

= All things =

" all things " is the 17th episode of the seventh season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . Written and directed by lead actress Gillian Anderson , it first aired on April 9 , 2000 , on the Fox network . The episode is unconnected to the wider mythology of The X @-@ Files and functions as a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story . Watched by 12 @.@ 18 million people , the initial broadcast had a Nielsen household rating of 7 @.@ 1 . The episode received mixed reviews from critics ; many called the dialogue pretentious and criticized the characterization of Scully . However , viewer response was generally positive .

The series centers on Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal , called " X @-@ Files " . Mulder is a believer in the paranormal . The skeptical Scully was initially assigned to debunk his work , but the two have developed a deep friendship . In this episode , a series of coincidences lead Scully to meet Dr. Daniel Waterston (Nicolas Surovy) , a married man with whom she had an affair while at medical school . After Waterston slips into a coma , Scully puts aside her skepticism and seeks out alternative medicine to save Waterston .

The script for " all things " , the only episode of the series written by Anderson , was originally fifteen pages too long with no fourth act . It was only after Anderson worked with series creator Chris Carter and executive producer Frank Spotnitz that the script was finished . The cast and crew helped Anderson adjust to her directorial debut ? the first time a woman directed an episode of The X @-@ Files . The episode makes heavy use of " The Sky Is Broken " , a song from Moby 's 1999 album Play , as well as a gong . The episode has been analyzed for its themes of pragmatism and feminist philosophy .

= = Plot = =

FBI special agent Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) is getting dressed in front of a mirror . As she leaves , her colleague Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) lies in his bed , half of his body covered by bedsheets . The narrative flashes back to a few days earlier : Scully arrives at a hospital and , after a series of coincidences , meets her former professor , Daniel Waterston (Nicolas Surovy) , with whom she had an affair while attending medical school . He is ill and suffering from an undiagnosed heart condition . She questions whether she made the right decision to leave him and abandon her medical career to pursue a career in the FBI . She meets Waterston 's daughter , Maggie (Stacy Haiduk) , who is extremely resentful of Scully for the effect she had on Waterston 's family .

Mulder ? on his way to England investigating heart chakra @-@ shaped crop circles ? calls Scully and asks her to meet a contact of his , Colleen Azar (Colleen Flynn) , to obtain some information . As Scully speaks to Mulder on her cellphone while driving her car , a woman appears on a crosswalk . Scully brakes hard to avoid hitting the woman . As she does so , she narrowly avoids colliding with a diesel truck . She realizes that , had the woman not stepped in her path , the truck would have killed her . When she later arrives at the house of Azar , she observes that Scully is going through a personal crisis and tries to offer her guidance , but Scully is dismissive .

Later , Scully returns to apologize to Azar and agrees to listen to her ideas . Azar shares her knowledge of Buddhism , the concept of the collective unconscious , and the idea of personal auras . Azar believes these concepts might explain these strange occurrences . After a confrontation with Maggie at the hospital , Scully walks through Chinatown . Seeing the woman who appeared earlier at the crosswalk , she follows her to a small Buddhist temple before the mysterious woman seemingly vanishes . Inside the temple , Scully has a vision of what is ailing Waterston . She returns to the hospital with Azar to visit Waterston .

Azar and a healer provide alternative treatment for Waterston , who fully recovers . He announces that he still wants a relationship with Scully , but she realizes she is no longer the same person she was those many years ago and rejects him . As she sits outside the hospital on a bench , Scully thinks that she sees the mysterious woman again , but it turns out to be Mulder . Later , the two agents sit in Mulder 's apartment talking about the events of the last few days . Mulder begins to

Speak more existentially about what transpired , implying that fate has brought them together but , when he turns to look at Scully , he sees that she has fallen asleep .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception and writing = = =

Sometime during the sixth season of The X @-@ Files , Anderson approached series creator Chris Carter and asked to write an episode . Anderson 's own beliefs in the power of spiritual healing and Buddhism provided inspiration ; she wanted to write a script in which Scully pursued a " deeply personal X @-@ File , one in which [she] is taken down a spiritual path when logic fails her " . She wrote the basic outline of what became " all things " in one sitting , and pitched the script to Carter the next day ; he later approved of the " personal and quiet " characteristics of the story .

The first draft of the script was 72 pages ? 15 pages too long ? and did not feature a fourth act . Carter and executive producer Frank Spotnitz worked closely with Anderson to finish the episode , although Carter and Spotnitz later acknowledged that the majority of the script " was all Gillian " . Despite her satisfaction with the final version , Anderson regrets a handful of the " necessary " script changes , most notably , the addition that Scully and Waterston 's affair was intimate . In the original script , the two came close to having an affair , but Scully ended the relationship when she discovered that Waterston was married .

