look up at Mulder as he drops onto the roof of the rental sedan -- he had used it to boost himself up to the level of the pole's handholds. He drops to the ground and joins Scully, the both of them stepping a few paces away from the local cops.

Mulder shows Scully the brass cylinder in his hand: It's about five inches long with a slight bulge in the middle. It's got a co-ax connection at either end.

SCULLY

What is it?

MULDER

I don't know. It just didn't look like it belonged up there. (X

SCULLY

Maybe I should have the Sci-Crime lab take a look at it. (X

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

MULDER

No, you stay here. I'll go get it analyzed.

(X)

Scully seems wary. Off her questioning look:

(X)

MULDER

It makes more sense for you to stay here and interview Helene Riddock. We need to hear what she has to say.

Scully doesn't respond. Mulder notices.

(X)

MULDER

Is that a problem?

(X)

SCULLY

No, it's fine.

(X)

Scully stares at Mulder evenly. He studies her face for a beat, finally deciding to let it drop.

(X)

MULDER

Alright. I'll be back tonight...

Scully nods. On this awkward beat Mulder pockets the cylinder, then heads toward their car. Off Scully staring after him, we:

CUT TO:

24 INT. LONE GUNMEN OFFICE - AFTERNOON

2

THE VIDEO TRAP

lies atop a workbench, connected in series to two co-axial cables.

BYERS (O.S.)

It looks a lot like a standard video trap for blocking premium cable channels...

(X)

WIDE TO INCLUDE

Mulder, Byers, Langly and Frohike gathered around the Lone Gunmen's workbench.

MULDER

What does this one block?

LANGLY

It doesn't seem to block anything.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

MULDER

Then what does it do?

The three Gunmen smile to one another.

FROHIKE

Glad you asked...

Byers reaches to click on a video monitor. It blooms to life with NTSC color bars and TONE. He twiddles down the shrieking volume.

BYERS

Here's the straight feed off our bars and tone generator, and here...

Byers clicks on a second, identical monitor. A second set of color bars blooms to life.

BYERS

... are the bars and tone as attenuated through the device.

MULDER

(beat; shrug)

Looks the same.

FROHIKE

That's what you'd think. (X)

LANGLY

We couldn't discern any difference between the two feeds. Not until we compared the signals on the oscilloscope.

Langly reaches over and punches on one... two oscilloscopes. (X)
They both show spiky, green representations of the video (X)
signals, and they both look exactly alike. Mulder waits a
beat, gives a shrug.

MULDER

Still looks the same.

FROHIKE

(smile)

Until we did... this.

Frohike tweaks a rheostat which makes the color bars rise slightly out of alignment -- now we can see the very bottom edge of the video frame. At the same time, the images on the two oscilloscopes shift... but one shifts more than the other.

FROHIKE

And... voila.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2)

2

MULDER

Now they're different.
(off their nods)
Why are they different?

BYERS

(pointing)
You know the way television
works?

MULDER

Yeah. It's a rapid series of
still pictures.

(X)

BYERS

(nods)
There's something non-standard
here in the vertical blanking
interval -- information that's
being added into the spaces
BETWEEN the still pictures.

(X)

MULDER

What information?

The Lone Gunmen look to one another somewhat glumly.

LANGLY

That's as far as we could get
with our equipment.

MULDER

(taps device)
Can we take this apart?

(X)

LANGLY

Not without destroying it
completely. That's by design.

BYERS

An amazingly sophisticated
design. All we can say for sure
is, this device is emitting a
signal -- for what purpose...

Byers shrugs, leaving the question hanging. Off Mulder's
thoughtful look, we...

CUT TO:

25 EXT. MARYLAND COUNTY ROAD - NIGHT

25

We're on a quiet stretch of highway. Mulder's n.d. sedan
blows by, headed north.

26 INT. SEDAN DRIVING - NIGHT

As Mulder drives, he retrieves his cell phone from inside his jacket. Just as he turns it on, it surprises him by RINGING on its own. He lifts it to his ear.

MULDER

Mulder --

SCULLY (FILTERED V.O.)

Mulder... where are you?

MULDER

Scully -- I was just about to call you. I'm on my way back.
(focusing)

Listen, somebody is introducing a foreign signal into these people's homes -- through their televisions.

(beat)

Are you still on the line?

(X)

27 INT. SCULLY'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON SCULLY

who sits in the dark with the motel phone to her ear. She's sidelit by the blue light coming from the television.

SCULLY

I'm here...

MULDER (FILTERED V.O.)

We've seen something like this before. What if the same people are behind it?

(long silence)

Scully? What's wrong?

(X)

(X)

Scully finally speaks. She works to keep her voice quiet and even. As it comes out, it's tainted with fearful suspicion.

