

= Død Kalm =

" Død Kalm " is the nineteenth episode of the second season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on March 10 , 1995 . The story was written by Howard Gordon , the teleplay was written by Gordon and Alex Gansa , and the episode was directed by Rob Bowman . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Død Kalm " earned a Nielsen household rating of 10 @.@ 7 , being watched by 10 @.@ 2 million households in its initial broadcast . The episode received mostly mixed @-@ to @-@ positive reviews .

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 the episode , Mulder and Scully are called in when a boatload of survivors from a U.S. Navy destroyer escort are found . What particularly catches Agent Mulder 's attention is that all of these sailors appear to have aged many decades in the course of a few days . Mulder and Scully travel to Norway where they find a civilian fisherman who is willing to take them to the ship 's last known position .

" Død Kalm " was written to make use of the show 's access to a navy destroyer that had previously featured in " Colony " and " End Game . " The episode was originally intended as a way to give the production crew a rest after several demanding episodes had been shot , but the episode became one of the more difficult to film during the second season .

= = Plot = =

In the Norwegian Sea , chaos erupts on board the USS Ardent , an American destroyer escort . Due to mysterious yet unspecified events , half of the Ardent 's crew board lifeboats and abandon ship against the captain 's orders . Eighteen hours later , they are spotted by a Canadian fishing vessel ; however , in that short span of time , the young crew members have undergone rapid aging .

Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) visit the ship 's sole surviving crew member , Lt. Harper , who has been quarantined at the Bethesda Naval Hospital . Scully finds that Harper , despite being in his twenties , has aged to the point of being unrecognizable . Mulder explains that the Ardent vanished at the 65th parallel , a location with a history of ship disappearances . Mulder believes that a " wrinkle in time " exists there , and that the Ardent was the subject of government experimentation related to the Philadelphia Experiment from World War II .

In Norway , Mulder and Scully get Henry Trondheim (John Savage) , a naval trawler captain , to take them to the Ardent 's last known location . After crashing into the bow of the Ardent , Mulder , Scully , and Trondheim find signs of advanced corrosion , even though the Ardent is only a few years old . Below decks , the party finds the mummified remains of several crew members . They also find the wizened commanding officer of the Ardent , Captain Barclay , who claims that " time got lost " after his ship encountered a " glowing light " in the ocean . Trondheim 's boat is stolen and his first mate is murdered .

Trondheim is later attacked by a Norwegian pirate whaler named Olafsson , who has not aged despite being on the ship for the past two days . Mulder , Scully , and Trondheim eventually begin to age unnaturally . Scully develops a theory that the Ardent is sailing near a metallic object beneath the ocean , and that it has caused free radicals to rapidly oxidize their bodies and age them . When Mulder notices that the ship 's sewage pipe is the only one not corroded through , the agents realize that something from the ocean contaminated the Ardent 's potable water and led to the aging ; Olafsson 's men remained unaffected due to their consumption of recycled water from the sewage system . Desperate to survive , Trondheim kills Olafsson after he reveals the secret , and sets out to keep the water for himself .

Scully learns from blood tests that the contaminated water causes rapid cellular damage and dramatically increases sodium chloride in the body . She tries to ration the drinkable water amongst the three , but discovers Trondheim attempting to hoard what little that remains . Trondheim locks Scully out of the sewage hold , forcing her to use minuscule supplies to keep Mulder alive . The

corrosion eventually eats through the ship 's hull , flooding the hold and drowning Trondheim , who cannot unseal the hatch . The agents both lose consciousness shortly before Navy rescuers arrive at their former ship . Scully comes to at the hospital , where she is told that her written observations on the case helped naval doctors reverse their aging and save Mulder from near @-@ certain death . Scully says that she wants to return to the Ardent for more research , but the doctor tells her that the ship sank shortly after their rescue due to the flooding .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

Series creator Chris Carter asked Howard Gordon to write " Død Kalm " because the X @-@ Files had been given access to a Canadian navy destroyer for the previous episodes " Colony " and " End Game . " The episode was originally intended as a way to give the production crew a rest after several " demanding " episodes had been shot . Before the script had been finished , Carter mentioned that he believed the episode would be a " great rest for everyone . "

In the book The Unofficial X @-@ Files Companion , N.E. Genge notes that aspects of the episode bear striking resemblances to the Philadelphia Experiment , the alleged naval military experiment . Indeed , the episode contains several mentions and allusions to the experiment .

= = = Filming = = =

HMCS Mackenzie , a decommissioned Canadian Forces destroyer , was used for interior and exterior shots as USS Ardent . The ship had previously been used to shoot interior scenes for the climax of the episode " End Game " . The ship was repainted in order to more closely resemble an abandoned ship , a technique Graeme Murray referred to as " paint @-@ aged . " Originally docked at New Westminster Quay , the ship was relocated to the more remote location of Barry Point to avoid night lights when filming exterior shots of the ship . The move cost the show approximately \$ 10 @,@ 000 . Mackenzie , once the lead ship of its class , was stripped and scuttled shortly after filming ended and now serves as an artificial reef off the Georgia Strait .

In order to ease filming , the producers sought out a set that could portray both a bar and a hospital , a task initially dubbed " impossible . " However , Jericho Sailing Club in Vancouver later stood in for both the Norwegian bar and the hospital to which Mulder and Scully are taken . The cast and crew of " Død Kalm " reportedly found the dual @-@ set " amazing . " The location of the set was only a short distance away from where David Duchovny was living . The producers subsequently decided to try to find possible locations closer to where the main stars were living in order to ease future filming .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Død Kalm " premiered on the Fox network on March 10 , 1995 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on January 16 , 1996 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 7 , with an 18 share , meaning that roughly 10 @.@ 7 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 18 percent of households watching television , were tuned into the episode . It was viewed by 10 @.@ 2 million households .

" Død Kalm " received mostly mixed to moderately positive reviews . Entertainment Weekly gave " Død Kalm " a B , noting that , " Despite clumsy makeup , isolation pays off again , and Mulder and Scully get to try a little tenderness . " Todd VanDerWerff from The A.V. Club , despite noting his original dislike for the episode , awarded it a B rating and wrote , " This episode works , almost in spite of itself . There are so many nice little moments here [...] it 's a script that pauses from the constant horror the show had been serving up for several episodes in a row to just tell an unsettling , ultimately moving tale of two friends who look into the abyss and somehow don 't fall . "

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 and a half stars out of five . The two noted that , while the episode 's premise " brims over with atmosphere " , the ending of " Død Kalm " was extremely lacking . Shearman and Pearson argued " that if the writers can only devise a plot which paints them into a corner so awkward there 's no realistic way they can get out , then they shouldn 't write the story at all . " The two also criticized the episode 's make up . They noted that " Scully looks like a credible old lady , Mulder rather more like a man wearing several layers of latex . "