

= The Truth (The X @-@ Files) =

" The Truth " is the collective name for the 201st and 202nd episodes of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . The last episodes of the show 's ninth season , " The Truth " originally served as the finale for the entire series , until the return of the series in January 2016 . First aired together on the Fox network on May 19 , 2002 , the episodes were written by series creator Chris Carter and directed by Kim Manners . " The Truth " was the most @-@ watched episode of the ninth season in the United States , receiving a Nielsen rating of 7 @.@ 5 , attracting 7 @.@ 5 percent of the available audience and being viewed by approximately 13 @.@ 25 million viewers upon its initial broadcast . The finale received mixed reviews , with many commentators criticizing the episode 's lack of closure . Others were pleased with the full return of actor David Duchovny to the series , as well as the episode 's conclusion .

The show centers on FBI special agents who work on unsolved paranormal cases called X @-@ Files ; this season focuses on the investigations of John Doggett (Robert Patrick) , Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) , and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) . In this episode , after not knowing Fox Mulder 's (Duchovny) whereabouts for the past year , Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) and Scully learn that Mulder is being held for the murder of a military man he could not possibly have killed : Knowle Rohrer (Adam Baldwin) , one of the government 's secret " Super Soldiers " . Mulder breaks out of prison with the help of Skinner , Reyes , Doggett , Scully and Alvin Kersh (James Pickens , Jr .) . Mulder and Scully travel to New Mexico where helicopters destroy an Anasazi cliff dwelling ruin along with The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) .

The episode featured the return of Duchovny ? following his departure after the eighth season finale ? as well as several other recurring characters . " The Truth " served to conclude many long @-@ time story arcs while creating new ones for a possible film franchise . Shooting took place at various California locales , including a hydroelectric power plant east of Fresno and Anza @-@ Borrego Desert State Park . Carter would return to The X @-@ Files universe with a feature film , The X @-@ Files : I Want to Believe (2008) , and has publicly discussed the possibility of a third film , which would focus on the impending extraterrestrial invasion revealed in " The Truth " .

= = Plot = =

At the Mount Weather military base , Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) appears with several government officials . He gains access to highly classified documents on a secure computer system , and is shocked and dismayed to read the documents , which provide details of the final colonization of the planet by alien forces . Before he can continue reading , Mulder hears another person approaching . He hides quickly and observes Knowle Rohrer (Adam Baldwin) , a former friend of John Doggett (Robert Patrick) but who has been irreversibly transformed into an enemy " Super Soldier " , approach the computer system . Rohrer immediately realizes the system has been accessed . Mulder attempts to attack Rohrer , but Rohrer overpowers him . Mulder frantically flees , but Rohrer outflanks him . In a violent altercation , Mulder flips Rohrer off a catwalk onto high @-@ voltage wiring , and Rohrer apparently dies by electrocution . Mulder attempts to escape , but is quickly arrested by several soldiers .

News of Mulder 's arrest spreads to the FBI . Upon hearing that he has resurfaced , and in such a dire manner , Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) visit him in military custody . During his time in captivity , Mulder receives mysterious visits from two phantoms of his past : Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) and X (Steven Williams) . Meanwhile , Scully and Skinner go to great lengths to get him released , but are unsuccessful . Mulder 's fate is ultimately made the subject of a military tribunal with Deputy Director Alvin Kersh (James Pickens , Jr .) in charge . At the outset , it appears Mulder will become the hopeless victim of a show trial stacked against him .

Skinner takes Mulder 's defense , while Scully , Doggett , Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) , Marita Covarrubias (Laurie Holden) , Gibson Praise (Jeff Gulka) and Jeffrey Spender (Chris Owens) testify on Mulder 's behalf . The prosecution presents Rohrer 's body as evidence against Mulder . Aware that Rohrer is a seemingly @-@ invincible " Super Soldier " , Scully performs a medical

examination and proves that the body is not that of Rohrer . Despite this , the defense is ultimately overruled , and Mulder is sentenced to death for the murder of a military officer . Later , Doggett , Skinner , Reyes , and Scully help Mulder escape , with the unexpected help of Kersh who decided he should have let Mulder go in the first place . Despite being advised to immediately leave the continent via Canada , Mulder instead takes Scully to New Mexico . On their way , Mulder receives a visit by three additional ghosts : The Lone Gunmen , who advise him to flee for his life rather than continue his pursuit of the truth . Mulder politely declines . Meanwhile , Doggett and Reyes find their office emptied , suggesting that the X @-@ Files have been closed down for the third time .

