

= Talitha Cumi (The X @-@ Files) =

" Talitha Cumi " is the twenty @-@ fourth episode and the season finale of the third season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on May 17 , 1996 in the United States . The teleplay was written by series creator Chris Carter , based on a story he developed with lead actor David Duchovny and was directed by R. W. Goodwin . The episode is one of several that explored the series ' overarching mythology . " Talitha Cumi " achieved a Nielsen household rating of 11 @.@ 2 , being watched by 17 @.@ 86 million people in its initial broadcast . The episode received mostly positive reviews from 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 . In this episode , Mulder and Scully search for a man who seems to possess strange powers , who may have information about Mulder 's family and the Syndicate . " Talitha Cumi " is the first part of a two @-@ part episode , initiating the plot that will be finalised in the fourth season premiere , " Herrenvolk " .

The basic premise of " Talitha Cumi " , most notably the scene featuring Jeremiah Smith 's interrogation by The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) , was heavily influenced by " The Grand Inquisitor " ? a chapter in Fyodor Dostoyevsky 's novel The Brothers Karamazov ? on the suggestion of Duchovny . The title of the episode is Aramaic for " arise maiden , " a reference to the healing power of Jeremiah Smith .

= = Plot = =

At a cafe in Arlington , Virginia , a man draws a gun and shoots three people before he is shot by police snipers outside . An older man revives the gunman and his victims by touching them with the palms of his hands .

Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) arrive to investigate . They interview the victims and gunman , finding that the mysterious healer , Jeremiah Smith (Roy Thinnes) , disappeared while being interviewed by a detective . Meanwhile , The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) meets with Mulder 's mother Teena (Rebecca Toolan) , and the two argue as someone photographs them from a distance . Later , Assistant Director Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) notifies Mulder that Teena has suffered a stroke . At the hospital , Teena writes the word " PALM " on a notepad , which Mulder takes to mean her stroke is connected to Jeremiah Smith .

Mulder finds footage of Smith being interviewed , and sees that someone else appears in Smith 's place when the detective looks away . Meanwhile , Smith is at his place of work at the Social Security Administration (SSA) when he is captured by the Smoking Man , and taken to a high @-@ security prison . Mulder heads to his mother 's home and encounters X (Steven Williams) , who shows him his photos of Teena and the Smoking Man . Mulder searches the house and realizes that " PALM " was Teena 's attempt to write " LAMP " . He then finds an alien stiletto weapon inside one of the lamps ? the same kind used by the alien bounty hunter in previous episodes .

At FBI headquarters , Scully meets a man who appears to be Smith , who has come to turn himself in . During an interview with Scully and Skinner , he claims to have no memory of the shooting or of healing anyone . Meanwhile , the Smoking Man interrogates the real Smith , who has lost faith in the Syndicate 's project . He shapeshifts into Deep Throat (Jerry Hardin) and Bill Mulder (Peter Donat) to unnerve his captor . Finally Smith reveals that the Smoking Man is dying of lung cancer .

Mulder blames the Smoking Man for his mother 's condition . When he learns about the statement given by " Smith " , Mulder goes to the SSA to bring him in for questioning . " Smith " initially complies but flees into a crowd , shapeshifting into someone else . The impostor ? a bounty hunter ? arrives at Smith 's cell to kill him , finding it empty . Mulder visits Teena at the hospital , but encounters the Smoking Man . Mulder threatens the Smoking Man with a gun , but he says that Teena met with him about the whereabouts of his sister , Samantha . In the parking garage , Mulder is confronted by X , who demands the alien stiletto . When Mulder refuses to hand it over , the two grapple to a stalemate .

Scully finds other identical " Jeremiah Smiths " working at SSA offices across the country . She is

later met by Smith , who reveals she had met an imposter . Smith promises more information , and he and Scully meet Mulder at an abandoned site . Mulder wants to take Smith to see his mother , but the bounty hunter arrives seconds later .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception and writing = = =

This episode , per David Duchovny 's suggestions , was heavily influenced by " The Grand Inquisitor " , a chapter in Fyodor Dostoyevsky 's novel The Brothers Karamazov . This was particularly evident in the scenes in the prison between The Smoking Man and Jeremiah Smith . In addition , this reference is woven into the story , in Smith healing the shooter and the shooting victims in the episode 's teaser , in the title of the restaurant ? " The Brothers K " ? and the episode 's title , originally from Mark 5 : 41 , in which Jesus heals the daughter of Jairus and quotes the Aramaic phrase meaning , " Little girl , get up ! " but which also figures in The Brothers Karamazov . These references were originally suggested by David Duchovny for the episodes " Colony " and " End Game " but never made their way into those episodes and were used here .

