

= Existence (The X @-@ Files) =

" Existence " is the twenty @-@ first episode and eighth season finale of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files and 182nd episode overall . The episode first premiered on Fox in the United States on May 20 , 2001 , and subsequently aired in the United Kingdom on June 28 , 2001 on Sky1 . It was written by executive producer Chris Carter and directed by Kim Manners . " Existence " earned a Nielsen household rating of 8 @.@ 4 and was watched by 8 @.@ 58 million households and 14 million viewers , overall . The episode received largely positive reviews from television critics .

The show centers on FBI special agents John Doggett (Robert Patrick) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) ? as well as ex @-@ FBI agent Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) ? who work on cases linked to the paranormal , called X @-@ Files . In this episode , continuing from the previous episode , " Essence " , a new type of alien , called a Super Soldier programmed to destroy any traces of alien involvement on Earth , is introduced . Mulder , Doggett , Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) , and Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) help Scully escape from Billy Miles with Special Agent Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) to a remote town . Shortly after , Skinner kills Krycek and Scully delivers an apparently normal baby with the alien Super Soldiers surrounding her . Without explanation , the aliens leave the area as Mulder arrives .

" Existence " is a story milestone for the series . It , along with previous season eight episodes starting with " Per Manum " , helped to introduce the story arc featuring the super @-@ soldiers which continued throughout the ninth season . The episode was the last to feature Fox Mulder 's character until the series finale the following year . As such , the last scene with Doggett and Reyes in Kersh 's office was intended to show the " New X @-@ Files " without David Duchovny .

= = Plot = =

The episode begins with a metal box brought in containing the remains of Billy Miles . The coroner examines it and notices a small piece of metal . After he leaves the room , the metal begins to spin , growing into what looks like the beginnings of a spine . Meanwhile , Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and Monica Reyes arrive at the abandoned town where Special Agent John Doggett (Robert Patrick) was born .

Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) is seated in a chair in Assistant Director Walter Skinner 's office , where he is shown a video from the morgue . Skinner tells him that Miles is somehow alive and still out to get Scully and her unborn child . Suddenly , Agent Gene Crane comes to Doggett and tells him that there is a person ? Knowle Rohrer ? who wants to see him , about issues concerning Miles and Scully . This leaves Fox Mulder and Skinner to interrogate Krycek . Rohrer fabricates a story to Doggett that Miles is part of a Military Project to create a super soldier and that Scully had a chip put in the back of her neck during her abduction to make her pregnant with the first organic version of a super soldier .

In Skinner 's office , Krycek gets up from his chair and starts leaving out the doorway . Skinner goes after him , then turns around and sees Miles approaching behind him . Skinner just manages to escape with Krycek (who was purposely closing the elevator doors on Skinner) , but Miles ' hand breaks through the elevator , injuring Skinner . At the hospital , Mulder distrusts what Doggett has been told by Knowle Rohrer , so the two set out to find out how trustworthy Rohrer really is . Meanwhile , at Doggett 's abandoned hometown where Reyes and Scully are hiding out , Reyes sees someone running off and follows whoever it is . A car pulls up and she meets a trooper who agrees to help with the birth . As Mulder and Doggett pull into the garage , they find Krycek with a passenger , who happens to be Rohrer . Mulder believes that Rohrer and Krycek are colluding together . Doggett covertly pursues Rohrer and learns that Rohrer has an accomplice : Agent Crane .

Mulder 's own problems arise when his cell phone rings and Krycek disappears from his car . Mulder , after learning what Doggett has witnessed , believes that Crane gave Krycek access to the FBI . Suddenly , Krycek smashes through the car window with his prosthetic hand and destroys the

cell phone . Krycek aims his gun at Mulder and tells him to get out . Krycek is about to pull the trigger when a bullet administered by Skinner pierces his arm . Krycek tries to pick his gun up again , but Skinner shoots his hand , rendering it useless . Krycek pushes his gun over and tells Skinner to shoot Mulder . Instead , Skinner raises his gun and shoots Krycek in the head . Doggett attempts to apprehend Rohrer and Crane but ends up being chased by the two . The pursuit ends up in the FBI garage and ends violently with Crane being run over and Rohrer crashing his car into the garage wall . Both men are presumed dead .

Scully goes into labour and Reyes helps her deliver an apparently normal baby with the alien Super Soldiers surrounding them . Without explanation , the aliens leave the area as Mulder arrives . While Doggett and Reyes report to the FBI Headquarters , Doggett initiates an investigation into Kersh after a late night meeting between him and Rohrer . Mulder takes Scully and their newborn baby back to her apartment . After marveling over the baby and discussing recent events , the two agents share a long , passionate kiss .