In the commentary for the episode , Anderson elaborated on Scully and Waterston 's original backstory : after Scully and Waterston came close to having an affair , Scully left to study at Quantico to become an FBI agent . After she left , Waterston became depressed , and his family began to suspect the affair . The emotional turmoil was too much for Waterston 's wife , who killed herself , which made Waterston 's daughter , Maggie , resent Scully , as shown in the finished episode . Anderson felt that the removal of this backstory made it hard for the audience to understand why Maggie was so angry at Scully .

When Anderson first wrote the episode , she did not hint that Scully and Mulder had had sex . Spotnitz and the production crew , however , felt it was natural to suggest that Scully and Mulder 's relationship may have evolved into a romantic one . The idea of heart chakra crop circles was included because Anderson wanted " whatever Mulder was involved in that took him away from me , away from Washington , to somehow tie into what it was that I was going through ? the journey that I was going through " . As such , Anderson dedicated much of her time researching both crop circles and heart chakras , but she later gave additional credit to Spotnitz , who she noted was also heavily involved during the researching process .

= = = Directing and music = = =

Around the same time that she approached Carter about writing an episode , Anderson was also receiving offers from several television networks to direct shows . She , however , had never directed before , and decided that she would first attempt to helm an episode of The X @-@ Files before branching out into other series . Anderson thus expressed her wish to direct the episode when she pitched the original idea for " all things " . Carter accepted her story , but did not appoint her as director until all the revisions and rewrites had been completed . Anderson worked with series director Kim Manners for the majority of the episode , later noting that if she had any questions , she would approach Manners first . To help Anderson , Manners gave her directing exercises , such as making a list of shots for every scene . The episode also marked the first time that a woman had helmed the direction of an episode of The X @-@ Files .

Anderson 's directing helped to energize the production , and the cast and crew worked more than usual to make sure that everything was in order for her . Production designer Corey Kaplan made sure that the episode featured a Buddhist temple at Anderson 's request , and casting director Rick Millikan helped Anderson choose the appropriate actors and actresses . Millikan later said that he

particularly enjoyed working with Anderson , because it was " fun " for him to watch her go through the casting process , which was entirely new to her . On set , Anderson 's directing style was described as " right on the money " by Marc Shapiro in his book all things : The Official Guide to The X @-@ Files , Volume 6 . He later wrote that " Anderson wielded a deft hand in her directorial debut , prodding the actors to her will , making decisions on the fly , and handling the complex special effects sequences " . Fans of the show later wrote to express their appreciation of Anderson 's directing abilities . Anderson was also involved in post @-@ production editing , during which she was forced to cut the final conversation scene between Scully and Daniel Waterston by 10 minutes in order to meet the allotted episode length .

The meditation scene required clips from previous episodes to appear in flashback . Initially , Paul Rabwin and the special effects crew cut the necessary scenes and placed them in animated bubbles . According to Rabwin , at this point , the crew was just experimenting with ideas . Eventually , the crew decided that the bubbles were too " hokey " , so they adopted a more standard slit @-@ scan effect . In order to create the sequence of Scully visualizing Waterston 's heart condition , Nicolas Surovy had to lie naked on a platform surrounded by a blue screen . A sphere was matched via motion control as a marker for a prosthetic beating heart that was crafted and filmed separately . The two shots were then combined .

Anderson wanted to include " The Sky Is Broken " , a song from Moby 's 1999 album Play in the episode , having heard it while driving home from work . She later explained that the song 's lyrics " fit with [the] idea that was unfolding for the script " . Anderson crafted the first shot after the opening credits , which involved Scully getting ready while water dripped from a sink , to create a " continuation of sound , rhythmic sound " , because it was important to the show 's musical aspect . Anderson and series composer Mark Snow worked together in post @-@ production ; after filming , she sent Snow several CDs of music and asked him for compositions that were similar in style and feel . A certain melody that the two worked on later became " Scully 's Theme " , which was not broadcast until the eighth season episode " Within " . " all things " also featured the use of the gong , an instrument that Anderson called " very Tibetan " and " appropriate for this episode " .

= = Themes = =

In the chapter " Scully as a Pragmatist Feminist " of the book The Philosophy of The X @-@ Files , Erin McKenna argues that " all things " represents an " important shift " in Scully 's approach to science , knowledge acquisition , and the pursuit of the truth . She reasons that the events of the episode open Scully 's mind to new ways of knowing , specifically citing " auras , chakras , visions ... and the importance of coincidence " . McKenna notes that Scully 's shift in perspective is a shift to American pragmatism , a belief that reality is ever @-@ changing . Pragmatists believe " the truth is out there " ? the motto of the series ? in a manner similar to Mulder 's . In " all things " , Scully begins to embrace pragmatism , although she still clings to her skeptic roots . Mixing the two , Scully evolves from a mere skeptic who demands proof to validate a truth , to an empiricist who wants proof , but is open to other perspectives .

