

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

" The Host " is the second episode of the second season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on September 23 , 1994 . It was written by Chris Carter , directed by Daniel Sackheim , and featured guest appearances by Darin Morgan . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " The Host " earned a Nielsen household rating of 9 @. @ 8 , being watched by 9 @. @ 3 million households in its initial broadcast . The episode received positive reviews , praising the creepiness of the villain .

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal , called X @-@ Files . In the episode , Mulder and Scully investigate a body found in sewage after being reassigned to different departments . Their inquiry results in the discovery of a bizarre fluke @-@ like man ? the product of the Chernobyl disaster ? that soon goes on a rampage in the sewers of New Jersey .

Series creator Chris Carter claimed to have been inspired to write the episode based on three incidents ; his dog having worms , his readings about Chernobyl , and the extinction of species during the 1990s . The Flukeman character was portrayed by Darin Morgan , brother of executive producer Glen Morgan . Darin Morgan would become a staff writer for the show later in the second season . In addition , " The Host " also introduced the character of X , the successor of Mulder 's former Syndicate informant Deep Throat .

= = Plot = =

On a Russian freighter off the coast of New Jersey , a crewman trying to fix the ship 's toilets is pulled into the septic system . His half @-@ eaten body appears in the sewers of Newark days later . Fox Mulder is assigned the case and visits with a Detective Norman in Newark , being shown the still @-@ unidentified body . Mulder angrily confronts Assistant Director Walter Skinner , feeling he has been given the seeming " wild goose chase " as a form of punishment .

That night , Mulder talks to Dana Scully , telling her that he 's thinking of leaving the FBI . He shoots down Scully 's idea that he request a transfer to Quantico , believing the FBI doesn 't want them working together . Scully performs the autopsy on the crewman 's body , finding a Russian language tattoo on his arm and a flukeworm inside his liver .

In Newark , a city worker named Craig is pulled underwater in the sewers but is rescued by his co @-@ worker . He believes he was attacked by a python . He decides to visit a doctor (with Mulder observing) and complains of a weird taste in his mouth . An abnormal four @-@ pointed wound appears on his back during a medical examination in Sayreville , New Jersey . Scully shows Mulder the flukeworm she found , whose mouth , though much smaller , matches the wound on the city worker 's back . Mulder receives a call from a mysterious man telling him he has a friend at the FBI . That night , the city worker coughs up a flukeworm in his shower and dies . Mulder visits a sewage processing plant and finds a large humanoid with a fluke @-@ like mouth .

At Quantico , someone slips a newspaper article under Scully 's door enabling her to identify the original body as a crew member on a Russian ship . Mulder and Scully meet at the processing plant and they look at the strange , fluke @-@ like man . Skinner wants to prosecute the creature and subject it to a psychiatric evaluation , which Mulder thinks would be difficult . Skinner tells Mulder of Craig 's death and admits that this would have been an X @-@ File had they still been open . Mulder raises his discontentment claiming that with X @-@ Files , a certain pair of agents could have saved a life . Skinner simply responds saying everyone takes their orders from someone , implying the decision was not his and came from higher up the chain of command .

That night workers put the flukeman into a U.S. Marshal 's van , but it kills the driver and escapes to a local campsite . The flukeman hides in a portable toilet and is pulled into a truck the next day when the toilet is drained . Mulder receives another phone call from the mysterious caller . When he questions Scully about it , she denies any involvement . The flukeman is brought back to the processing plant . Scully believes that the flukeworm she found in the body is a larva , attempting to

reproduce . One of the men at the processing plant is pulled underwater by the flukeman while investigating a storm drain overflow . Mulder heads in and saves him , apparently killing the flukeman by closing a sewer grate on it , slicing it in half . Scully concludes her investigation , thinking that the creature was brought to the U.S. by a Russian freighter that was hauling salvage from Chernobyl , and that the creature was created in a ' soup ' of radioactive sewage . Elsewhere , the flukeman 's remains open its eyes .

= = = Continuity = = =

In the 2013 comic continuation of The X @-@ Files called Season 10 two stories ? " Hosts " , part one and two ? continued on the story of " The Host " almost twenty years later after the events of this episode . According to the comics , the Flukeman escaped and travelled to Martha 's Vineyard where it began to multiply , abducting multiple beach @-@ goers . The Flukeman and his offspring were nearly all killed , however , by local sheriff Michael Simmons (who later told the agents in " Hosts , Part 2 " that his real name was Mikhail Simonov and he served as one of the Soviet Army 's liquidators during the Chernobyl disaster) . In addition , " Hosts , Part 2 " expanded upon the backstory of the Flukeman , revealing that he was a Soviet liquidator named Gregory , who , after being locked in a sewerage tanker truck in Chernobyl , mutated into the original Flukeman after he was exposed to irradiated cooling water from the still @-@ burning Reactor No. 4 and to flatworms in the sewerage tank .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

Chris Carter claimed to have been inspired to write the episode after his dog had worms , a situation he called " very disgusting " . He also had been reading about Chernobyl and the extinction of species at the time and blended all three of these concepts when writing the episode . Carter described his mood while writing the episode , " I was in a funk when I wrote that episode . We were coming back from hiatus and I was trying to find something more interesting than just the Flukeman . I was irritated at the time and I brought my irritation to Mulder 's attitude . Basically , he had become fed up with the FBI . They had given him what he felt was a low assignment , which was sending him into the city after a dead body . But lo and behold , he finds that this is a case that for all intents and purposes is an X @-@ File . It 's been given to him by a man he 's never looked at as an ally , Skinner . So it 's an interesting establishing of a relationship between them . " Producer J.P. Finn described the episode as a departure from Carter 's usual work as it did not deal with an alien subject matter .

