

= Beyond the Sea ( The X @-@ Files ) =

" Beyond the Sea " is the thirteenth episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It was written by co @-@ executive producers Glen Morgan and James Wong , and directed by David Nutter . The episode is a " Monster of Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . The episode first aired in the United States on January 7 , 1994 , on the Fox Network . Despite a mediocre Nielsen rating compared to other episodes of the first season , " Beyond the Sea " received a generally positive reception amongst 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 . The plot of the episode sees Scully 's father die and her skepticism put to the test by Luther Lee Boggs , a prisoner on death row who claims to have psychic powers .

The episode showed the protagonists reversing their usual roles of " believer " and " skeptic " for the first time , and introduced the theme of father @-@ figures that was continued throughout the series . Critical commentary has noted parallels between the character of Dana Scully and that of Clarice Starling from The Silence of the Lambs .

= = Plot = =

Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) entertains her parents , William Scully ( Don Davis ) and Margaret Scully ( Sheila Larken ) shortly after Christmas . After they leave , she falls asleep on her sofa . Several hours later , she wakes up to see her father sitting across from her , speaking silently . The telephone rings , and after looking at the phone , she finds the chair empty again . She answers the call ? from her mother , who tells her that her father died of a heart attack an hour earlier .

Meanwhile , in Raleigh , North Carolina , a young couple are kidnapped by a man dressed as a police officer . Several days later , Scully and her partner Fox Mulder ( David Duchovny ) discuss the case in Mulder 's office at FBI headquarters . Mulder relates that the case seems to be the work of a repeat offender , and there is reason to believe the couple will be killed in a matter of days . He also tells Scully that Luther Lee Boggs ( Brad Dourif ) , a serial killer he had helped to apprehend years before , has claimed to have had psychic revelations about the kidnapping and has offered to help police in exchange for his death sentence being commuted . Mulder is unusually skeptical about Boggs ' claims .

Later , the agents visit Boggs in prison , where he makes an impassioned revelation about the kidnapped couple based on a piece of " evidence " that is really a shred of Mulder 's T @-@ shirt . Satisfied that he is lying , the pair prepare to leave . Scully looks back at Boggs and sees another vision of her father , speaking to her and singing the song that had been played at his funeral , " Beyond the Sea " . She does not tell Mulder about this , and the pair discuss the possibility that Boggs has orchestrated the kidnapping with a partner to avoid execution . They have a fake newspaper made which declares the couple to have been found , hoping to trick Boggs into contacting his accomplice . He does not fall for the trick , but gives the agents vague clues about the case . Scully , acting on these , first finds a warehouse where the couple had been held , and later leads Mulder and several other agents to a boathouse where the kidnapper is holding the couple . The girl is rescued , but the kidnapper shoots Mulder and escapes with the boyfriend .

Convinced of Boggs ' involvement in the kidnapping , the prison warden rules out any kind of clemency . Boggs speaks to Scully again , claiming to be able to contact her father . He offers to relay one last message to her from him if she will attend his execution . He also gives her information about the kidnapper 's new location , warning her to avoid " the blue devil " . Scully then leads several agents to the location Boggs gave her ? a brewery ? where they are able to rescue the kidnapped boyfriend . Scully chases the kidnapper as he flees , but stops in her tracks when he runs along a gantry beneath the brewery 's logo ? a leering blue devil . The gantry gives way , and the kidnapper falls to his death .

Boggs is led to his execution and sees that Scully has not attended . Scully visits Mulder in hospital , where he is recovering from his gunshot wound . She has come to believe Mulder 's assertion that

Boggs arranged everything . Mulder asks her why she refused the chance to hear from her father again through Boggs . She tells him that she did not need to hear anything , because she already knew what her father would have said .

