

= Elegy (The X @-@ Files) =

" Elegy " is the twenty @-@ second episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It was written by John Shiban and directed by James Charleston . The episode aired in the United States on May 4 , 1997 on the Fox network . It is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Elegy " earned a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 6 and was seen by 17 @.@ 1 million viewers upon its initial broadcast . The episode received mostly positive reviews from television critics ; the performance of lead actress Gillian Anderson was especially praised .

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Anderson) who work on cases linked to the paranormal , called X @-@ Files . In this episode , Mulder and Scully track a series of murders that lead to a home for the mentally ill and a clue that makes no sense : each victim has appeared as an apparition in the area where their body was found along with the words " She is me " . Furthermore , the episode continues the storyline that concerns Scully 's battle with cancer .

Shiban was inspired to write the episode based on an incident that involved his wife 's father potentially seeing other beings in a room when he was dying . Shiban was also inspired by the 1975 film One Flew Over the Cuckoo 's Nest . The series sought out a bowling alley for the opening scenes , but many establishments in Vancouver , Canada were reluctant to yield over two @-@ thirds of their space as well as close down for three days . Eventually , the Thunderbird Bowling Centre was chosen .

= = Plot = =

Angie Pintero (Alex Bruhanski) , the owner of a bowling alley , tells one of his employees , an autistic man named Harold Spuller (Steven M. Porter) , to go home for the evening . Shortly thereafter , Angie discovers a badly @-@ injured blond girl wedged inside of the automated pinsetter . The girl attempts to speak , but no words come out of her mouth . Angie notices police in a nearby parking lot and rushes outside to get help . He realizes a crowd has gathered around the dead body of the same girl he saw only moments earlier in the bowling alley . Angie relates his bizarre tale to Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) . Mulder suspects that Angie encountered the dead girl 's ghost ; three similar encounters , and three similar murders , were reported in the area in as many weeks . The agents discover the words , " She is me " written on the bowling lane where Angie saw the spirit , but its meaning remains a mystery .

Detective Hudak (Daniel Kamin) tells Mulder and Scully that an anonymous caller phoned 911 with a message regarding Penny Timmons , one of the killer 's victims . The caller claimed that Timmons ' last words were " She is me . " Hudak notes , however , that the victim 's larynx was severed , making it impossible for her to utter dying words . The agents trace the source of the 911 call to a payphone at the New Horizon Psychiatric Center . Mulder notices one of the patients , Harold Spuller , avoiding his gaze . After viewing photographs of the murder victims , Scully comes to the conclusion that Spuller fits the killer 's profile : a compulsive person consumed with the desire to organize , clean and reorder . Scully uses a rest room to attend to a nose bleed . There she encounters the spirit of another blond girl . Moments later , Mulder tells her that the body of yet another victim was found nearby .

Later , Mulder discovers Harold in a room accessible from the bowling alley . The walls of the room are covered with score sheets , including those of the victims . Mulder realizes that Harold met each of the murdered women at the bowling alley . Suddenly , Harold lapses into a strange seizure . From his point of view , he sees Angie 's ghost standing behind Mulder . He rushes out of the room and makes his way to the bowling alley , where Angie lies dead , the victim of a heart attack . Mulder tells Scully that every person who saw the apparitions was about to die , implying that Harold may be next . Scully , who also saw a victim 's ghost , is struck by the implication .

Harold is transported back to the psychiatric center where he is tormented by Nurse Innes (Nancy Fish) . Later , Mulder finds Innes lying on the floor , half @-@ conscious . Innes claims Harold went

berserk and attacked her . One of the other patients , Chuck Forsch , tells Scully that Nurse Innes was trying to poison Harold . Scully slowly realizes that Innes , not Harold , was responsible for the murders . When Innes attacks Scully with a scalpel , Scully draws her weapon and fires , striking her in the shoulder . While summarizing the case with Mulder , Scully explains that Innes had been ingesting Harold 's medication , triggering violent and unpredictable behavior . Scully hypothesizes that Innes committed the murders in order to destroy the love Harold felt towards the young women . Later , Harold 's body is discovered in a nearby alley , the apparent victim of respiratory failure . Scully , however , suspects that Harold died from what Innes took away from him . Scully admits to Mulder that she saw the ghost of the fourth victim shortly after she was murdered . Later , Scully sees Harold 's spirit sitting in the back seat of her car .

= = Production = =

" Elegy " was written by John Shiban and directed by James Charleston . The episode was inspired by an event that happened when Shiban and his future wife were visiting her father in the hospital . According to Shiban , he was very near death and kept looking around the room , even though there were only two visitors with him . Eventually , he asked his daughter how many people were in the room . When his daughter revealed that there were only two people with him , he kept looking around the room . Shiban was inspired by the idea that " a dying person might be able to look through the cracks [?] into the next world " . He developed a premise revolving around a " haunted bowling alley " because " it just seemed right " .

The character of Harold Spuller was inspired by Shiban 's enjoyment of the 1975 film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo 's Nest* . In fact , Spuller 's friend Chuck Forsch is played by Sydney Lassick , who appeared in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo 's Nest* as one of Jack Nicholson 's fellow patients . Steven M. Porter , who portrayed Spuller , was invited to audition for the show by writer Frank Spotnitz . According to Porter , after the audition he felt that he had " either made a great impression or a complete fool of myself " . Many of the gestures that Porter used in the episode were inspired by his appearance in a play called *Asylum* .

The series sought out a bowling alley for the opening scenes , but many were reluctant to yield over two @-@ thirds of their space as well as close down for three days . Eventually , the Thunderbird Bowling Centre was chosen . The series was allowed to film at the location under the condition that the bowling surfaces were preserved . Due to this , the production staff was forced to either wear bowling shoes or wear makeshift " paper booties " on their feet . In between camera set ups , Duchovny and director Charleston bowled several games . Duchovny later joked that after the episode , he " realized how old " he was because he felt sore from all the bowling . He joked , " when you get sore from bowling , it 's time to start thinking about your life and where it 's going . "

= = Reception = =

" Elegy " premiered on the Fox network on May 4 , 1997 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 10 @. @ 6 , with a 16 share , meaning that roughly 10 @. @ 6 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 16 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . " Elegy " was seen by 17 @. @ 1 million viewers on first broadcast .

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 four stars out of five and called it " terrific " . They applauded Shiban 's script , noting that it focused on " greater attention to the relationship between Mulder and Scully " , rather than the X @-@ File itself . The two called the shot where Scully sees the apparition in the bathroom " one of the most chilling things the series has offered this year " , and noted that the part with Scully conferring with her counselor " is the highlight of the season " . Paula Vitaris , writing for *Cinefantastique* , rated " Elegy " three stars out of four , writing that the X @-@ File part of the episode " falls apart by the end " but that the installment is saved by " the emotional impact of Scully " . Vitaris praised the acting of the cast , and especially lauded Anderson 's performance , noting that she conveyed " the shock and confusion at witnessing

the frightening sight of the ghostly girl with a cut throat " .

Not all reviews were as positive . Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club awarded the episode a " B ? " and called it " alternately deeply moving and really , really stupid " . His main criticism of the episode was the it portrayed mental illness in a manner that was " offensive at worst and just plain idiotic at best " . Furthermore , he derided the " magical mentally handicapped person " trope as " cringe @-@ worthy " and cliché . VanDerWerff , however , wrote that the episode was saved largely due to the " beautiful little scenes that let you see the weight of everything Scully 's been carrying around her " .