= = = Casting and filming = = =

The Flukeman ? also known affectionately as " Flukey " by the cast and crew ? was portrayed by Darin Morgan , brother of executive producer Glen Morgan . He would become a staff writer for the show later in the second season . The Flukeman suit used by Morgan , which included flipper @-@ like feet , yellow contact lenses , and fake teeth , took six hours to put on ; this process was eventually sped up . Morgan wore the suit as much as 20 consecutive hours during shooting . As a result , he was forced to go to the bathroom while still wearing the suit . Morgan was rarely on set without being in full costume , and recalled that when he met up with David Duchovny again upon joining the series ' writing staff , the actor had no idea who he was , despite having enjoyed an amiable relationship with the costumed Morgan previously . The suit dissolved in water , forcing special effects artist Toby Lindala to reconstruct the suit each day . Because the suit did not permit Morgan to breathe through his nose , he was unable to eat while wearing it . Carter described the character as " the embodiment of everyone 's sense of vulnerability , the idea of something that

exists in the underworld of the sewer system and might in fact come to bite you in the least elegant of places ". The original intention was showing even less of the Flukeman , but some angles and lighting ended up revealing more of the creature 's design . Carter still felt it helped to " get more creepy " , as the Flukeman is not shown fully until the final scenes .

The sewer processing plant scenes were shot at Iona Island Sewage Treatment plant in Canada . The sewer scenes were shot in a pit on the show 's stage , with Carter using his father , who worked as a construction worker , as a consultant on how to build it . As no ship was available for filming the opening scenes in the Russian freighter , a hydro sub station in Surrey , British Columbia was adapted into an engine room . Carter had to fight with Fox 's broadcast standards department over the scene where a victim vomits up a flukeworm while in the shower . James Wong described it as the grossest piece of television ever put on the air . As Gillian Anderson 's pregnancy was getting more apparent , the producers started to shoot Scully 's scenes in a way it would be disguised , with " very fancy trick angles , trench coats , and scenes where she is seated rather than standing " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" The Host " premiered on the Fox network on September 23 , 1994 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on September 4 , 1995 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 8 , with a 17 share , meaning that roughly 9 @. @ 8 percent of all television @- @ equipped households , and 17 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 9 @. @ 3 million households .

The episode received glowing praise from critics . Entertainment Weekly gave " The Host " a rare A + , noting that it was " a refreshing instance of a fully and satisfactorily resolved episode ? like a perfect meal , although you definitely don 't want to eat during this one . " Reviewer Zack Handlen of The A.V. Club described the episode as " the first really , really icky X @- @ Files " , and while considering redundant the " circular " nature of the plot , with the creature coming back to the sewers after escaping , he felt that " The Host " " holds up because of the Flukeman 's irreconcilable ugliness , and because it continues down the path that " Little Green Men " started on " . On a more negative view , Critical Myth 's John Keegan gave the episode 6 / 10 , considering that " as fun as this episode can be , there are some places where it just doesn 't quite add up " , criticizing writing elements such as the lack of resolution , the explanation for the Flukeman 's origins , and the " heavy @- @ handed " introduction of X. A writer from the Vancouver Sun listed " The Host " as one of the best stand alone episodes of the show , saying that it broke the " B @- @ movie fun at best " quality of most X @- @ Files standalone episodes , saying that " thanks to its cinema @- @ grade made @- @ up effects , claustrophobic sets and chilling subject matter , this Chris Carter @- @ penned episode not only took the show to new heights of horror and suspense , it offered a fresh alternative on network television " . " The Host " was later picked for the 2008 DVD The X @- @ Files : Revelations , with eight episodes Chris Carter considered " essential grounding " for the film The X @- @ Files : I Want to Believe . The plot for the episode was also adapted as a novel for young adults in 1997 by Les Martin .

The Flukeman character has also attracted positive criticism . Writing for Den of Geek , John Moore listed the Flukeman as one of his " Top 10 X @- @ Files Baddies " , writing that " the idea of a man size biter running around drains in a city near me ? looking like a giant , fanged maggot - was always likely to induce a goodly amount of cheek @- @ shifting on the sofa . " The A.V. Club 's Zack Handlen described the flukeman as a " beyond icky " monster that " just looks wrong " , adding that " the plain fact of its existence is horrifying enough that it doesn 't need to do more " . Connie Ogle from PopMatters ranked the character among the " best " monster @- @ of @- @ the @- @ week , describing it as " something of a poster boy for XF villains , " and considering that " never has toxic waste seemed so dangerous as when the big slimy white fellow slithers onto the screen and starts attacking people in the sewers . "