

= 2Shy =

" 2Shy " is the sixth episode of the third season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on November 3 , 1995 . It was written by Jeff Vlaming , directed by David Nutter , and featured guest appearances by Timothy Carhart and James Handy . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the series ' wider mythology .

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 this episode , Mulder and Scully investigate a spate of " lonely hearts " murders targeting overweight women . The two eventually discover a mutant killer who is extracting the body fat from his victims after seducing them over online chat rooms .

The episode was the first one of the series to be written by Vlaming . " 2Shy " also marked Steve Kiziak 's first appearance as Duchovny 's body double . The episode was viewed by almost 15 million people in its initial broadcast , and drew mixed reviews from critics . Although director Nutter based the gory scenes in " 2Shy " on the earlier episode " The Host " , the episode has drawn comparisons to " Squeeze " and " Irresistible " .

= = Plot = =

In Cleveland , a couple sit flirting in a car at night , having met over the internet . The man , the charismatic and handsome Virgil Incanto ( Timothy Carhart ) , suffocates his overweight date , Lauren , with a gelatinous substance he spits up . The next morning , a policeman finds Lauren 's body , covered in the substance .

Fox Mulder ( David Duchovny ) and Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) are called in to investigate , as the victim 's description seems similar to those of other victims of a lonely hearts killer still at large . Scully attempts to perform an autopsy on Lauren 's body , only to find that it has liquified with only a skeleton remaining . Scully later discerns that the substance coating the body was a concentrated digestive enzyme , and that the remains are lacking in body fat .

Incanto prowls an online chatroom , arranging to meet with a similarly overweight woman named Ellen Kaminsky ( Catherine Paolone ) . Incanto is interrupted by his landlord Monica Landis , who believes he is a writer and who is romantically interested in him . He ignores her and resumes chatting . Elsewhere , Mulder learns that Lauren met a man in a chatroom , and researches Incanto 's online accounts . They find that he had started one account using a credit card taken from a previous victim .

Kaminsky stands up Incanto while he waits at a restaurant . He leaves , murdering a slightly overweight prostitute who injures him in a struggle . Incanto is forced to flee before he can fully dissolve the body . At the autopsy , Scully finds that the body 's airways are choked with the same substance that dissolved Lauren . Scully also finds the skin under the victim 's nails contains no oils or fatty acids , convincing Mulder that the killer is sucking body fat from his victims .

Mulder finds passages of obscure medieval poetry in Incanto 's e @-@ mails , and compiles a list of people who would have access to the texts from which these were taken . The agents , along with local detective Alan Cross ( James Handy ) , agree to canvass everyone on the list . Meanwhile , Incanto , a translator of medieval Italian literature , receives a package while talking to Monica and her blind daughter , Jessie . He receives an e @-@ mail from Kaminsky , asking to arrange another date ; he is also questioned by Cross .

Returning home with Kaminsky , Incanto invites her inside , but quickly retracts his invitation when he sees the lights on in his apartment . After leaving Kaminsky , Incanto finds and kills Monica in his apartment after she discovers Cross ' body in his bathtub . When Jessie asks Incanto about her mother 's whereabouts , he denies seeing her and aggressively asks her to leave him alone . However , Jessie smells her mother 's perfume in Incanto 's apartment and calls the police . When they arrive , Incanto is gone , but his computer gives a list of women he has been in contact with . Only two are unreachable , one being Kaminsky .

After Incanto comes to Kaminsky 's apartment , she recognizes his facial composite distributed by the FBI . Scully arrives at Kaminsky 's apartment and is attacked by Incanto ; however , as they struggle , Kaminsky retrieves Scully 's gun and fires on her attacker . Later , during questioning , a visibly weakened and deformed Incanto admits to the killings . He claims to have given his victims what they had wanted in return for what he wanted ( the fatty acids to keep his skin condition under control ) . Incanto states " the dead are no longer lonely " .

= = Production = =

" 2Shy " was written by Jeff Vlaming , who had previously worked for the series *Weird Science* . Vlaming 's only other writing credit for the series was the later third season episode " Hell Money " . He had initially pitched the idea of a mutant who fed on body oils , which was eventually changed to body fats . The presentation of the character Virgil Incanto also went through several permutations , initially conceived as a creepy Phantom of the Opera @-@ like recluse , and as a butcher who would be able to cut the fat from his victims , before the final " fairly normal @-@ looking " version was decided upon .

Director David Nutter made sure that the episode contained several visceral moments , after the popularity of the " Flukeman " character in the earlier episode " The Host " . Frank Spotnitz , the series ' story editor , was initially wary of the concept as he felt it might be seen as offensive , but changed his mind when series creator Chris Carter convinced him the episode told " a good story " , and was a " fun , old @-@ fashioned sort of X @-@ File " .

The episode was primarily filmed in Vancouver 's Quebec Street , with two nearby apartment buildings used for interior shots . " 2Shy " marked the début of Steve Kiziak as Duchovny 's new body double . While filming a scene in which Mulder bursts through a door , Kiziak and the other body doubles mistakenly burst through the wrong apartment 's door , interrupting the tenant 's dinner party . Kerry Sandomirsky , who portrays Ellen Kaminsky 's friend Joanne , had previously appeared in the first season episode " Roland " , while Incanto 's landlord was played by Glynis Davies , who had appeared in season one 's " Tooms " and the second season episode " Irresistible " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" 2Shy " premiered on the Fox network on November 3 , 1995 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on February 27 , 1997 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 10 @.@ 1 with a 17 share , meaning that roughly 10 @.@ 1 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 17 percent of households watching TV , were tuned in to the episode . The episode was viewed by over 14 @.@ 83 million viewers .

Zack Handlen , writing for *The A.V. Club* , had mixed feelings about the episode , ultimately rating it a B- . He felt that the character of Virgil Incanto was " wonderfully gross " , although he " lacks the universal creepiness " of first season villain Eugene Tooms , from the episode " Squeeze " . Handlen also felt that the episode was let down by the fact that it " takes it as a given that single women are targets " , failing to give any real depth to its female characters . An overview of the third season in *Entertainment Weekly* also rated the episode a B- , and called Incanto a " fine example " of the series ' " unassuming " villains , comparing him to Tooms and to the second season villain Donnie Pfaster . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book *Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen* , rated the episode three stars out of five , calling it " a retread of Squeeze " and " a little too formulaic to be truly satisfying " . However , Shearman and Pearson felt that the episode " has a heart to it " and " jogs along at a fair pace " , also praising its gory visuals .

TV Guide listed Incanto among the scariest X @-@ Files monsters , whilst UGO Networks listed the character as one of their best " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " in the series , saying Scully 's " pure revulsion at Incanto 's instinctual need makes for one of *The X @-@ Files* ' finest final scenes " .