SCULLY

Mulder... why didn't you go to the Sci-Crime Lab today like you said you were going to do?

MULDER (FILTERED V.O.)

I said I was going to get this thing looked at, Scully. I didn't say I was going to Sci-Crime.

(X)

SCULLY

Then where were you?

(X)

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

MULDER (FILTERED V.O.)
 I went to see three friends of
 ours. I don't know how far this
 reaches --

Scully hears a single, distinct CLICK. She tenses. We slowly
 PUSH IN on her face as she listens intently.

MULDER (FILTERED V.O.)
 -- I didn't want our only piece
 of hard evidence falling into the
 wrong hands.

Another CLICK -- Scully's anxiety is rising. She speaks in
 little more than a whisper.

SCULLY
 What was that?

MULDER (FILTERED V.O.)
 What?

SCULLY
 That sound. What is that?

Yet another CLICK.

SCULLY
 There it is again!

MULDER (FILTERED V.O.)
 Scully... I didn't hear anything.

SCULLY
 Who's listening to us...?

Scully slowly moves the receiver away from her ear... stares at
 the phone in her hand like it has suddenly become her potential
 worst enemy. We hear Mulder's voice, sounding tiny now that
 the speaker is away from Scully's ear.

MULDER (FILTERED V.O.)
 Scully -- I, uh... I'll be there
 in an hour, alright?

28
 thru OMITTED
 29

30 INT. SEDAN DRIVING - NIGHT

Mulder is looking a little freaked out.

MULDER
 Stay where you are. You're at
 the motel?

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

We hear Scully hang up. DIAL TONE hums on the other end. Mulder quickly dials Scully back.

31 INT. SCULLY'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Scully stares at the phone. It starts to RING. She breathes a little faster, quickly unplugs it so that it goes dead. Behind her the motel TV is on. A borrowed VCR sits atop it, as do a dozen tapes belonging to Helene Riddock. Onscreen one of them strobes along on FAST FORWARD.

A thought dawns on Scully: She looks around overhead at the myriad places an electronic bug could be hiding.

Scully notices the wire leading to the nearby table lamp. She turns the lamp over and pulls off the felt covering on the base. She checks inside... no bug. She turns her attention to:

A PICTURE ON THE WALL

off which she carefully tears the backing -- again, no bug in sight. She gets more panicked, moves out of frame.

MONTAGE

We see a rapid series of HARD CUTS: throughout them, Scully methodically turns the room upside-down looking for hidden listening devices. Removing outlets, light switch plates, light fixtures, etc.

REVERSE ANGLE ON ROOM

as Scully kneels to unplug the television. She feels the back of the unit for bugs. Finding none, she stands up again, surveying the now-trashed room... looking for hiding places she might have missed.

SCULLY'S POV - THE ROOM (SPFX)

Suddenly, her surroundings begin to DISTORT. It starts small -- SPARKS OF COLOR trace the walls, like we saw with Helene Riddock. Then the room itself begins to WARP. Furniture seems to smear... the wallpaper liquifies.

SCULLY

glances around at these sights, only mildly confused by them. Behind her, to us, the room appears normal. Scully's attention is drawn to...

REVERSE - THE WINDOWS

where HEADLIGHTS GLOW through the curtains. A car is pulling up right in front of her room.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

CLOSER ON SCULLY

as she creeps silently to the door... puts her ear to it, listening for all she's worth. We hear two male voices whisper ominously. We have to strain to hear them -- we're not even sure we're hearing them correctly.

FIRST VOICE

Here... She's in here... How do we...

SECOND VOICE

She's armed... Get your gun... Get ready for the...

FIRST VOICE

On the count of three... Wait... Knock first -- call her name...

Scully presses her ear right against the wood, frantically straining to hear, when -- BAM! BAM! BAM!! LOUD KNOCKS SOUND like GUNSHOTS, scaring the piss out of us. Scully fumbles for the door chain, manages to slap it in place.

Scully backs away from the door wide-eyed. She fumbles her pistol from its holster. We hear a KEY TURN in the LOCK.

WIDE ON ROOM

The door creaks open, throwing a razor slice of cold light across Scully's frightened eyes.

WHAM! -- the door hits the end of the chain. We see the black silhouette of a MAN in the light through the door. We just see TEETH... a pearly white grin. His voice is weirdly slow and deep, like out of a nightmare.

FIRST VOICE (ALTERED)

Scully..?

(X)

BLAM!-BLAM!-BLAM!-BLAM! -- Scully wildly unloads her Smith & Wesson at the door, its muzzle STROBING the dark room.

Chunks of wood fly from the door and its frame. A man YELLS. After a long beat, the door kicks inward, snapping the chain.

Mulder steps sideways into the threshold, gun drawn. A MOTEL MANAGER cowers on the ground. Mulder barks back at the man.

