

= Miracle Man (The X @-@ Files) =

" Miracle Man " is the eighteenth episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on March 18 , 1994 . It was written by Howard Gordon and series creator Chris Carter , directed by Michael Lange , and featured guest appearances by R. D. Call and Scott Bairstow . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Miracle Man " earned a Nielsen household rating of 7 @.@ 5 , being watched by 7 @.@ 1 million households in its initial broadcast ; and received mixed 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 . When Mulder and Scully receive a video tape of a faith healer whose latest patient died mysteriously , the agents come to believe the healer 's ministry may be covering up several murders .

" Miracle Man " was the first episode of The X @-@ Files written by Howard Gordon without the aid of his long @-@ term collaborator Alex Gansa . Chris Carter helped Gordon flesh out the details of the episode . Exterior shots for the episode were filmed on location in Steveston , British Columbia ? a location which had previously been used in the earlier first season episode " Gender Bender " .

= = Plot = =

In 1983 , a young boy , Samuel Hartley , appears at the scene of a car accident and pushes his way past an emergency crew . He opens a body bag and commands the severely burnt cadaver inside to " rise up and heal . " Samuel 's father , Calvin , convinces a fireman to let him continue . The body inside the bag comes alive , grabbing Samuel 's hand .

Ten years later , Dana Scully shows Fox Mulder a videotape of a religious service led by the now @-@ grown Samuel , who has become an evangelical faith healer for a ministry run by Calvin . The video shows a supposed healing which later left the follower dead . The agents travel to Clarksville , Tennessee , where they attend a service featuring an enthusiastic sermon by Leonard Vance , the man whom Samuel raised from the dead a decade earlier . The agents learn from Calvin that Samuel has gone missing .

Samuel eventually turns up drunk at a local bar , his faith shaken by the death . He is taken into custody . The agents doubt his ability , but he is able to convince Mulder that he knows the latter has lost a sister ? Samantha ? at a young age . Mulder has been seeing visions of Samantha , and continues to see them . At Samuel 's bail hearing , the courtroom fills with a swarm of locusts , which Samuel claims is a sign of God 's wrath against him .

Once he is released , Samuel returns to his ministry and attempts to heal a woman in a wheelchair . However , she suffers a seizure and dies , which leads to Samuel 's second arrest . An autopsy reveals the woman died of cyanide poisoning , whilst Mulder and Scully find evidence that the swarm of locusts , which were actually common grasshoppers , was guided by someone to the courtroom through the building 's ventilation system . Mulder believes Samuel to be innocent . However , the local sheriff , Maurice Daniels , allows two of his men to beat Samuel to death in his cell .

At his home , Vance is confronted by a ghostly vision of Samuel , who accuses him of betraying the church and perpetrating the murders . Vance confesses and blames his bitterness at having been resurrected with such a scarred and deformed visage . Mulder and Scully , who have been able to trace a large purchase of grasshoppers to Vance , arrive to find the man dying of cyanide poisoning from his own glass of water . He confesses to the agents before falling dead .

As the agents prepare to finish work on the case , they receive a phone call to say that Samuel 's body has gone missing from the morgue , and witnesses have seen him walking around , badly bruised . Meanwhile , Sheriff Daniels is arrested by one of his deputies for questioning by the district attorney over Samuel 's death . As Mulder and Scully leave Tennessee , Samuel 's ministry closes down , and Mulder sees one last vision of his missing sister before he gets into his car .

= = Production = =

" Miracle Man " was the first episode of The X @-@ Files written by Howard Gordon without the aid of his long @-@ term collaborator Alex Gansa . The pair had worked on several other series before The X @-@ Files , and had also contributed the episodes " Conduit " , " Ghost in the Machine " , " Fallen Angel " and " Lazarus " to the series so far . Series creator Chris Carter recalls being asked to collaborate on the episode , saying " Howard came to my house , and said , ' Help me out , ' so we went to my living room and put up this bulletin board and in a matter of hours we came up with this story " . Originally the script had called for more overt religious imagery , though censors at Fox objected to depictions of faith healer Samuel being beaten to death whilst in a cruciform pose , leading to scenes being cut .

Exterior shots of the town were filmed on location in Steveston , British Columbia ? a location which had previously been used in the earlier first season episode " Gender Bender " . Scenes set in the home of Reverend Hartley were shot in a mansion in the Langley area , with the crew taking advantage of an old filled @-@ in swimming pool in the building to set up the necessary equipment . All of the scenes set in the faith healer 's tent were filmed in one day , and involved over three hundred extras . Producer R. W. Goodwin felt that the greatest difficulty in creating the episode was the challenge in finding enough actors in the Vancouver area who could portray a convincing Southern United States accent , leading to the hiring of a dialect coach to prevent the cast from sounding " like they were coming from fifteen different parts of the South " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Miracle Man " premiered on the Fox network on March 18 , 1994 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on January 26 , 1995 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 7 @.@ 5 with a 13 share , meaning that roughly 7 @.@ 5 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 13 percent of households watching TV , were tuned in to the episode . A total of 7 @.@ 1 million households watched this episode during its original airing .

In a retrospective of the first season in Entertainment Weekly , the episode was rated a B- . Scott Bairstow 's guest role was praised , though it was noted that " an ultimately contrived plot and a stereotypical Bible @-@ thumping Southern milieu make for a case more suited to Jessica Fletcher than Mulder and Scully " . Zack Handlen , writing for The A.V. Club , described it as " a largely predictable story that hits all the middle @-@ of @-@ the @-@ road marks " , finding the religious imagery to have been used to little effect . Matt Haigh , writing for Den of Geek , felt that the identity of the killer was one of the few endings amongst first season episodes that he had found genuinely surprising , though he attributed this to the episode 's focus on Mulder 's personal history . The use of Mulder 's visions of his sister Samantha as a motivation for his actions in this episode has been seen as " opening up " the overarching search for the truth about her through the series . The plot for " Miracle Man " was also adapted as a novel for young adults in 2000 by Terry Bisson .