

= Never Again (The X @-@ Files) =

" Never Again " is the thirteenth episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It was written by producers Glen Morgan and James Wong , and directed by Rob Bowman . The episode aired in the United States on February 2 , 1997 on the Fox network and in the United Kingdom on BBC One on December 3 , 1997 . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . The episode received a Nielsen rating of 13 and was viewed by 21 @.@ 36 million viewers . It received mostly positive reviews from television critics .

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 . Mulder is a believer in the paranormal , while the skeptical Scully has been assigned to debunk his work . In this episode , Scully leaves town ? and Mulder ? for a solo assignment . She soon meets Ed Jerse , a man who is being mentally controlled by a drug @-@ related side effect of his tattoo . His tattoo , affectionately named Betty , does not want to share him , especially not with Scully .

Although " Never Again " was directed by Bowman , it was originally scheduled to be directed by noted movie director Quentin Tarantino . Tarantino was unable to direct the entry due to a dispute with the Directors Guild of America . Gillian Anderson was particularly pleased with the episode showing a different side of Scully ; she had specifically asked Morgan and Wong to write an episode that explored Scully 's dark side . Several cast members from Morgan and Wong 's series Space : Above and Beyond were cast in the episode .

= = Plot = =

In Philadelphia , Ed Jerse loses a divorce settlement to his ex @-@ wife , who has sole custody of his children . After getting drunk at a bar , Ed wanders into a tattoo parlor and impulsively receives a tattoo depicting a Sailor Jerry @-@ like pin @-@ up girl with the words " Never Again " under her image . At work the next day , Ed hears a woman calling him a " loser " ; he has a violent confrontation with a female co @-@ worker ? who denies saying anything ? and is subsequently subdued .

In Washington , Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully conduct a discreet meeting with a Russian informant , Vsevlod Pudovkin , who claims to have seen a UFO at a secret research center . Upon returning to FBI headquarters , Mulder heads out on vacation to visit Graceland , leaving Scully to follow up on the Pudovkin case for him . Scully is uninterested in the case and expresses serious doubts about Pudovkin 's credibility , leading to an argument with an inconsiderate Mulder . Scully becomes upset over the direction her life and career are going .

Meanwhile , Ed is fired via telephone . He hears the same voice as before and yells at the woman living below him , thinking it was her . Upon hearing the voice after a pair of Jehovah 's Witnesses stop by , Ed goes downstairs and murders his neighbor , throwing her body in the furnace . When her voice talks to him again , Jerse realizes it is coming from his new tattoo . Scully heads to Philadelphia and watches Pudovkin enter a tattoo parlor . Inside , she sees Ed arguing with the owner , wanting the tattoo removed . Ed strikes up a conversation with Scully and invites her out to dinner , which she initially declines .

That night , Scully talks to Mulder over the phone and informs him that Pudovkin is a con man and part of the Russian mafia . Frustrated by the conversation , Scully calls Jerse and tells him that she changed her mind . At a nearby lounge , Scully is concerned about Ed 's arm , where he has burned the tattoo with a cigarette butt . Ed convinces Scully to get a tattoo , and she has one of an Ouroboros applied to her back . Scully stays at Ed 's apartment . The tattoo is angry at him , saying she will be dead if he kisses her , which he does anyway .

The next morning , two detectives arrive at the apartment after Ed goes out , telling Scully that Ed 's neighbor is missing and blood was found in her apartment with an unusual chemical substance in it . Scully researches the material on Ed 's laptop and tries to call Mulder , but hangs up before Mulder has a chance to answer . When Ed arrives , Scully tells him that they found blood in his neighbor 's

apartment and that it was likely his . She thinks that the chemical came from the tattoo ink and wants them both to head to the hospital to be tested . Ed tells Scully about the voice he has been hearing from his tattoo .

As Scully heads to the other room to get ready , her FBI badge falls out of her coat pocket . Scully discreetly picks it back up without Ed noticing . The tattoo begins to talk again , convincing Ed to redial Scully 's last call to see who she was speaking to . An FBI operator answers and , upon learning that Scully is a FBI agent , the tattoo forces Ed to attack her . Scully tries to escape but is overpowered by Ed , who binds her in a bedsheet and carries her down to the basement to throw her in the furnace . At the last moment , Ed is able to overpower the impulses of the tattoo and instead thrusts his own arm into the furnace .

Scully returns to Washington and is congratulated by Mulder for being the first person to make a second X @-@ File appearance . Ed was brought to a burn center in Philadelphia where the ergot chemicals were found in his blood ; it was also in Scully 's blood , but not enough to cause hallucinations . Mulder wonders if this all happened because of their earlier argument , to which Scully replies that not everything is about him .

= = Production = =

= = Writing and directing = = =

" Never Again " was written by Glen Morgan and James Wong , and directed by Rob Bowman . The episode was the final episode that the pair wrote for the show , as they took over as executive producers for the series ' sister show Millennium shortly after . The initial story the two developed was a ? sort of Abraham Lincoln ? s ghost in the White House type of thing ? . Both writers had desired to write a story wherein Lincoln 's ghost haunts the White House and Mulder and Scully investigate . Morgan explained that he had " done a lot of research and I had always wanted to write a feature about Lincoln ? s ghost " . However , due to the massive amounts of rewrites the two were forced to do for " Musings of a Cigarette Smoking Man " , both Morgan and Wong lost interest in the story . Morgan explained , " I felt they didn ? t want my heart and soul anymore , so I wouldn ? t give this one to them " . The two later crafted " Never Again " in its place . Years later , Frank Spotnitz said that he " always wondered about " the story and what the finished product would have been like .

