

= Bad Blood ( The X @-@ Files ) =

" Bad Blood " is the twelfth episode of the fifth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . Written by Vince Gilligan , directed by Cliff Bole , and featuring guest appearances from Luke Wilson and Patrick Renna it aired in the United States on February 22 , 1998 on the Fox network . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . The episode received a Nielsen rating of 12 @. @ 0 , being watched by 19 @. @ 25 million viewers . In addition , " Bad Blood " received largely positive reviews , with many critics praising the episode 's humor .

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 . Mulder is a believer in the paranormal , while the skeptical Scully has been assigned to debunk his work . In this episode , Mulder and Scully must report to their supervisor , Assistant Director Walter Skinner ( Mitch Pileggi ) after Mulder kills a young man he believes to be a vampire . After each recollecting their takes on the event , they realize that they have very different memories of the investigation .

" Bad Blood " was inspired by an episode of The Dick Van Dyke Show wherein the main characters tell different versions of a fight they have had . According to critical analysis of the episode , " Bad Blood " explores the dynamics of the relationship between Mulder and Scully . In addition , some scholars argue that by Scully telling the tale from a perspective opposed to Mulder 's , the episode subverts the male gaze ( a feminist concept arguing that films tend to cater to male viewers and perspectives ) . The episode 's makeup and special effect coordinators used various techniques to create many of the effects seen in the episode , such as the vampire teeth , the glowing eyes , and the bite marks .

= = Plot = =

One night , FBI Special Agent Fox Mulder ( David Duchovny ) kills a young man , who Mulder believes is a vampire but has pointed dentures instead of actual fangs . Afterwards , he and his FBI partner , Special Agent Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) must report to their supervisor , Assistant Director Walter Skinner ( Mitch Pileggi ) . Before they do so , they attempt to get their stories straight .

Scully tells her version of the story via a flashback to the previous day . She arrives at work and Mulder tells her about a murder in Texas , which he believes to be the work of vampires . In her version , Mulder is exuberant , insensitive , and irritating , while she is calm and mindful of her thoughts . The agents travel to the small town of Cheney , Texas where they meet Sheriff Hartwell ( Luke Wilson ) , whom Scully finds highly charming . Mulder and Hartwell leave to investigate further while Scully autopsies the body . She discovers that the victim , whose last meal had been pizza , was incapacitated with chloral hydrate . She returns to the motel room and orders a pizza , but Mulder soon appears and sends her back to autopsy another body . She leaves him just as her food is delivered . When she finds that the second victim had also ingested chloral hydrate in a pizza , she realizes Mulder is in danger and returns to the motel room . She finds him about to be attacked by the pizza delivery boy , Ronnie Strickland ( Patrick Renna ) . She shoots at Ronnie , who runs off into the woods . When she catches up to him , Mulder has gotten there first and hammered a stake into Ronnie 's heart .

Mulder tells Scully his version . In his recollection , he is sensitive and polite to Scully , while she is dismissive and irritable , and clearly enamored with Sheriff Hartwell ( who , in Mulder 's version , is far less refined and has obvious buck teeth ) . While Scully is performing the autopsy , Mulder and Hartwell get a call to go to the local RV park , where there is " a situation " . They find another dead body , apparently a victim of the same attacker . Mulder returns to the motel room ; after Scully has left , he eats her pizza and realizes that he has been drugged . Ronnie enters , with glowing green eyes , and prepares to attack Mulder , but Mulder manages to postpone his demise by scattering sunflower seeds all over the floor , which Ronnie compulsively starts to pick up . Scully enters and shoots Ronnie , but the bullets have no effect , and Ronnie runs out with Scully in pursuit . Mulder

recovers from being drugged and chases after Ronnie .

Back in the office , Scully says that no one will believe his story given their diverging statements and the fact that Ronnie was apparently a human . Meanwhile , a Texas coroner prepares to perform an autopsy on Ronnie 's body . When he removes the stake , Ronnie wakes up and escapes . Skinner sends Mulder and Scully back to Texas to investigate . Scully stakes out the cemetery with Sheriff Hartwell , while Mulder goes to the RV park . As they wait , Sheriff Hartwell gives Scully a hot drink , apologizes to her on behalf of Ronnie , and says that he makes them all look bad . He makes it clear that he too is a vampire and Scully realizes she has been drugged . Before she loses consciousness , she sees Sheriff Hartwell 's eyes turning green .

At the RV park , Mulder finds Ronnie . As he tries to arrest him , Mulder is surrounded and overwhelmed by a group of people with glowing green eyes . He wakes up the next morning in the RV park , in his car , where he is rejoined by Scully . They are both unharmed and the vampires have disappeared . Back in Washington , they give Skinner their unified report .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing and filming = = =

" Bad Blood " was written by Vince Gilligan , who had already written a number of episodes for the series ; this was his fifth writing credit of the season . Aware that he had an episode to be filmed soon after the Christmas period of 1997 , he had been working on a script that would involve a story being presented by Robert Stack of Unsolved Mysteries , with unknown actors playing Mulder and Scully . Under pressure to complete the script , Gilligan decided his idea would not work . He said , " I just couldn 't figure out how to do it " . The series would later explore the idea of an X @-@ Files crossover in the guise of non @-@ fiction with the seventh season episode " X @-@ Cops " , also penned by Gilligan .