MULDER

Get back! Call the police! --

The manager takes off like a streak, not looking back. Mulder cautiously sweeps the room, his pistol at the ready.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED: (2)

MULDER
SCULLY? -- SCULLY! --

The room is empty, and a shambles. Mulder drives his shoulder through the closed door to:

THE MOTEL KITCHENETTE

(X)

which he enters pistol-first. He immediately sees:

THE OPEN BACK DOOR

(X)

We see outside across a moonlit field to the dark woods beyond -- ()
and no Scully in sight.

RESUME MULDER

who numbly holsters his gun. As he stares out the door,
looking lost... we FADE TO BLACK.

(X)

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

32 INT. MRS. SCULLY'S HOUSE - DAY - CLOSE ON A FRAMED PHOTO (X) 3

sitting on a nightstand -- a portrait of Mrs. Scully and her (X)
two daughters, Dana and Melissa. We hear a phone RINGING. In (X)
the background, MRS. SCULLY sits up out of bed, her back to us. (X)
A LEGEND reads: MARCH 2, 1996. 6:04 AM.

CLOSE - MRS. SCULLY (X)

awakened from sleep, picks up the receiver. She fumbles to (X)
turn on a nearby lamp. (X)

MRS. SCULLY

Hello?

INTERCUT WITH:

33 INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY - MULDER 3

looks tired, unshaven -- he's been up all night. He speaks
into his cell phone. In the background, FINGERPRINT EXPERTS
dust the room, where daylight reveals the full extent of
Scully's paranoid search. A BALLISTICS EXPERT pries slugs from
the splintered door frame.

MULDER (X)

Mrs. Scully, it's Fox Mulder.
It's about Dana.

MRS. SCULLY (X)

What is it? Is something wrong?

MULDER (X)

I was hoping you might have heard
from her.

MRS. SCULLY

Why? What happened?

Mulder steels himself.

MULDER (X)

I'm not exactly sure. There was
some confusion last night.

(beat)

She's missing.

MRS. SCULLY

Missing? What do you mean?

(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

MULDER

She ran off last night. We're looking for her now, but we're concerned she's... not acting like herself.

MRS. SCULLY

(to herself)

Oh my god...

Through the window, Mulder sees an N.D. SEDAN pull to a stop. A.D. WALTER SKINNER emerges.

MULDER

Mrs. Scully, I'm sorry, can I call you right back?

MRS. SCULLY

Please, tell me what's going on...

MULDER

Try not to worry. I promise you I'll find her. Just stay by the phone.

Mulder is stepping out the door as he clicks off.

34 EXT. MOTEL PARKING LOT - DAY

Frederick County and federal law enforcement officials shuttle between the squad cars and n.d. FBI sedans parked outside. Skinner turns upon seeing Mulder approach.

SKINNER

Mulder.

MULDER

Sir, I think we're going about this manhunt the wrong way. It's being run as if we were searching for an escaped convict.

SKINNER

No one wants to find Scully safe more than I do. The fact remains she fired four rounds at you and an unarmed civilian last night.

MULDER

I understand that. But these officers should be instructed not to confront her once they find her.

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

SKINNER

What are they supposed to do?

MULDER

Keep an eye on her until I get there. I believe I can get her to listen to me.

SKINNER

(not sarcastic)

She didn't listen to you last night.

Mulder is caught up short by the truth of this.

MULDER

She's not responsible for her actions. She's suffering from some kind of paranoid psychosis that made her perceive me and the motel manager as a threat.

(X)

SKINNER

Do you know what brought this on?

(X)

MULDER

I can't explain the exact mechanism, but I think it came from watching videotapes we recovered from a crime scene.

(X)

SKINNER

(eyebrows furrow)

What kind of videotapes?

(X)

MULDER

I believe they contain an electronic signal that induces violent behavior.

(X)

SKINNER

Do you have any proof of this?

(X)

From his coat pocket, Mulder produces one of the videotapes.

MULDER

I don't know. I hope so. I'll get it checked out.

(X)

Skinner glances around at the bustle of law enforcement. He speaks lower.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED: (2)

SKINNER

I don't know how you got into
this case, Mulder. But if there
are any stones you've left
unturned...

Mulder is already thinking along these lines. Off his look of
grim resolve, we:

CUT TO:

35 INT. MULDER'S APARTMENT - DAY - CLOSE ON AN "X"

Being taped onto Mulder's window.

CAMERA WIDENS TO INCLUDE MULDER

As he finishes making the "X," then steps away from the window,
looking at his watch.

CLOSE - THE WATCH

Shows the time is 11:21 A.M.

CLOSE - MULDER

Anxiety playing on his face. Knowing that as urgently as he
needs to find Scully, he has no choice now but to wait for the
one man who can explain what's happened to her.

