

= Fallen Angel (The X @-@ Files) =

" Fallen Angel " is the tenth episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on November 19 , 1993 . It was written by Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa , and directed by Larry Shaw . The episode featured the first of three guest appearances by Scott Bellis as Max Fenig , and saw Jerry Hardin reprise his role as Deep Throat . The episode helped explore the series ' overarching mythology . The episode was mostly well received .

The show centers on FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) , who work on cases called X @-@ Files , which are linked to the paranormal . When Mulder and Scully investigate a mysterious crash site , they find that the official reports of the incident may be covering up the crash of a UFO . Meanwhile , Mulder meets a ufologist who he believes may be a former abductee .

The episode introduced the UFO fanatic character Max Fenig , who would go on to be a minor recurring character . Fenig would later appear in the fourth season episodes " Tempus Fugit " and " Max " . In addition , Fenig also laid the template for the introduction of The Lone Gunmen in the later first @-@ season episode " E.B.E. "

= = Plot = =

Near Townsend , Wisconsin , a UFO crashes in the woods . When the deputy sheriff arrives on the scene , he is killed by an invisible figure while surrounded by bright white light . As the Air Force monitors the crash , Colonel Calvin Henderson , the military 's UFO reclamations expert , launches an operation to clean up the site .

After consulting with Deep Throat , Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) travels to Townsend and takes photos of the crash site , only to be captured . After being interrogated by Henderson , Mulder is detained alongside an eccentric NICAP member named Max Fenig (Scott Bellis) , who was also captured in the woods . The next morning , Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) arrives to retrieve Mulder , telling him that FBI Section Chief Joseph McGrath is threatening to shut down the X @-@ Files because of his behavior . She also claims that the wreckage has been identified as a downed Libyan fighter jet ; Mulder dismisses this explanation . Meanwhile , the invisible occupant of the UFO passes through an electronic fence set up around the crash site , escaping into the outside world .

The agents return to Mulder 's motel room , finding it ransacked by Max . He turns out to be a fan of Mulder 's , having followed NICAP 's research into his work on the X @-@ Files . Max brings the agents to his Airstream trailer , where he shows them audio transmissions from the deputy , as well as a fire crew that arrived at the crash site . Mulder and Scully visit the deputy 's widow , who claims the government won 't release her husband 's body and has threatened her into silence . They also meet a doctor who treated the deputy and the fire crew , revealing that they died of abnormally severe burns ; he claims that he was also threatened . Henderson arrives at the hospital with a group of burned soldiers , who were attacked after they cornered the invisible alien at their base .

Mulder returns to the motel and finds Max inside his trailer , having an apparent epileptic seizure . As Mulder tends to Max , he discovers a mysterious scar behind Max 's ear . Mulder reviews earlier X @-@ Files , discovering similar scars on two reported alien abductees . Scully believes that whatever abduction experience Max had was a schizophrenic delusion , having noticed medication in his trailer . But Mulder believes that Max , despite his interest in UFOs , is completely unaware of his experiences and was guided to Townsend by his abductors on the night of the crash .

The Air Force tracks a larger UFO as it hovers over Townsend . The invisible alien enters Max 's trailer and abducts him . When the agents visit the trailer and find Max missing , an Army radio transmission reveals that he has been transported to a waterfront . They race to save Max as Henderson 's men scour the area searching for him . The alien kills two soldiers who encounter Max , causing him to flee into a warehouse . As Mulder finds Max inside , the building is surrounded by Henderson 's forces . Mulder tries to comfort Max , but is attacked and injured by the alien . Mulder then sees Max floating in a pillar of light before vanishing . When Henderson finds that Max is

missing , he orders Mulder arrested .

Back in Washington , both Scully and Mulder report to Section Chief McGrath , who does not believe their claims . McGrath offers an especially harsh reprimand to Mulder , and presents written testimony by Henderson claiming that Max 's body was found in a cargo container . McGrath and his disciplinary board decide to shut down the X @-@ Files and dismiss Mulder from the FBI , but the decision is vetoed by Deep Throat , who feels it would be more dangerous for them to allow Mulder to turn whistleblower than to let him continue his work .

= = Production = =

" Fallen Angel " was written by Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa , and directed by Larry Shaw . The episode foreshadows the closing of the X @-@ Files , which would occur in the season finale of the first season , " The Erlenmeyer Flask " . The UFO fanatic character Max Fenig also laid the template for the introduction of The Lone Gunmen in the later first season episode " E.B.E. " . Scott Bellis would reprise his role as Max in the fourth season episodes " Tempus Fugit " and " Max " , which explained the fate of the character after his disappearance in this episode . Max 's NICAP baseball cap would make a brief appearance in Mulder 's office in " Beyond the Sea " , later in the first season .

The scenes depicting Washington , D.C. in the episode were filmed at Simon Fraser University on Burnaby Mountain in British Columbia . Shooting at this location was made difficult by the confined space available in which to set up the necessary equipment . The invisible alien featured in this episode appears to be inspired by the movie Predator . The alien was deliberately made invisible in order for it to be scarier to the audience , with series creator Chris Carter noting that " what you don 't see is scarier than what you do see " . Casting director Lynne Carrow was proud of Scott Bellis ' performance as Max , calling him in 1995 perhaps her proudest find in casting the show , saying that he " Just knocked our socks off " . Carter also praised the performance of guest star Marshall Bell as Colonel Henderson and was proud that the episode permitted the producers to expand the role of Deep Throat . Actor Brent Stait , who plays Corporal Taylor in the episode , teaches alongside series regular William B. Davis at the William Davis Centre for Actors Study in Vancouver .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Fallen Angel " premiered on the Fox network on November 19 , 1993 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on September 24 , 1994 . This episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 5 @.@ 4 , with a nine share , meaning that in the United States , roughly 5 @.@ 4 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and nine percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 5 @.@ 1 million households . It was , and would thereafter permanently remain , the lowest @-@ rated episode of the series ever broadcast .

The episode was mostly well @-@ received , with a retrospective of the first season in Entertainment Weekly rating it a B + , describing it as " A very cool @-@ looking episode that does the best job so far of illuminating the agents ' position with relation to the government " ; also noting the character of Max Fenig as a precursor to those of The Lone Gunmen . Keith Phipps , writing for The A.V. Club , also rated the episode a B + , calling it " a strong entry " , finding that it served as a " slow reveal " of the series ' themes . Phipps also noted the importance of Max Fenig as a sign of " the human toll exacted by all the dark goings on " in the series , claiming that " without Max we just get Mulder and Scully chasing a mysterious downed object and coming up empty @-@ handed . With Max , we start to realize the stakes for which they 're playing " . Matt Haigh , writing for Den of Geek , reviewed the episode negatively , calling it " a mundane forty minutes " that " really fails to impress " , and noting that the plot follows " more or less the same pattern " , as the series ' previous mythology episodes . 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 stars out of five . Shearman described " Fallen Angel " as having been produced " with style and wit " ,

feeling that it featured a relatively static plot but was nevertheless entertaining . He found Duchovny 's performance in the episode , and its final scene featuring Deep Throat 's ambiguous motivations , to have been the highlights of an episode otherwise filled with " smoke and mirrors " ; comparing it to the earlier episode " Conduit " in this regard .