

= Provenance (The X @-@ Files) =

" Provenance " is the ninth episode of the ninth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on March 3 , 2002 . The episode was written by series creator Chris Carter and executive producer Frank Spotnitz , and directed by Kim Manners . " Provenance " helps to explore the series ' overarching mythology . The episode received a Nielsen household rating of 5 @. @ 5 and was watched by 5 @. @ 8 million households and 9 @. @ 7 million viewers . It received mixed to positive reviews from critics .

The show centers on special agents of the FBI 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 , when rubbings from the spaceship resurface the FBI hides its investigation from the X @-@ Files . Meanwhile , Scully is forced to take drastic measures when she discovers a threat to William .

" Provenance " introduced the character of the Toothpick Man , played by Alan Dale . This character became the leader of the New Syndicate and worked within the FBI during the show 's ninth season . The episode makes reference to rubbings from an alien wreck , a direct continuation from the plots of the sixth season finale " Biogenesis " and the seventh season opener " The Sixth Extinction " .

= = Plot = =

Navajo rubbings are found in the satchel of a motorcyclist who crashed while attempting to cross the Canada ? United States border . Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) is called into a meeting with Alvin Kersh (James Pickens , Jr .) , Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) , Brad Follmer (Cary Elwes) and a few unknown men . She is shown a copy of the rubbings and is asked whether she can identify them . After the meeting , Scully explains to John Doggett (Robert Patrick) and Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) that the rubbings are similar to ones she found on a wrecked spacecraft three years prior . Meanwhile , the motorcyclist uses an alien artifact which begins to heal the wounds from his crash .

Meanwhile , in Alberta , Canada , a downed spacecraft is being excavated under the direction of Josepho , the leader of a UFO religion . At the FBI , Doggett breaks into Skinner 's office and steals the rubbings , along with an FBI personnel file belonging to Agent Robert Comer , the motorcyclist . Reyes reveals that Comer 's rubbings do not match those from Africa , suggesting the existence of a second craft . Meanwhile , Comer goes to Scully 's apartment , overpowers Margaret Scully (Sheila Larken) and locks himself in William 's room . Scully arrives and , after a struggle , is forced to shoot Comer when he tries to smother the baby .

The mortally wounded Comer tells Scully that William " has to die " . Scully searches Comer 's jacket and discovers the artifact . Later , in Calgary , one of the cultists , the Overcoat Woman , sees a newspaper headline about Comer 's shooting ; she rushes to the dig site and informs Josepho . In Washington , Kersh admits to Scully and Doggett that Comer had gone undercover into Josepho 's cult , and reveals that Josepho is a former U.S. military officer . Kersh explains that Comer was given the assignment to investigate a series of death threats against Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) .

As Reyes brings William back to Scully 's apartment , Comer 's artifact flies over William and hovers above his head . Scully , realizing something is wrong , plans to drive William to somewhere safe . At the same time , Doggett notices the Overcoat Woman watching them nearby . As Scully and Reyes drive away , Doggett confronts the woman at gunpoint , but she runs him over . Scully places William under the care of The Lone Gunmen , but they are soon ambushed by the Overcoat Woman . With Melvin Frohike (Tom Braidwood) and Richard Langly (Dean Haglund) incapacitated , the woman opens the back door of the van to find John Fitzgerald Byers (Bruce Harwood) holding William . The woman puts a gun to Byers ' head .

= = Production = =

" Provenance " was written by series creator Chris Carter and executive producer Frank Spotnitz , and directed by Kim Manners . Manners was very pleased with Anderson 's performance in the episode . He later noted , " There was something about Gillian that was very sexual . " He further elaborated , " There 's some burning within her that really comes across on screen . She really is brilliant , and she brings so much ; the camera loves her . " A large portion of the episode was based on the ancient astronaut theory ; a theory that proposes intelligent extraterrestrial beings have visited Earth in antiquity or prehistory and made contact with humans . The themes had previously been visited in the " Biogenesis " / " The Sixth Extinction " / " Amor Fati " story arc .

The episode marked the first appearance of Alan Dale as the Toothpick Man , the leader of the New Syndicate who works within the FBI . An interview with Digital Spy described him as " effectively [stepping] into the nicotine @-@ stained chair of the departed Cigarette Smoking Man (William B. Davis) as the head of a shady new syndicate , although he was later exposed as an alien . " Laura Leigh Hughes makes her third and final appearance as Kersh 's Assistant . She had previously appeared in the sixth season episodes " Triangle " and " Dreamland . "

The scenes in Calgary were actually shot in the back of the Universal Studios lot in Los Angeles . In order to convert the Los Angeles cityscape into Calgary 's , Mat Beck created a matte of the shot ; the background buildings were then edited out . A separate shot of Calgary was superimposed in the background and the scenes were mixed .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Provenance " first premiered on the Fox network in the United States on March 3 , 2002 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 5 @.@ 5 , meaning that it was seen by 5 @.@ 5 % of the nation 's estimated households and was viewed by 5 @.@ 8 million households . " Provenance " was viewed by 9 @.@ 7 million viewers and was the 61st most watched episode of television that aired during the week ending March 3 . The episode eventually aired on BBC Two on January 12 , 2003 . " Provenance " was later included on The X @-@ Files Mythology , Volume 4 ? Super Soldiers , a DVD collection that contains episodes involved with the alien super soldiers arc .

" Provenance " received mixed to positive reviews from television critics . Jessica Morgan from Television Without Pity awarded the episode an A ? grade . John Keegan from Critical Myth gave the episode a largely positive review and awarded it a 9 out of 10 . He wrote , " Overall , this was a powerfully intense episode with plenty of strong characterization and ties to former continuity . In short , this episode had something for everyone . I only hope that the next episode manages to live up to this beginning . " Jeffrey Robinson from DVD Talk concluded that " Provenance " , along with its follow @-@ up " Providence " , " does a fairly good job without including Duchovny " due to its adherence to " the series ' main storyline [about] the government conspiracies . "

Other reviews were more negative . 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 one star out of five . The two noted that Anderson was constantly playing " a mother who 's always crying , shouting or looking miserable " in the episode . They wrote that the episode 's " characters no longer make sense " and that the plot has " been so required to dance through the little conspiracy hoops that there 's no consistency any more . " Furthermore , Shearman and Pearson criticized the idea to suggest that Mulder died in the episode , due to the fact that Carter announced Duchovny would return for the season finale . M.A. Crang , in his book Denying the Truth : Revisiting The X @-@ Files after 9 / 11 , criticised the plot of the episode , saying that it " throws up many elements that we 've seen the series do better elsewhere ... in the hope that something will stick " .