The silence is shattered by the RING of Mulder's phone.

MULDER

(into the phone)

Mulder.

INTERCUT WITH:

36 INT. LONE GUNMEN OFFICE - DAY - FROHIKE

Turns from a video monitor to speak into the phone.

FROHIKE

Mulder, we pulled something off
that videotape you took from
Scully's room.

MULDER

What is it?

FROHIKE

I think you ought to come down
here and see for yourself.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

Mulder looks at the "X" on the window, torn by whether to stay or go. Finally:

MULDER
I'll be right there.

As he hangs up:

CUT TO:

37 INT. LONE GUNMEN OFFICE - DAY - CLOSE ON A MONITOR

Displaying another Home Value Network pitch, this time for cubic zirconium jewelry. The volume is low.

FROHIKE (O.S.)
Here's the tape Scully was reviewing last night.

WIDE TO INCLUDE - MULDER AND THE LONE GUNMEN

huddle around a computer screen. The video image is contained in a large pull-down window, other windows display fast-changing digital computations.

FROHIKE
We scanned part of the tape onto disk.

LANGLY
Digitized it.

BYERS
Using some interpolating freeware we pulled down off the Net, we were able to blank out the visible frames --

MULDER
(impatient)
What did you find?

The Lone Gunmen exchange a chastened look. Frohike clicks the mouse to enter a command on the computer.

CLOSE - THE COMPUTER SCREEN

The video image evaporates, leaving behind a strange, abstract holographic IMAGE -- a 3-D stream of red and green video pixels rushing toward the viewer.

MULDER
(o.s.)
What is it?

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED:

RESUME WIDE

LANGLY

Apparently, it's the signal your cable trap device was emitting.

BYERS

Of course, it's slowed down significantly. It's designed to cycle at fifteen flashes per second.

FROHIKE

(looking from one to the other)

That's within the range that induces seizures in epileptics.

MULDER

You're saying this signal is stimulating some kind of electrical activity in the brain?

Langly nods.

LANGLY

The photic driving response.

BYERS

Studies into subliminal influence have found a correlation between heightened suggestibility and the manipulation of this response.

MULDER

Mind control.

FROHIKE

(nodding)

Fifty-seven channels of it.

BYERS

Tachistoscopic images. Both Russian and American scientists have been working with them for decades... developing applications for warfare, espionage...

LANGLY

Not to mention Madison Avenue. Ever look for the naked lady in the ice cube?

Mulder lets this soak in.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (2)

3

FROHIKE

(X)

What we haven't been able to determine is why you weren't affected.

Mulder looks at the monitor. Realizing.

MULDER

(X)

I think I know. I'm red-green color blind.

The Gunmen look to one another, nodding appreciatively.

(X)

LANGLY

(X)

That would make sense.

BYERS

(X)

In order to produce the intended psychotropic effect, this signal has to pass through the optic nerve. Your inability to accurately perceive the color red might render you immune to its effects.

At that moment, Mulder's cell phone RINGS.

MULDER

(into the phone)

Mulder.

Mulder doesn't say another word. Instead, his face hardens as he listens to what's being said on the other end of the line. Frohike, Langly and Byers share a concerned look.

MULDER

I'll be right there.

Mulder hangs up.

FROHIKE

What happened?

MULDER

I have to go. The Maryland State Police think they found Scully.

FROHIKE

(X)

Is she alright?

Mulder looks numb; like he's on autopilot.

MULDER

(X)

No. They want me to ID her body.

(CONTINUED)

37 CONTINUED: (3)

As Mulder exits, CAMERA HOLDS ON the stricken faces of the Lone Gunmen, reacting to this disastrous news.

CUT TO:

38 EXT. MORGUE - NIGHT - MULDER'S CAR

Pulls to a stop in an underground parking structure. Mulder gets out, consumed by a sense of grim purpose. A LEGEND reads: FREDERICK COUNTY MORGUE, 8:17 PM. (X)
(X)
(X)

Mulder approaches the entrance when a SEDAN with tinted glass rolls to a stop in front of him. He looks down to see:

X

Leaning to face him through the open passenger window.

X

Get in.

But dealing with him is the last thing Mulder wants to do at this moment.

MULDER

I can't talk to you now.

X

They're watching you. Now get in before you get both of us killed.

MULDER

(bitter)

Interesting choice of words. My partner may be dead. (X)

Mulder turns on his heel and walks. X glares after him. He's forced to raise his voice -- which he hates having to do.

X

So what if she is? --

Mulder turns back, his look threatening violence. But now X has his full attention. (X)

X

What happened here is far more important than the life of your partner. (X)

MULDER

And just what was this?

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

X

You have to find that out for yourself.