Gillian Anderson was particularly pleased with the episode showing a different side of Scully and said , " I thought it was a great idea . I personally was going through a dark period at the time , and I wanted to explore Scully 's dark side . For some reason , Glen and Jim were on the same wavelength that week . Afterward , a lot of people told me that on that episode I was so ' unlike ' Scully or that ' it showed my range ' . I told them I thought they were wrong . I don 't think that what I did here was out of character for Scully . The only thing different is that the audience hadn 't seen it before . " Initially , Anderson called up Morgan and asked him to write a story wherein Scully " fall [s] hard " for another man , which leads to an " intense kind of romantic or passionate relationship " . Morgan obliged and wrote a scene where Scully enjoys a passionate night with Jerse . This was later removed from the script by series creator Chris Carter , the only time in Glen Morgan 's tenure on the show where a scene of his was removed by Carter . Morgan later noted " I think Chris thought that I was monkeying around with him , but I really wasn 't . "

Quentin Tarantino was originally intended to direct this episode , but was stopped from doing so by the Directors Guild of America . Although the episode was written specifically for Tarantino to direct , the DGA complained that Tarantino , who is not a member , failed to join the union after working on ER as a director , per an agreement between the two entities . A spokeswoman from 20th Century Fox later noted , " Quentin approached us , we were very excited at the opportunity . We made some special arrangements , and we 're disappointed that it 's not happening . But we bow to Quentin 's philosophical stance [and] we hope something can be worked out for the future . " The episode 's air date was flipped with the episode " Leonard Betts " in order to ensure that the latter

episode , which featured the show 's two stars in their traditional roles , aired after the Super Bowl . Anderson has said that she would have played the part differently had she been aware of this at the time , as Scully discovers she has cancer at the end of " Leonard Betts " .

= = = Casting and effects = = =

Rodney Rowland was a former cast member of Glen Morgan and James Wong 's series *Space : Above and Beyond* . He and Anderson dated for a period of time after this episode . Jodie Foster provided the voice for Ed 's tattoo , Betty . Foster was a close friend of casting agent Randy Stone and Gillian Anderson . Anderson initially volunteered to get a real Ouroboros ? a depiction of a serpent coiled into a circle devouring its own tail ? tattoo for the episode , but was later told by the production crew that getting an actual tattoo would create too many problems . As such , fake tattoos were created . These tattoos were decals designed by art department staffer Kristina Lyne and altered by makeup artist Laverne Basham . The Bettie Page tattoo was inspired by " Brooklyn Joe " Lieber , a tattoo artist from San Francisco .

= = Reception = =

" Never Again " was originally broadcast in the United States on the Fox network on February 2 , 1997 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC One on December 3 , 1997 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 13 , with a 19 share , meaning that roughly 13 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 19 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 21 @.@ 36 million viewers .

The episode received mostly positive reviews from television critics . Zack Handlen from *The A.V. Club* was positive towards the episode and gave it an A. He applauded the fact that it " lets Scully be flawed " and allowed her to be " far more human " than usual on the show . Handlen concluded that the episode was a success because it illustrated " the way our need to connect with others makes us vulnerable " . He was , however , critical of Mulder 's actions in the episode , calling him a " spoiled ass " and noted that there was a " little boy ignored feel to his dialogue at the end " . John Keegan from *Critical Myth* awarded the episode a 7 out of 10 and called it " one of the best character studies of the entire series " . He concluded that " Much of Scully 's underlying psychology is explored in this episode , and in keeping with what has been revealed about Mulder , it 's not pretty . The final act doesn 't quite match the intensity of the third , but it 's rather clear what the writers were trying to convey . " Meghan Deans from *Tor.com* wrote positively of the episode and noted that " [i] t is fortunate , I think , that the Super Bowl forced the change in sequence . " She argued that , had ? Leonard Betts ? not aired before " Never Again " , the audience would have been forced to " read her actions as reactions to Mulder and Mulder alone " rather than against the fact that she has cancer .

Paula Vitaris from *Cinefantastique* gave the episode a positive review and awarded it three stars out of four . She called Scully 's unhappiness with her situation " understandable " and positively critiqued Gillian Anderson , calling her performance " wonderful " . Vitaris , however , was critical of the " Leonard Betts " / " Never Again " switch , writing that " nothing in this episode points to fear of cancer as Scully 's motivation " . She concluded , however , that " [' Never Again '] is a fascinating look at a whole new side of [Scully] . " Not all reviews were glowing . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book *Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen* , on the other hand , gave the episode a mixed review and rated it two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five . The two were critical of Scully 's behavior , noting that " seeing Scully as angry and bored and believing her life is pointless isn 't really Scully " . They argued that Scully 's belief that her life is boring is easily countered by the fact that " she hunts fluke monsters , catches serial killers , and gets abducted by aliens " . Despite this , Shearman and Pearson wrote that " Gillian Anderson makes it work . "