Mulder and Scully arrive at Anasazi ruins to find a " wise man " who they believe can make sense of the classified documents Mulder has read . They discover the so @-@ called " wise man " is none other than The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) , who is hiding to survive the colonization ? an event that will happen on December 22 , 2012 , the predicted end of the world . Outside , Reyes and Doggett arrive and prepare to fight Rohrer , who has been sent to kill Mulder and The Smoking Man . Rohrer is killed when the magnetite in the ruins affects his superhuman body . Switching cars with Mulder and Scully , Doggett and Reyes drive off . Black helicopters destroy the cliff dwellings ? and The Smoking Man within ? thinking that Mulder is still inside before flying away . Doggett and Reyes are last seen speeding away .

In a motel room in Roswell , New Mexico , Mulder and Scully prepare for bed and talk . Mulder explains his belief " that the dead are not lost to us . That they speak to us as part of something greater than us ? greater than any alien force . And if you and I are powerless now , I want to believe that if we listen to what 's speaking , it can give us the power to save ourselves . " Despite their slim chance for success , Mulder declares , " Maybe there 's hope . "

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

The episode was written by series creator Chris Carter . He noted , " It 's the end ? you don 't get another chance . So you 'd better put everything you 've ever wanted to put in into the episode . There were things to distract us from what was really going on . The band was breaking up . " He expounded on the idea , saying that executive producer Frank Spotnitz and he decided " it was probably time to go [...] it was strange to be writing these things knowing it was the last time we 'd see Scully doing certain things or hear Mulder saying certain things . " Spotnitz explained that Carter made the announcement in January so that " we had time to wrap our minds around the end and plan for it and give all of the characters their due . " Gish later said , " I have a great respect for the elegant way in which they 're closing the curtain " . Actor Bruce Harwood , who played John Fitzgerald Byers on the show , called the finale the " passing of a generation " .

Several of the episode 's scenes feature elements that reference earlier installments . The final scene in which Mulder and Scully speak in a hotel room is reminiscent of the series ' pilot episode . Furthermore , in " The Truth , " it is revealed to Mulder by The Smoking Man that the aliens plan to colonize the earth on December 22 , 2012 , an event that , according to the show , the Mayans predicted . This is a throw @-@ back to the second season episode " Red Museum , " which featured members of a new religious movement who believed that the year 2012 would bring about the dawning of the New Age .

Before the release of the 2008 film The X @-@ Files : I Want to Believe , Carter expressed an intent to make a third X @-@ Files feature film that would focus on the impending alien invasion revealed in this episode , depending on the success of The X @-@ Files : I Want to Believe . Following the release of The X @-@ Files : I Want to Believe , Carter , Spotnitz , Duchovny , and Anderson all expressed their interest in making one . However , on January 17 , 2015 , Fox Television Group chairman and CEO Gary Newman revealed that there was network interest in reviving The X @-@ Files , not as a movie franchise , but as a limited run television event .

=== Casting ===

With this episode , Duchovny rejoined the main cast of The X @-@ Files after his departure following the eighth season finale " Existence " . The episode marks the only time that all five principal actors ? Duchovny , Anderson , Patrick , Gish , and Pileggi ? are credited together in the opening titles . Mulder , Scully , and the The Smoking Man are the only characters to appear in both this episode and the series ' pilot . This episode is the fourth of only four episodes in season nine where Duchovny appeared , the others being " Trust No 1 " , " Jump the Shark " , and " William " . Duchovny appeared in the first two via archival footage and only made a small cameo in the third . The episode marks the return of several characters who had either previously been killed @-@ off or had left the show , including X , who was killed in the season four opener " Herrenvolk " ; Deep Throat , who was murdered in the first season finale " The Erlenmeyer Flask " ; Alex Krycek , who was shot and killed by Skinner in the eighth season finale " Existence " ; The Smoking Man , who was purportedly killed in " Requiem " ; Gibson Praise , who was last seen in the eighth season episode " Without " ; The Lone Gunmen , who were killed @-@ off in the ninth season episode " Jump the Shark " ; Jeffrey Spender , who originally was killed @-@ off in the sixth season episode " One Son " but reappeared in the ninth season episode " William " ; and Marita Covarrubias , who last appeared in the seventh season finale " Requiem " .