Mulder practically spits out his words.

MULDER

They're trying to manipulate behavior, aren't they? Alter people's decision-making -- what to buy, who to vote for --

(X)

X

This isn't about commerce or politics. It's not about who leads in the polls -- it's about who will shape the future.

(X)

MULDER

(realizing)

-- By eliminating free will.

(X)

X

Don't think this was an isolated experiment, Agent Mulder. If you don't stop them here, their work will continue somewhere else.

(X)

MULDER

(conflicted)

I can't do anything about that right now.

(X)

X

While you've been chasing your partner, they've been destroying evidence. Pursue them now or the men responsible for what happened to Agent Scully will be beyond your reach tomorrow.

(X)

Mulder holds X's gaze, but there's nothing more he can say. Once more he walks away -- this time for good.

CUT TO:

39 INT. MORGUE VIEWING ROOM - NIGHT

3

A door opens into a small bland room. Mulder enters, ushered by the staid COUNTY CORONER.

Inside the room, a bench seat faces a long window shuttered by venetian blinds. The Coroner stands by the closed window with his hand on the draw cord.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

CORONER

A State Patrolman found the body
off a rural highway at
approximately 2 p.m. Nude. Shot
in the temple.
(sober)
Are you ready?

Mulder stands silently for a beat -- the Coroner waiting respectfully. Mulder steps closer to the window.

MULDER

I'll do it.

The Coroner surrenders the draw cord. Mulder takes a moment to prepare himself. Then opens the blinds. He slowly lifts his head. (X)
(X)

REVERSE - MULDER (SEEN THROUGH WINDOW) (X)

a reflection of the corpse is visible in the glass before Mulder. From what little we can see, it could be Scully. (X)
(X)

Mulder lets out a ragged sigh. His words come out in a relieved whisper. (X)
(X)

MULDER

It's not her.

The Coroner gently reaches to draw the blinds.

RESUME (X)

MULDER (X)

I'll call Agent Scully's mother. (X)

CORONER (X)

We already tried. We weren't able to reach her. (X)

MULDER (X)

What do you mean? (X)

CORONER (X)

I called several times. Nobody was home. (X)

Mulder's mind is working on the significance of this.

CORONER

Is something wrong?

But Mulder's not listening. He exits, consumed with a renewed sense of purpose.

CUT TO:

40 EXT. MRS. SCULLY'S HOUSE - NIGHT - CLOSE - DOORBELL 4

A finger urgently presses the button. The muted sound of the doorbell is audible.

WIDER

Mulder stands before the front door. He rings the bell again, then backs away a few steps, peering into the windows. The drawn curtains are lit up from inside. A silhouette slides across one of them.

Mulder moves to the door, knocking urgently -- when it suddenly opens. Mrs. Scully fills the narrow margin of the doorway, as if trying to block his entrance. Even his ability to see past her.

MULDER
Mrs. Scully --

But he instantly reads on her face that something is wrong.

MULDER
Is she here?

Mrs. Scully shakes her head tightly.

MRS. SCULLY
No.

MULDER
You haven't been answering your phone.

MRS. SCULLY
(nervously)
If I hear from Dana, I'll call you. Alright?

Mrs. Scully begins to shut the door, but Mulder stops it with his hand.

MRS. SCULLY
Fox... please. Go away.

MULDER
I can't do that.

Mulder gently pushes his way past Mrs. Scully.

41 INT. MRS. SCULLY'S HOUSE - MULDER 41

steps inside, glancing around the seemingly empty living room.

MULDER
Where is she, Mrs. Scully?

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

Before she can respond, Scully steps into view behind Mulder, her pistol levelled at his head. Upon seeing this:

MRS. SCULLY
DANA! Put down the gun!

Mulder turns slowly to face his partner. Scully is pale, her darting eyes glazed with an almost palpable paranoia.

MULDER
Scully. I'm here to help you.

SCULLY
I told you, Mom. He's here to kill me --

MULDER
I'm on your side, Scully. You know that.

Mrs. Scully eases beside Mulder.

MRS. SCULLY
Dana, put it down.

MULDER
Scully, listen to me carefully. You're sick. Those tapes you watched, they've done something to you. Whatever you believe is happening --

Mulder takes a cautious step toward her. Scully suddenly clicks back the hammer with her thumb.

SCULLY
STAY BACK!

MRS. SCULLY
Dana...
(holds her breath)
You're not yourself. He's telling you the truth.

SCULLY
It's not the truth! He's been lying to me from the beginning. He never trusted me. He never...

Mulder swallows, speaks with quiet sincerity.

MULDER
Scully... you're the only one I trust.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

4

Scully hesitates for the briefest moment, then addresses Mulder directly for the first time, her intensity renewed.