In addition , McKenna reasons that " all things " is heavily influenced by feminist philosophy and epistemology , schools of thought that try to criticize or re @-@ evaluate the ideas of traditional philosophy and epistemology from within a feminist framework . According to McKenna , feminism rejects dualistic ways of thinking , especially " typical male / female dualism " . Feminist philosophy , instead , calls for a pluralistic way of thinking , noting that there are many consistent sets of truths about the world . In the episode , Scully starts out " sure of her more rational scientific view and approach " . As the episode progresses , however , she decides to branch out . Eventually , she brings in a spirit healer to " corroborate or nullify the new beliefs she is encountering " . Despite dabbling in mysticism , a field generally stereotyped as feminine by the patriarchy , Scully engages in " protracted inquiry " , examining all sides of the issue , in order to return Waterston to health .

When Mulder and Scully talk at the end of the episode , Mulder questions the fact that he left " town for two days and [Scully] spoke to God in a Buddhist temple and God spoke back " . Scully retorts that , " I didn 't say God spoke back " . McKenna proposes that this is an example of Scully 's

rational scientific approach meshing with her newer , feministic pragmatism . The two modes of understanding are not " to be seen ... as competing systems , but as complementary , as are Scully and Mulder themselves " . McKenna concludes that this is represented in the opening scene , in which Mulder and Scully are implied to have had sex . This is meant as a metaphor , showing the full merging of Scully 's and Mulder 's different philosophies into pragmatic feminism .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

The episode originally aired in the United States on the Fox network on April 9 , 2000 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on Sky1 on July 9 , 2000 . In the U.S. , " all things " was watched by 12 @. @ 18 million viewers . It earned a Nielsen household rating of 7 @. @ 5 , with an 11 share , meaning that roughly 7 @. @ 5 percent of all television @- @ equipped households , and 11 percent of households watching television , tuned into the episode . In the U.K. , " all things " was seen by 580 @, @ 000 viewers , making it the seventh @- @ most watched program on Sky1 for that week . On May 13 , 2003 , the episode was released on DVD as part of the complete seventh season .

Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club awarded the episode a " C " and called it " a curious failure " . He felt that the writing was " pretentious " and composed of " some weird , weird bullshit " . VanDerWerff wrote that , although the episode was unsuccessful , there was something so " pure and unadorned at its center that I can 't outright hate it " . Furthermore , he admired the show and Anderson for " making the attempt " . Kevin Silber of Space.com gave the episode a negative review , critical of the script and characterization . He said , " nothing much seems to happen , and what does occur is substantially driven by coincidence and arbitrariness " . He did not like Azar and disapproved of Scully 's philosophical " reverie " , calling it " facile , and hard to reconcile with the determined rationalism she 's displayed over the years in the face of events no less strange than those that occur here " .

In their book *Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @- @ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen* , Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson rated the episode one star out of five , calling the premise and characters dull . The two criticized Anderson for looking at the " minutiae of life too intensely " , which made many of the actors and actresses come off as ciphers . Furthermore , Shearman and Pearson were critical of Anderson 's directing style , calling it " pretentious " , noting that the plot 's significance was drowned out by unnecessary artistic flourishes and needless pizzazz . Paula Vitaris from CFQ gave the episode a negative review , awarding it one star out of four . She called Anderson 's directing " heavy @- @ handed " and bemoaned the storyline because it " plays havoc with Scully 's motivations and character as established in the past seven years " .

Not all reviews were negative . Tom Kessenich , in his book *Examinations* , gave the episode a largely positive review and called it " wonderful " . He praised Anderson 's tenacity in presenting a darker moment from Scully 's past and favorably compared the episode to " *The Sixth Extinction II : Amor Fati* " in terms of character development . Kinney Littlefield of The Orange County Register wrote that the " wistful , meditative episode " was " not bad for Anderson 's first directing effort " . He did , however , comment that it was not as " sly as the episode about an alien baseball player that Duchovny directed " . The Michigan Daily writer Melissa Runstrom , in a review of the seventh season , called the episode " interesting " .

While the episode received lukewarm reviews from critics , fans of the show reacted generally positively to " all things " , and the show 's producers received calls and letters from viewers stating that they " loved the vulnerability and quiet determination that Scully revealed in the unusual episode " .