With the help of co @-@ executive producer Frank Spotnitz , he came up with a new idea . Spotnitz was inspired by an episode of The Dick Van Dyke Show , called " The Night the Roof Fell In " , in which the characters of Rob and Laura Petrie tell different versions of a fight they have had . Gilligan said of the idea , " I just thought it was a cool way to tell a story . " With two versions of the same story taking up much of the episode , Gilligan knew that he would have to keep the plot simple and settled on a vampire story , that everyone would easily understand . Both Mulder and Scully 's version of the episode were filmed back to back , utilizing the " exact same sets and camera angles " . The RV park that was featured in the episode was formerly the site of a sawmill that had previously been used in the fourth season episode " Gethsemane " that had burned down .

= = = Casting and effects = = =

Luke Wilson guest starred as Sheriff Hartwell ; he had previously worked on 1998 comedy film Home Fries , which had been scripted by Vince Gilligan . Former child actor Patrick Renna played Ronnie Strickland . He said of the part , " before we started I asked if Ronnie was pretending to be a moron . They told me , ' No . He 's really just a moron . ' " .

The out of control RV was created by the show 's special effects coordinator , David Gauthier ; an auxiliary steering wheel was rigged up in the vehicle so that the driver would be able to steer the car from the back window , out of the camera 's sight . Wilson and Renna were fitted with faux vampire teeth ? which were sardonically labeled " funny fangs " ? courtesy of special effects makeup coordinator Toby Lindala . Wilson later recounted that they fit comfortably in the actor 's mouth , musing that " the retainers I had to wear as a kid never fit as well . " In order to create the glowing green eyes , fluorescent material was glued to the actors ' eyelids . However , because they were unable to see , this gave the vampires a " somewhat vacant " stare . The various corpses with fangs marks were created by makeup artist Laverne Basham . In order to create a suitable model , Gilligan bit the back of his hand to give Basham something to work with .

= = Themes = =

According to Susanne Kord and Elisabeth Krimmer , " Bad Blood " explores the dynamics of the relationship between Mulder and Scully by " develop [ ing ] the dysfunctional potential of [ their ] routine interactions . " In " Scully Hits the Glass Ceiling : Postmodernism , Postfeminism , Posthumanism and The X @-@ Files " , Linda Badley suggests that The X @-@ Files often subverts the concept of the male gaze through the whole series and " Bad Blood " includes an example of this , allowing Scully to be the one that gazes at Sheriff Hartwell .

Michelle Bush , in her book Myth @-@ X , described the episode as allowing the viewer " a peek inside [ Mulder and Scully 's ] heads " by showing how they see themselves and each other , as well as " their insecurities about their attractiveness to the other " . The title " Bad Blood " can be applied to the tension between the two characters in the episode . She described how in each of their stories they try to describe themselves in the way the other would find attractive .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Bad Blood " was first broadcast in the United States on February 22 , 1998 , on the Fox network . In its original broadcast , it was watched by 19 @. @ 25 million viewers , according to the Nielsen ratings system . It received a 12 @. @ 0 rating / 17 share among viewers meaning that 12 @. @ 0 percent of all households in the United States , and 17 percent of all people watching television at the time , viewed the episode . The episode was one of eight featured on Revelations , a DVD released prior to the release of the 2008 movie , The X @-@ Files : I Want to Believe .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Bad Blood " received largely positive reviews from critics . In a 2000 review of season five for the New Straits Times , Francis Dass called the episode " an absolute gem . The most hilarious X @-@ Files episode I have ever seen . " Rebecca Traister of Salon.com called it " possibly the best X @-@ Files episode of all time " . In a 2008 review of the Revelations DVD , which contained " Bad Blood " , Erik Henriksen of The Portland Mercury praised the way the writers " managed to tweak their genre formulas " and said of the episode , " It 's witty and quick and features a great performance from Luke Wilson " . In a review of Revelations for the Reading Eagle , Gina McIntyre called the episode " a hilarious riff on how [ Mulder and Scully ] view each other " . Zack Handlen of The A.V. Club wrote a positive review of what he described as one of his " top five favorite X @-@ Files " . He called the script " very smart " and compared the story to the plot of Rashomon . He said " Yes , ' Bad Blood ' can be goofy , but it 's a good kind of goofy , the kind that pokes holes in characters in ways that just make them more lovable . " 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 five stars out of five and wrote " Now that 's how you tell a vampire story ! " The two praised Gilligan 's use of humor as well as the episode 's examination of both Mulder and Scully 's differing points of views . Shearman and Pearson noted that " the gimmick here isn 't supernatural , but structural " , and called the episode 's framing device " subtly done " , which resulted in its " brilliance " . Review website IGN named it the eighth best standalone X @-@ Files episode of the entire series . Rob Bricken from Topless Robot named " Bad Blood " the funniest X @-@ Files episode . An article in The Montreal Gazette listed " Bad Blood " as the ninth best stand @-@ alone episode of the series . Tom Kessenich , in his book Examination : An Unauthorized Look at Seasons 6 ? 9 of the X @-@ Files , named the episode one of the " Top 25 Episode of All Time " of The X @-@ Files , ranking it at number 19 . He called the episode " a satiric X @-@ File at its finest . " Den of Geek writer Juliette Harrison named it the " finest " stand @-@ alone episode of season 5 and wrote , " for sheer fun

and narrative playfulness , the winner has to be Bad Blood " .

Not all reviews were so glowing . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a more mixed review and awarded it two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of four . Although she enjoyed the comedic elements of the episode , she was somewhat critical of the underlying issues , most notably the way Mulder and Scully viewed each other in the episode . She wrote that , " their relationship seems to be a strangely passive @-@ aggressive one " . Vitaris also was critical of the fact that Mulder was not guilty over the fact that he may have killed an innocent boy .

Gillian Anderson has described " Bad Blood " as one of her favorites of the series , commenting " Oh , yes ! I loved that episode . As far as I 'm concerned it 's one of our best ever . I think it really showed how well David and I can work together " .