SCULLY

You're in on it! You're one of them! The people who abducted me, who put that -- THING in my neck! --

(breaking down)

-- the people who killed my SISTER!!

Realizing her daughter is at the breaking point, Mrs. Scully steps between her and Mulder.

MRS. SCULLY

You know that's not true. I want you to listen to me, Dana --

SCULLY

GET OUT OF THE WAY!

Scully's eyes remain locked defiantly on Mulder, who stares back at her with calm determination.

MRS. SCULLY

Dana, you trust me, don't you?

Scully blinks -- her eyes tell us that she does.

MRS. SCULLY

Then you know I wouldn't do anything to hurt you. And I won't let anyone else hurt you.

Scully fights back tears. Her pistol wavers.

MRS. SCULLY

That's why you came, isn't it? You're safe here.

(beat)

Put down the gun, Dana.

Mrs. Scully reaches out slowly... gently taking her wrist. Scully allows her arm to be lowered. Then, she hangs her head, falling into her mother's strong embrace. Scully's shoulders begin to heave, giving way to deep choking sobs. As Mulder remembers to exhale, we:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

42 INT. HOSPITAL - DAY - MULDER 4

makes his way up the hallway. A LEGEND reads: NORTHEAST GEORGETOWN MEDICAL CENTER. MARCH 3, 1996. 1:43 PM. He reaches the door to a hospital room, in which:

AN OBSERVATION WINDOW

affords a view of Mrs. Scully, who sits on the edge of a hospital bed. She is holding her daughter's hand, but her figure obscures Scully's face.

Sensing Mulder's presence, Mrs. Scully looks up. She stands, gestures for Mulder to enter.

MULDER

gently pushes open the door. Steps into:

43 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - SCULLY 4

leans forward in bed to look around her mother. She smiles weakly up at Mulder. She looks exhausted, but lucid, the anger and terror gone from her eyes.

SCULLY

Mulder...

Mrs. Scully looks from Mulder to her daughter.

MRS. SCULLY

I'll leave you two to talk.

Mulder and Mrs. Scully exchange a brief smile. She exits.

MULDER

How are you feeling?

SCULLY

(forcing a smile)

Ashamed.

Scully looks to the floor -- Mulder gently touches her wrist, as if to say "it's okay."

SCULLY

Mulder, I was so sure. I saw things... heard things... it was like the world was upside down. Everyone was out to get me.

Mulder smiles ironically.

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED:

MULDER

Now you know how I feel.

SCULLY

I thought you were going to kill me...

(X)

MULDER

I'm not surprised.

(off her questioning
look)

I did some checking. Joseph Patnik thought he was killing a Bosnian war criminal -- a man the media touted as a modern-day Hitler. It turns out Patnik's parents were both Holocaust survivors.

(X)

SCULLY

I'm not following you.

(X)

MULDER

Helene Riddock -- she feared her husband's infidelity. You see a pattern developing here, Scully? What if this video signal somehow eased these people over the edge?

(X)

SCULLY

Made them give into their worst fears...

(quiet)

... like me thinking you'd betray me...

(X)

Mulder gives Scully a look of understanding.

(X)

SCULLY

I was so far gone -- I was convinced I saw...

(X)

MULDER

What?

(X)

SCULLY

Your cancer man. The man who smokes all the cigarettes.

(X)

MULDER

(curious)

Doing what?

(X)

(CONTINUED)

43 CONTINUED: (2)

SCULLY

You were plotting with him. You were sitting in a car in the motel parking lot. It looked like you handed him a videotape.

Mulder thinks about this, looking troubled. Scully shakes her head.

SCULLY

It was crazy.

MULDER

Maybe not.

SCULLY

What do you mean?

MULDER

What if he was there? Only it wasn't me he was talking to.

SCULLY

Then who?

MULDER

I don't know.
(his mind elsewhere)
Try and get some sleep.

Mulder gently pats her hand, then heads for the door. Off Scully's look of curiosity, we go:

44 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Exiting the room, Mulder sees DR. MARILYN LORENZ standing at the nurse's station.

MULDER

Dr. Lorenz.

Dr. Lorenz turns as Mulder approaches.

DR. LORENZ

Agent Mulder, I was just about to check in on your partner.

Mulder pauses for a beat, the gears in his head turning.

MULDER

What course of treatment have you outlined for her?

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

4

DR. LORENZ

At this point? Nothing more than bed rest. We still haven't been able to determine what brought this on. As far as I can tell, there's nothing medically wrong with her.

MULDER

That wasn't the case last night.

DR. LORENZ

No, it wasn't. It's got me puzzled. Her MRI was negative, but the spinal tap revealed high levels of serotonin in her brain.

MULDER

Could that have been what brought on her strange behavior?