= = Production = =

" Beyond the Sea " was written by The X @-@ Files co @-@ executive producers and long @-@ time writing partners , Glen Morgan and James Wong ; it was their fourth script for the series . The episode was directed by David Nutter . As Morgan and Wong explained , their episode was written in response to criticisms of the show 's initially limited characterization of Scully . Wong said , " Gillian Anderson needed to show off her talents more , and this was a perfect opportunity to dispel those notions that Scully will never believe . It was time for the character to grow , because she was just doing the same kind of thing too often . " Executives at Fox vetoed the idea two times before Carter told the network , " we 're doing it . "

Don Davis was cast as Agent Scully 's father and was one of several Twin Peaks actors to appear in the series . Davis returned as William Scully in " One Breath " ( season 2 ) . Sheila Larken , who played Scully 's mother , Margaret , is the wife of the show 's co @-@ executive producer R.W. Goodwin . Larken returned for a further 15 episodes in the role . Morgan and Wong fought hard to have veteran film actor Brad Dourif play the role of Luther Lee Boggs against concerns about the cost of hiring him . X @-@ Files creator Chris Carter called the president of Twentieth Century Fox , Peter Roth , during thanksgiving dinner and convinced him to let them cast Dourif for the part . Dourif was asked to appear in the episode with only four days of preparation . He originally refused the part , until the producers gave him an extra week to prepare . While getting into character between takes , his deep breathing exercises turned his face bright purple .

This episode is a favorite of both creator Carter , who calls it his favorite episode of the first season and actress Gillian Anderson . Co @-@ writer Morgan also praises it as a script he is proud of . Director Nutter says of the episode , " I think it 's the most accomplished piece of directing of actors I 've been able to do ... I think this episode really made a difference in how the audience looks at Scully . I think it brought a lot of dimension to her character and for her person it definitely had a lot of impact . "

= = Cultural references and continuity = =

The episode title , " Beyond the Sea " , references Bobby Darin 's 1959 song , which is played at the funeral for Scully 's father . The appearance of Luther Lee Boggs greatly resembles Richard Ramirez . The names Luther Lee Boggs and Lucas Henry were inspired by real @-@ life serial killer Henry Lee Lucas . The Luther Lee Boggs character is mentioned by Dakota Whitney ( Amanda Peet 's character ) in The X @-@ Files : I Want to Believe ( 2008 ) . In one scene from this episode , Max Fenig 's National Investigations Committee On Aerial Phenomena ( NICAP ) hat from the episode " Fallen Angel " can be seen hanging in Mulder 's office .

Scully and her father 's nicknames for each other ? Ahab and Starbuck ? are taken from Herman Melville 's 1851 nautical novel Moby @-@ Dick . Further references to the novel appear later in the series in the second season episode " One Breath " and the third season episode " Quagmire " .

= = Themes and analysis = =

In the episodes prior to " Beyond the Sea " , the protagonists of The X @-@ Files are firmly established in the roles of believer ( Mulder ) and rational scientist / skeptic ( Scully ) . " Beyond the Sea " is the first episode in which these roles are reversed . Scully , vulnerable after the death of her father , is persuaded by Boggs ' apparent psychic ability . Meanwhile , Mulder refuses to believe the serial killer , discounts any evidence in Boggs ' favor and will only consider rational explanations . According to Jan Delsara , Scully is inclined to believe Boggs because she identifies with him : they both understand the pressure of high family expectations . Scully strongly desired to make her father

proud , despite not fulfilling his expectation that she became a doctor , and Boggs , in killing his family , had hoped to kill their expectations and judgment of him . In contrast , Mulder 's relationship with his parents , based on resentment of them for their failure to protect his sister ( themes developed later in the series ) , makes him unwilling to identify with Boggs . While Scully follows her instinct and solves the case , Mulder gets shot and ends up in the hospital because of his doubts and skepticism . According to Joe Bellon , as the episode progresses , even Scully 's personality becomes like Mulder 's and " for all narrative purposes , she becomes Mulder for almost an entire episode . " According to Dean A. Kowalski , this role reversal of the partners represents a " blending " of Mulder and Scully 's characters that is present throughout the series .