Originally , this episode was to feature the recurring character Shannon McMahon . However , actress Lucy Lawless became pregnant shortly after filming the two @-@ part episode , " Nothing Important Happened Today " and was not available for subsequent episodes . Actress Julia Vera was called in to play the role of the woman who is helping the Smoking Man live in the Anasazi ruins . Vera had previously appeared in the sixth season two @-@ part episode " Dreamland " . She later called the opportunity " amazing " and declared that " my greatest experience was The X @-@ Files " . The final scene of the episode was originally going to feature the Toothpick Man , the alien leader of the New Syndicate played by Alan Dale , informing U.S. President George W. Bush , played by actor Gary Newton , of Mulder 's escape . The scene was filmed , but was not included in the broadcast version ; executive producer Frank Spotnitz later said that he was " so happy " that the producers cut the scene , noting that ? despite " a lot of debate about it , on both sides " ? the scene was unable to top the final scene with Mulder and Scully . On the DVD 's audio commentary , the producers mentioned that they had considered filming the shot on the Oval Office set created by The West Wing , a serial drama created by Aaron Sorkin that was originally broadcast on NBC . In addition , they originally wanted to have Martin Sheen appear as his character on The West Wing , Josiah Bartlet , instead of Bush , noting that the cameo would have been " a nice , sort of wink " to the television audience . Despite being cut from the final episode , the shot was featured as a deleted scene on the season nine video release .

=== Filming ===

The majority of the episode ? like the rest of seasons six , seven , eight and nine ? was filmed in Los Angeles , California . The first scene , featuring Mulder breaking into a military base , was shot in a hydroelectric power plant east of Fresno , California . The rooms that were featured in the episode were the main rooms for the power plant that The X @-@ Files design team redecorated ; the crew later called the set the " war room " . Most of the decoration and interior scene was done by the visual effect crew ; the only visible part seen in real life was a large generator that pumped water . Bill Roe , the cinematographer for the episode , spent four to five days lighting the set for filming . Kim Manners called his work " a great job " . The scenes that take place in the main computer terminal room were shot on a sound stage at 20th Century Fox ; the crew built the set themselves . The scenes with Mulder being tortured by the military guards were shot at Fort MacArthur , an abandoned military base in San Pedro , California , including The Marine Mammal Care Center located at Fort MacArthur . Filming the court room was one of the " most challenging sequences " Manners had ever done . Carter wanted the courtroom to have no spectators and no jury . This meant that Manners had to shoot each scene with a limited amount of actors and make them look "

fresh " . Manners was terrified to film the 40 @-@ page long courtroom scene , pointing out that the show was basically re @-@ telling a nine @-@ year history of The X @-@ Files . Corey Kaplan designed the set .

The Anasazi ruins were constructed in Anza @-@ Borrego Desert State Park . Location manager Mac Gordon later noted that , due to the presence of a rare " spiny black horned toad " in the area , he and his crew were forced to hire several biologists to locate any lizards in the area and move them elsewhere . In addition , Gordon had a difficult time persuading the park rangers to build and then blow up faux @-@ ruins . He explained , " we were on a state park property that was an off road park , with motorcycles and [All @-@ terrain vehicles] flying all over the place , but they still blanched when I said we have to build Indian ruins and then blow it up . " However , the cameo of The Smoking Man was filmed on a sound stage back at 20th Century Fox . Manners noted that Davis had " a hell of a time " trying to smoke his cigarettes through a hole in his neck , because the hole was fake . The scene featuring The Smoking Man being burnt up by the fire from a missile was done via computer animation . The missiles were created via CGI technology by animator Mat Beck . The helicopter , however , included real smoke bombs . A shot of William B. Davis was overlapped with fire , and eventually a skull to give the effect that The Smoking Man 's flesh was burnt away . Paul Rabwin later called the scene a " great sequence " .

The last scene of the episode shot was between Anderson and Duchovny and was called " extremely tough " by Manners , due to it being " very emotional " . He noted that the scene " sums up the series " about a " man who believed and a woman who was skeptical but became a believer " . The scene was filmed at an actual motel , called La Cresenta . The location had previously been used in episodes " Sein Und Zeit " and " This is Not Happening " .

= = Themes = =

The final scene , featuring a conversation between Mulder and Scully , has been examined by author V. Alan White due to its perceived religious undertones . In the book The Philosophy of The X @-@ Files , he notes that the final scene " undermines Mulder 's seemingly persistent scorn of traditional " religion and his subtle acceptance of theism . In previous episodes ? mainly those dealing with Scully 's Catholicism ? Mulder shows a lack of approval when it came to the concept of organized religion , often pointing out that " theologians can be just as dogmatic as scientists " when it comes to unexplained phenomena . White proposes that this needling may be intentional on Mulder 's part , as a form of " ironic reversal of [Scully 's] skepticism about the paranormal " . However , the final lines of " The Truth " see Mulder talking about a belief in " something greater than us , greater than any alien force " . White also points out the fact that during this scene Mulder grabs Scully 's gold cross , an icon that symbolizes her belief through much of the series .