(X)

DR. LORENZ

High serotonin levels have been associated with mania. The good news is, as of this afternoon, her levels are pretty much back to normal.

(X)

Mulder is happy to hear this -- but he is also thinking hard, trying to piece the puzzle together. He speaks hesitantly.

MULDER

Doctor... would you have made a diagnosis of amphetamine abuse for someone in Agent Scully's condition?

(X)

DR. LORENZ

Not given her serotonin levels. That wouldn't make any sense.

(X)

Mulder nods -- this obviously confirms his thinking. He mumbles his thanks, moving away from Dr. Lorenz as he dials a number on his cell phone. The information operator answers.

MULDER

Braddock Heights. I'd like the number for the Frederick County Psychiatric Hospital.

(X)

INTERCUT WITH:

45 INT. PSYCH HOSPITAL - NURSE'S STATION

4!

A DUTY NURSE answers her ringing phone.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

4

DUTY NURSE
Ward Three.

MULDER
I'd like to speak to Dr. Stroman,
please.

DUTY NURSE
I'm sorry, Dr. Stroman is not
available. I believe he's
returned to Washington.

(X)

MULDER
Do you know how I can reach him?

The Duty Nurse shuffles through some papers in front of her.

DUTY NURSE
I don't think I have a number for
him. You might still reach him
at the motel. He just left a
couple of hours ago.

MULDER
Which motel?

DUTY NURSE
The Mirador Motel. I think I've
got the number around here
somewhere...

We see it in Mulder's face -- he suddenly realizes just who the
Cigarette Smoking Man might have been talking to.

MULDER
That's alright, I know where it
is.

Mulder clicks off. As he hurries for the exit:

CUT TO:

46 INT. MIRADOR MOTEL - DR. STROMAN'S ROOM - DAY

4

The room is dark. A LEGEND reads: 5:17 PM.

(X)

KEYS JINGLE, then the door swings open, revealing Mulder and
the Motel Manager (the same one who nearly got shot by Scully).

(X)

(X)

MOTEL MANAGER
I haven't had a chance to clean
the room yet. He just checked
out.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

The Manager switches on the lights, frowning.

MOTEL MANAGER

What with all the excitement
around here, I can't blame him.
(sarcastic)
You go first.

(X)

Mulder makes his way into the room, a look of frustration on his face.

MULDER

You charge for local calls, don't
you...

MOTEL MANAGER

Of course.

MULDER

Then you'd have a record of calls
made from this room...

MOTEL MANAGER

I'll go get it.

As the Motel Manager exits, Mulder begins to search the room. He looks in the trash can, in the dresser drawers, under the unmade bed. Rising to his feet, his eyes fix on...

AN ASHTRAY

on the nightstand. Lying in it, a single MORLEY CIGARETTE
BUTT.

RESUME MULDER

who knows now he's on the right track. The Manager reappears at the door, a computer PRINT-OUT in hand.

MOTEL MANAGER

Here you go.

Mulder takes the print out, scanning it quickly. One phone number catches his eye. Mulder speed-dials his cell phone.

MULDER

(into phone)
Danny? It's Mulder. I need you
to run a number for me...

CUT TO:

47 EXT. SAFE HOUSE - DUSK (X)

An isolated n.d. house on the outskirts of town. Mulder's car approaches. He pulls to a stop a discreet distance away. (X)
(X)

Mulder steps out of the car, moving toward the house. As he nears the front door, the SOUND of an approaching vehicle draws his attention to the street.

MULDER'S POV

The familiar CABLE TRUCK motors into view. As it pulls into the driveway of the safe house, parking behind a late-model sedan:

RESUME MULDER

who ducks out of sight. He watches as the Cable Man emerges from the truck and quickly enters the house.

Mulder moves to a window, where he sees:

MULDER'S POV - THROUGH WINDOW

The Cable Man entering the room, followed by Dr. Stroman. The two men talk nervously. Dr. Stroman checks his watch, then moves straight toward the window -- toward Mulder.

MULDER

quickly sidesteps, flattening his back against the siding. A foot away, Dr. Stroman peers out the window expectantly. Whoever he is looking for, he doesn't see.

Mulder eases away from the window. We follow him as he rounds the corner of the house. Seeing a BACK DOOR, he draws his gun.

He silently tries the door knob -- it's locked. As he looks around for an alternate entrance...

Suddenly -- BANG! BANG! -- from inside the house, two clean shots, then ominous SILENCE.

MULDER

takes tactical position against the wall, listening for more shots. After waiting a heartbeat, he steps out, KICKING IN the back door and rushing into:

48 INT. SAFE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MULDER 4

scans the room, brandishing his pistol. He checks each corner, then rushes into:

49 INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 49

Mulder appears, quickly scanning the room. He's taken back by the sight of:

MULDER'S POV

the DEAD BODIES of Stroman and the Cable Man, small POOLS OF BLOOD soaking into the carpet around their heads.