As Carter was writing " Talitha Cumi , " he decided that the episode 's main theme would be loyalty . It was decided that the commitment Mulder felt towards the X @-@ Files would be tested by seeing if he would be willing to sacrifice those he cared about , most notably his mother , Scully , and the quest to find his sister , Samantha . In addition , the Smoking Man 's allegiances are in that he must decide whether or not to heal himself of cancer using the power of Jeremiah Smith . Ultimately , Mulder 's loyalties prove altruistic , whereas the Smoking Man chooses self @-@ interest over The Syndicate 's cause .

= = = Casting = = =

Hrothgar Mathews was chosen as the suicidal gunman out of several actors , one of whom had even brought a fake gun to his audition . During his audition , he tried out the test reading several ways , including a style that had a " messianic quality " . Mathews was chosen for the role and told by Chris Carter that , despite his character 's life @-@ changing event , he was " still a lunatic " .

Roy Thinnes , who portrayed the alien healer Jeremiah Smith , was suggested to Chris Carter by David Duchovny , after the latter had met and spoken to the Thinnes on an airplane flight . Carter had seen Thinnes ' television work before , and had been a fan of his appearance on the 1967 ? 68 television series The Invaders . Early on in pre @-@ production , the writers decided to have Smith morph into various characters that the Smoking Man had , either personally or involuntarily , killed , including Deep Throat , Bill Mulder , and Melissa Scully . Melinda McGraw , who portrayed Melissa Scully during the second season , was unavailable for filming , so her scene was cut . In addition , a photo @-@ double was brought in for Jerry Hardin , who played Deep Throat , because he was unavailable on one of the filming days . Frank Spotnitz later called the prison sequence the scene with " the biggest cast ever . "

Gillian Anderson 's stand @-@ in , Bonnie Hay , was cast as the main hospital nurse , marking her fifth appearance as a character in the show . She had previously portrayed a nurse in the earlier third season episode " D.P.O. " and the two @-@ part second season episodes " Colony " and " End Game . "

= = = Filming and post @-@ production = = =

The fight between Mulder and X was heavily edited by Fox 's broadcast standards department . Despite the fact that most of the action was done by stunt doubles , Steven Williams was injured during the filming of the fight scene . The opening scene with the restaurant shooting was filmed mostly on two handheld cameras , with director R. W. Goodwin using a variety of short shots and

rapid cuts to different perspectives . This was done to create a chaotic scene which would contrast with how the character of Thinnes ' character Jeremiah Smith was presented ? shots focused on him were filmed using a Steadicam to allow the character to seem " rock steady " . The film used was also overcranked , where the frame rate of the recording is much higher than that which will be played back , slowing down the footage when it is played at a normal frame rate . This gave a slow motion effect to Thinnes ' movements , in order to aid the " Godlike " impression Goodwin wanted .

The " Grand Inquisitor " scene between Jeremiah Smith and The Smoking Man involved several instances of morphing from one character to another . The morph involving Smith assuming the guise of Peter Donat 's character Bill Mulder was simply achieved by using static cameras , allowing Thinnes to leave the set and Donat to take his place , with the morphing effect bridging the change in actors . However , Jerry Hardin , who was involved in another morph to his character Deep Throat , was unavailable on the day this was shot , as he was filming for a movie elsewhere . The sections of the morph involving Thinnes were recorded , and the set was reconstructed later when Hardin was available , with the actors matched up based on footage and photography to recreate the same positions , which producer Paul Rabwin has described as " backwards " and " very difficult " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Talitha Cumi " premiered on the Fox network on May 17 , 1996 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on September 3 , 1997 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 11 @. @ 2 with a 21 share , meaning that roughly 11 @. @ 2 percent of all television @- @ equipped households , and 21 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . A total of 17 @. @ 86 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing .

In an overview of the third season in Entertainment Weekly , " Talitha Cumi " was rated an " A ? " . The review called the episode a " frustratingly provocative cliff @- @ hanger " , calling the interrogation scene of Jeremiah Smith " a tour de force " . Chris Carter has also noted that the interrogation ' is really a summation of my feelings about science ... that it has definitely usurped religion and can explain everything now " . Writing for The A.V. Club , Zack Handlen rated the episode an " A " , praising its cliffhanger ending and " good storytelling " . Handlen felt that the episode dealt with themes familiar to the series , but in a manner which did not appear repetitive ; and again noted Jeremiah Smith 's confrontation with The Smoking Man as a highlight .