

= John Doe (The X @-@ Files) =

" John Doe " is the seventh episode of the ninth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . The episode first aired in the United States on January 13 , 2002 on the Fox network . It was written by executive producer Vince Gilligan , and directed by co @-@ executive producer Michelle MacLaren . The episode is a " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week " episode , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the mythology , or overarching fictional history , of The X @-@ Files . " John Doe " earned a Nielsen rating of 5 @. @ 0 and was viewed by 5 @. @ 28 million households . The episode received largely positive reviews from television critics .

The show centers on FBI special agents who work on cases linked to the paranormal , called X @-@ Files ; this season focuses on the investigations of John Doggett (Robert Patrick) , Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) , and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) . In this episode , Doggett wakes up in Mexico with no memory of who he is or how he got there . Meanwhile , Reyes and Scully struggle to locate him . The two later discover that Doggett 's memory has been taken by a " memory vampire " that works for a drug cartel .

" John Doe " was written after Gilligan had been thinking of a story involving a " memory vampire " for months . Furthermore , the episode was MacLaren 's directorial debut . Noted director Kim Manners helped guide her through the process . Director of photography Bill Roe used specific lighting for the episode ; indoor scenes are dark and hard to make out whereas outside scenes are bright and over @-@ saturated with light . The Mexican hotel apartment was created from Fox Mulder 's (David Duchovny) old apartment set .

= = Plot = =

John Doggett (Robert Patrick) awakens inside an abandoned warehouse to find a man in the process of stealing one of his shoes . Doggett chases the man outside , where he summons two Mexican police officers . One of the policemen hits the man with his nightstick , while the other demands his identification . When Doggett finds he has no papers , the officer asks him his name . Doggett is shocked to realize he can 't remember his own identity .

Doggett is taken to the local jail , where he meets a fellow prisoner named Domingo . Domingo is eventually freed and offers to have Doggett bailed out as well , under the condition that Doggett help him perform his criminal tasks . Doggett agrees , but changes his mind once he is released . Nestor , Domingo 's friend , pulls a gun , but Doggett quickly overpowers him and takes the weapon . Doggett returns to the warehouse in hopes of finding clues to his identity . From time to time , he experiences flashbacks of his wife and son , but has no idea who they are .

In the meantime , in Washington , Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) examine video footage from a security camera positioned at the Mexican border . FBI Deputy Director Alvin Kersh disbands the task force searching for Doggett , believing the video is proof that he entered Mexico on his own free will and was not abducted . Meanwhile , Doggett phones a U.S. Marine Corps public affairs office , hoping his Marine tattoo will shed some light on his true identity . Before he is able to ask any questions , he notices policemen nearby and flees .

Scully traces Doggett 's phone call and has Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) travel to the Mexican town where he was last seen . It is revealed that Caballero , an enforcer for the local drug cartel , is a " memory vampire " : he can absorb the memories of those posing a threat to the cartel . Reyes finds Doggett and faces gunfire from the police , who are likewise controlled by the cartel ; all the while , Reyes attempts to remind Doggett of who they are . Doggett remembers his son . The agents are rescued by Skinner and the Mexican Federales . Doggett tearfully admits that he is happy to have all of his memories , even the bad ones , " as long as I remember the good . ?

= = Production = =

= = Writing and directing = = =

" John Doe " was written by executive producer Vince Gilligan and directed by Michelle MacLaren . The episode marked Gilligan 's first solo episode for the ninth season . Gilligan had " fiddled " with the story of a " memory vampire " for months , before writing it . The notion to set the story in Mexico and center it around Robert Patrick 's character was Frank Spotnitz 's idea . From there the story " went together fairly easily . "

" John Doe " was co @-@ executive MacLaren 's directorial debut . Although she had never helmed an episode before , MacLaren utilized information that she had gathered by working with Kim Manners , one of the series ' prolific directors . She later noted , " Kim taught me how he breaks down a script and prepares his shot list . The most powerful thing he said to me was that he imagines the show all cut together and sees the movie in his head and really visualizes it . " Gilligan later said that MacLaren " really rose to the occasion and really did her homework . " The bus crash scene was created with the use of elaborate " smoke and mirrors " , according to Gilligan . Over nine cameras were used to film the entire scene . Several of the cameras were under @-@ cranked in order to give the illusion that the bus was going faster than it really was . A steel ramp was buried in the ground to flip the bus . However , the scene was reportedly torpid to film . Gilligan later joked that " You could have stood there and had a sandwich while the thing was backing up : it was so slow . "

= = = Filming and effects = = =

Director of photography Bill Roe later stated that he borrowed motifs from Steven Soderbergh 's 2000 film Traffic for some of the shots . In addition , before filming , he decided to do various test shots to get the lighting right . The crew ended up shooting " exteriors three , four stops over what you should shoot it at " , resulting in very washed out outdoor scenes . Roe and his crew had a hard time developing the various lighting contrasts for the episode . When talking about the episode , Roe said : " it was really dark so we had this huge contrast of lighting . It was dark and warm and brown . When you go inside , you can barely see things , but when you 're outside , it 's just blaring . " To create the Mexican town featured in the episode , scenes were filmed at a small town located outside of Los Angeles . A matte of the town 's background and blue sky were then cut and a faux Mexican background was added . In addition , Mat Beck was given a flyer , and he duplicated it , making several strings of posters that did not exist when the shots were filmed .

When creating the Mexican hotel apartment , the crew re @-@ decorated what was once Fox Mulder 's (David Duchovny) apartment on the show . Production Designer Corey Kaplan said of the development of the episode that , " It was very creative and very rewarding for us as an art department , to create the complete total look of being in another culture . " Several Spanish songs are featured in the episode . When the characters are at the cantina , the song " La Calentura " by Roberto Ruiz is playing . During scenes in the garage " Juana La Cubana " by Fito Olivares is featured .

= = Reception = =

" John Doe " first aired in the United States on January 13 , 2002 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 5 @.@ 0 , meaning that it was seen by 5 @.@ 0 % of the nation 's estimated households and was viewed by 5 @.@ 28 million households . " John Doe " was the 66th most watched episode of television that aired during the week ending January 13 . The episode later aired in the United Kingdom on December 16 , 2002 on BBC Two .

The episode received largely positive reviews from television critics . Jessica Morgan from Television Without Pity gave the episode an A ? rating . Juliette Harrison of Den of Geek named " John Doe " the best stand @-@ alone episode of season nine and called it " a refreshing change of pace " . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen , gave the episode a glowing review and rated it five stars out of five . The two praised Gilligan 's script and Patrick 's performance , noting that the

former " writes the script with a dirtiness that gives it real power " and the latter 's acting was " extraordinary " . Furthermore , Shearman and Pearson wrote that " ' John Doe ' shows that there 's still a fresh take to be had on The X @-@ Files after all " . Meghan Deans of Tor.com applauded the episode and called it " a clear bright spot in a dark and dismal season , both in its script and in its shooting . " She felt that the focus on Doggett was effectively done , and the script focused on " strong character arcs " , which worked towards its advantage . In the end , she concluded that the episode was " part of the X @-@ Files , moreso than would an alien or a mutant " because it focused on the idea that " pain makes you , more pain makes you better , and living within that pain keeps you alive . " M.A. Crang , in his book Denying the Truth : Revisiting The X @-@ Files after 9 / 11 , praised the central premise , the cinematography and Patrick 's performance , calling " John Doe " a " stylishly produced entry " .