MULDER

tenses as we hear, from BEHIND:

VOICE

Drop the gun.

Mulder recognizes the voice. He reluctantly obliges, his gun clunking to the floor as we see X emerge from the shadows behind him. X keeps his pistol levelled loosely at Mulder's back.

X

You're too late. (X)

X collects Mulder's gun, slipping it into his pocket. Mulder glares at him, simmering. He speaks quietly.

MULDER

Why kill these men if you wanted me to expose them?

X

That was yesterday. This is today.

(beat)

I told you the evidence would disappear.

MULDER

(heated)

But you didn't tell me you'd be the one making it disappear.

X

We all have orders to follow, Agent Mulder. You could have prevented this. Instead, you forced my hand. (X)

X leans over the Cable Man, picking up his lifeless hand. He carefully places his own pistol in the dead man's grip.

MULDER

Don't lay this off on me, you sonofabitch. You killed these men in cold blood --

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

X rises, getting in Mulder's face. But Mulder is still going, wound up.

MULDER

-- You pulled that trigger. You pulled me into this case because you don't have the courage to reveal the truth yourself.

X

You're in no position to pass judgment on me.

MULDER

You're a COWARD. You skulk in dark corners, feeding me scraps of information -- leaving me to piece it all together.

X glares at Mulder for a tense beat -- we think violence is about to flash. Then X turns away, starts for the door.

MULDER

You're not walking away from this.

Mulder slaps a hand on his shoulder to stop him. X whirls on him, batting his hand aside. Then, dangerously quiet:

X

My orders don't include you.

But Mulder's eyes don't waver. X pulls Mulder's pistol from his pocket... offers it to him. Mulder takes it.

X

I AM walking away. And you won't stop me.

X turns, heads toward the door. Behind him, without hesitation, Mulder raises his gun. He clicks back the hammer, prepared to shoot. X hesitates at the open threshold.

MULDER

You assume too much.

X

No, I don't, Agent Mulder. You need me as much as I need you.

X takes a beat, then steps outside. Leaving Mulder, who slowly lowers his weapon. On the image of Mulder standing over the two dead bodies, lowering his head, we:

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

50 EXT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY (STOCK) 50

A LEGEND reads: FBI HEADQUARTERS, MARCH 11, 1996. The standard bustle of morning traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue.

51 INT. SKINNER'S OFFICE - DAY 51

Skinner sits behind his desk, perusing a CASE REPORT. Mulder sits across from him, waiting.

SKINNER
This is your final report, Agent Mulder?

MULDER
Yes, sir.

SKINNER
(looking up)
I see more questions here than answers. You don't know who manufactured the device you found, or what its purpose was.

MULDER
No, sir.

Mulder's frustration is clear. At that moment, the door opens, revealing Agent Scully.

SKINNER
(sincere)
Agent Scully... welcome back.

SCULLY
Thank you, sir. I'm sorry I'm late. I just got back from the Documents Section.

SKINNER (X)
What did you find out about the two men Mulder found executed?

SCULLY (X)
The cable company employee had no criminal record -- there's nothing remarkable about him whatsoever. We found a medical license under the name "Dr. Henry Stroman" in Falls Church, Virginia -- he died in 1978.

Skinner shakes his head -- this doesn't make any sense. (X)

SKINNER
What about their executioner?

(CONTINUED)

51 CONTINUED:

Scully looks to Mulder. He constructs his answer carefully.

MULDER

He remains an unknown subject.

Skinner's eyes narrow, considering Mulder's lawyerly response. Off Mulder's unreadable expression, we:

CUT TO:

52 EXT. D.C. STREET - NIGHT

The figure of X walks down the sidewalk, hands in his pockets. The hour is late, the street deserted. Steam rises out of manhole covers.

We pull back to reveal X is approaching a black Lincoln Town Car that idles at the curb. He glances once over his shoulder, then opens the passenger door and slips inside.

53 INT. TOWN CAR - NIGHT

X closes the door. We widen to reveal none other than:

THE CIGARETTE-SMOKING MAN

seated behind the wheel. Neither man speaks for a moment.

CSM

You've completed your work?

X

All the personnel and hardware have been removed. But Mulder still has one of the devices.

(X)

CSM

It's useless to him.

CSM lights a cigarette. He glances sideways at X.

CSM

You still haven't been able to identify Mulder's source?

X

No. That person remains unknown.

CSM stares at X, appraising him. X steadily holds his gaze, betraying not a hint of dishonesty.

CSM finally breaks his gaze. As he turns his head forward, exhaling a cloud of smoke, we... FADE OUT.

THE END