= = Production = =

= = Writing and casting = =

" Existence " was written during filming , which led to Kim Manners ? the director of the episode ? helping with the script . Because of this , several of the action scenes , such as the fight at the FBI headquarters , were Manners ' ideas . The last scene with Doggett and Reyes in Kersh 's office is the birth of the " New X @-@ Files " without David Duchovny . From here on , Monica Reyes became a main character on the show . Star Trek : The Next Generation regular Denise Crosby briefly appears as Scully 's gynecologist . The episode features the last appearance of Nicholas Lea , sans the series finale . Reportedly , Lea had become tired of the role and was growing weary of the ambiguous nature of the character . When Lea learned that his character was to be killed off in " Existence " , he reportedly welcomed the news . The night the episode aired , Lea wrote on his personal website : " I felt that [Krycek] wasn 't getting a fair shake anyway . [...] I wanted more in @-@ depth ideas about the character and it never came to pass . It kind of stopped being fun to play . "

The final scene of the episode featuring Mulder and Scully kissing almost was not filmed . Initially , the script called for Mulder to kiss Scully 's forehead . Both Duchovny and Manners argued that the scene was " mundane " and that they had " been teasing and doing that bull for so long " that they wanted " a real kiss at this point " . During the birth of Scully 's child , several allusions to the story of the birth of Jesus are made , including Mulder following a star to find Scully and The Lone Gunmen bringing gifts for the baby , much like the Three Wise Men . Scully 's child was portrayed by Jerry Shiban , who is the son of John Shiban , a producer who worked on The X @-@ Files as well as The Lone Gunmen . He was the first of seven babies to represent the character and the only one to play Baby William for a single episode .

= = Effects and filming = =

The episode featured several elaborate CGI scenes . The first scene with the vertebrae was entirely computer generated by visual effects head John Wash . Alex Krycek was killed by a CGI bullet straight through the head , which again was Manners ' idea . Extra money was budgeted for Krycek 's death . Mitch Pileggi was very happy when he was told he would be killing Krycek ; he explained , " when they came to me and told me that I was the one that was going to kill Krycek , I was elated . Not because I wanted Nick to go away or anything , it was just from a character stand @-@ point ; Skinner just wanted to kill Krycek so bad . " Manners later called it one of his " favorite scenes [he 'd] ever directed " and one of the " best scenes [he 's] seen in a long time on television . "

The car scene with Gillian Anderson and Annabeth Gish was shot at Kanan Road , Malibu . Anderson and Gish sat in what is known as an insert car , while the crew sat in a pickup car in front

of them . The birth scene was filmed at the old Paramount Movie Ranch . According to director Kim Manners , the most difficult scene to shoot was in the elevator with Mitch Pileggi and Nicholas Lea . Gish had never worked much with guns before joining The X @-@ Files cast , so the producers got a retired LAPD officer to teach her more about firearms . She did some shooting practices before returning to the set . The FBI garage scenes were shot in Century City and took a total of four days to finish .

The episode also contains a scene wherein Reyes serenades Scully with " karaoke renditions " of whale calls . Gish later noted that " [Series creator Chris Carter] gave me a tape of whale songs , which was hysterical to be playing in my trailer . " Carter was inspired to write the scene after a friend gave him a Paul Winter album that incorporated whale sounds into the music . Carter later explained that , " I just thought it was kind of much like [Reyes '] character to appreciate that . "

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Existence " premiered on May 20 , 2001 in the United States on Fox . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 8 @.@ 4 , meaning that it was seen by 8 @.@ 4 % of the nation 's estimated households . The episode was watched by 8 @.@ 58 million households and by 14 million viewers , overall . In the United Kingdom , " Existence " premiered on June 28 , 2001 and received 0 @.@ 65 million viewers , placing The X @-@ Files number three in the top ten broadcasts for Sky1 that week behind Star Trek : Voyager and The Simpsons . Fox promoted the episode with the tagline " Will the beginning be the end ? " The episode was later included on The X @-@ Files Mythology , Volume 4 ? Super Soldiers , a DVD collection that contains episodes involved with the alien super soldiers arc .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Existence " received mostly positive reviews from critics . Zack Handlen of The A.V. Club awarded the episode a " B " . While offering a positive opinion in regards to the finale as a whole , he felt that " Existence " dragged more so than " Essence " , resulting in a less interesting episode . He also felt that the overarching mythology of the series had long ago become too convoluted to make sense , but that the " human pieces of the show still work , and that includes Doggett . " Contra Costa Times columnists George Avalos and Michael Liedtke were pleased with the episode noting that the last scene was " beautifully written " . Avalos and Liedtke also reacted positively to the death of Alex Krycek at the hands of Skinner , saying it was the best scene in the episode . Despite their praise , however , they stressed that " Existence " was not as exciting as the previous episode , " Essence , " or the 1998 The X @-@ Files feature film . Jessica Morgan of Television Without Pity gave the episode an A- rating , noting that " season eight 's finale goes out with a big fat juicy kiss between Mulder and Scully , at long last " . Gareth Wigmore of TV Zone was positive toward both " Essence " and " Existence " . Wigmore gave the episodes a 9 out of 10 rating and wrote " the reason that this two @-@ parter works is that its plot is simple enough for the audience to still have a handle on " .

Not all reviews were positive . 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 more mixed two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a scathing review and awarded it no stars out of four . She heavily derided the plot , and wrote , " Thus endeth the Mulder @-@ and @-@ Scully era of The X @-@ Files , and what a load of sanctimonious crap it turned out to be ! "