Scully 's co -@-@ option of Mulders ' usual role also demonstrates the complexity of her character . Although she is strongly influenced by her scientific background , she has religious faith too . Paul C. Peterson notes that although this episode is not directly about religion , it shows the first of several visions Scully experiences throughout the series ; later visions appear in episodes more directly related to religion and Scully 's faith , such as " One Breath " , " Elegy " and " All Souls " . In this episode , her faith in her father ultimately proves stronger than her belief in the paranormal as she refuses to be tempted by Boggs . Rather than take him up on his offer to help her contact her father , Scully visits her partner in the hospital .

" Beyond the Sea " is the first episode to explore a central theme of Scully 's character development ? her attraction to , and conflict with , authoritative men . Throughout her career with the FBI she experiences conflict with patriarchal figures . In the fourth season episode " Never Again " , she expresses a long @-@ held fascination with father @-@ figures . This theme is introduced with her guilt and need for approval following her father 's death in " Beyond the Sea " and continues in later episodes including " Irresistible " , " Small Potatoes " , " Bad Blood " , and " Milagro " .

The theme of father @-@ figures is one that is explored throughout The X @-@ Files , in relation to both Mulder and Scully . As well as their own fathers , a number of characters play a paternal role to the agents in later episodes , including Deep Throat , the Cigarette @-@ Smoking Man and Senator Matheson . Both of the protagonists have deep @-@ rooted family issues and this episode is the beginning of the exploration of that story arc . A motif often employed in the show is that of mirroring , doubling or cloning . Scully 's relationship with her father , first dealt with in " Beyond the Sea " , is mirrored by that of Mulder 's with his father ? also named William ? who dies at the end of the second season .

Comparisons have been drawn between the character of Dana Scully and that of FBI student Clarice Starling in *The Silence of the Lambs* . Rhonda Wilcox and J. P. Williams note the similarities in their appearances , as well as their positions in a patriarchal working environment . In " Beyond the Sea " in particular , parallels can be seen . Like Starling , Scully has an emotional connection with ? and a need to prove herself to ? her dead father . After William Scully 's death , his daughter becomes particularly concerned with whether or not he was proud of her . Although by the end of the episode , Scully seems to have come to terms with her father 's opinion of her , her worries resurface later in the series when she fears that he would have been ashamed of her actions ( " Anasazi " ) . The connection to Clarice Starling is further shown by Scully 's encounter with Luther Lee Boggs , an apparently helpful serial killer , which echoes Starling 's relationship with serial killer Hannibal Lecter .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Beyond the Sea " was first broadcast in the United States on January 7 , 1994 , on the Fox network . In its original broadcast it was watched by 6 @.@ 2 million households and 10 @.@ 8 million viewers , according to the Nielsen ratings system . It received a 6 @.@ 6 rating / 11 share among viewers meaning that 6 @.@ 6 percent of all households in the US , and 11 percent of all people watching television at the time , viewed the episode .

Author Phil Farrand rated the episode as the sixth @-@ best episode of the first four seasons in his book *The Nitpicker 's Guide for X @-@ Files* . A writer from the *Vancouver Sun* listed " Beyond the Sea " as one of the best stand alone episodes of the show , saying that Brad Dourif 's acting was "

remarkably chilling ". They noted that this episode was the first to center around Gillian Anderson 's character , and showed signs of Scully 's vulnerability . Connie Ogle from PopMatters ranked the episode amongst her " best " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week episodes . Ogle felt that Luther Lee Boggs was one of the " greatest " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week characters of the show , saying : " Spend a few minutes in Luther 's skeevy presence , and alien abduction seems like a blessing " . Writers for IGN named the episode their second favourite stand alone episode of the show , noting favourably how it " flips " the established dynamic between Mulder and Scully . In The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy , Gary Westfahl described the episode as one of the most " highly regarded " stand alone episodes .

In a retrospective of the first season , Entertainment Weekly gave " Beyond the Sea " an A + , noting how it humanizes Scully and praising the casting of Dourif . Zack Handlen of The A.V. Club graded the episode a B + , praising Dourif as Boggs but wondered specifically about his intentions . Despite liking the fact that Scully was the focus of the episode and praising Anderson 's performance , he thought that its " main flaw " was the way it handled her moral crisis , opining that she appeared too weak .