Several of the episode 's scenes and motifs have been compared to popular myths and legends . Michelle Bush , in her book Myth @-@ X , equated Mulder 's overall quest to that of the search for the Holy Grail . She notes that in " The Truth " , Mulder and Scully metaphorically " find their way to the Grail castle " only to discover that the Fisher King ? the wounded knight charged with protecting the secret ? is actually The Smoking Man . Furthermore , Bush compared the final scene of the episode ? featuring Mulder musing about hope regarding an alien invasion ? to the myth of Pandora 's Box . According to legend , the ancient Greek gods gave Pandora a box filled with evils and told her not to open it . Due to her curiosity , she disobeyed and unleashed various calamities unto the world . Bush argues that the Syndicate 's tampering with alien technology ? such as their alien @-@ human hybrid experiments ? are similar to the contents of the box . She notes that , in both cases , " man 's curiosity is his downfall " . In the end , however , both Pandora 's box and the world of The X @-@ Files contain hope , which , in the legend , was the only thing in the box that Pandora did not let go of .

= = Reception = =

== Ratings ==

" The Truth " was originally aired on the Fox network on May 19 , 2002 , and became the most watched episode of the ninth season , receiving the season 's highest Nielsen ratings . Nielsen ratings are audience measurement system that determine the audience size and composition of television programming in the United States . " The Truth " earned a household rating of 7 @. @ 5 , meaning that it was seen by 7 @. @ 5 percent of the nation 's estimated households . It was viewed by a total of 13 @. @ 25 million viewers in the United States alone . On the date of its airing , the episode ranked third in its timeslot , behind the season finale of Survivor : Marquesas and the heavily promoted reunion of The Cosby Show . " The Truth " , however , placed ahead of the season finale of The Practice . In the United Kingdom and Ireland , the episode made its first appearance on Sky1 on September 26 , 2002 and received 1 @. @ 03 million viewers , placing The X @- @ Files second in the top ten broadcasts for Sky1 for that week , behind The Simpsons . The episode was included on The X @- @ Files Mythology , Volume 4 ? Super Soldiers , a DVD collection that contains installments involved with the alien " Super Soldiers " arc .

== Reviews ==

The entry received mixed reviews by critics ; the main reason for criticism was that , instead of creating a conclusion , the episode raised new questions for the audience . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @- @ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen , gave the episode a scathing review and awarded it one star out of five . The two , despite calling the opening " promising " , derided the episode 's ending ? especially the revelation of alien colonization of December 22 , 2012 ? writing , " is this really what the series was about ? " Furthermore , Shearman and Pearson concluded that the problem with the episode was that the show , which he called " brilliant ? frequently , truly brilliant " decided " to define itself in the summing up " with the episode , which did not answer very many questions . UGO named the episode the fourteenth " Worst Series Finale " and wrote that the episode ? and the show 's eighth and ninth seasons by extension ? were negatively affected by the series ' lack of a defining plot line . The article noted that , while the episode claimed to wrap up the story arcs for the series , " the trial of Mulder ultimately resulted in very little satisfying payoff to the series ' overarching mysteries " . Joyce Millman , writing for The New York Times , after the premiere of " The Truth " , said of the show : " The most imaginative show on television has finally reached the limits of its imagination . " M.A. Crang , in his book Denying the Truth : Revisiting The X @- @ Files after 9 / 11 , was critical of the episode 's trial sequences . While he stated that these scenes " do a good job of bringing together the many disparate threads of this arc " , he felt that they were " interminably dull " .

Not all reviews were critical . Tom Kessenich , in his book Examinations , wrote a rather positive review of the episode . He noted that , while the episode " told us nothing of significance " regarding the " big picture " mythology story arc , the chance to see Mulder and Scully together one last time resulted in " an exquisite Mulder @- @ Scully moment " . He was particularly pleased with the final scene , noting that it was an appropriate conclusion ; he called it " fitting " , as well as " wonderful " . Kessenich maintained that , were it not for the return of Duchovny , " nobody would have given a damn about the end of this series . " Julie Salamon of The New York Times gave the episode a positive review . Salamon noted that " Until the end , the series maintained its mesmerizing visual gloominess , cleverly punctuated with suggestive plays of color and light " . She claimed the show " also retained its conspiracy @- @ theory heart that has appealed so greatly to viewers " . John C. Snider of SciFiDimensions praised the episode , stating " The Truth is a satisfying conclusion to the series , with plenty of twists and turns , a few surprise guest appearances , and an explosive finale complete with requisite black helicopters . The romantics among us will also be pleased with the culmination of the Mulder / Scully relationship " .

In 2011 , the finale was ranked number twenty @- @ two on the TV Guide Network special , TV 's Most Unforgettable Finales .

== Filming locations ==