

= Blood (The X @-@ Files) =

" Blood " is the third episode of the second season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on September 30 , 1994 . The teleplay was written by Glen Morgan and James Wong from a story by Darin Morgan and was directed by David Nutter . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Blood " earned a Nielsen household rating of 9 @. @ 8 , being watched by 8 @. @ 7 million households in its initial broadcast . The episode received mostly positive reviews .

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 . In the episode , Mulder and Scully investigate a series of killings in Franklin , Pennsylvania . All the suspects appear compelled to murder after seeing violent messages on electronic devices .

" Blood " was inspired by writer Glen Morgan 's own hematophobia as well as controversy over malathion spraying in Southern California . The episode marked the second appearance of the Lone Gunmen in the series , as well as a guest appearance by pornographic actress Ashlyn Gere .

= = Plot = =

In Franklin , Pennsylvania , postal worker Edward Funsch (William Sanderson) is informed that he will be fired at the end of the week due to budget cuts . Afterwards , Funsch sees the words " Kill ' Em All " on his machine 's digital display . At Franklin 's civic center , a middle @-@ aged man in a crowded elevator sees " No Air " displayed on the elevator 's LED display , and is the only one who can see the message . Sweating and obviously claustrophobic , he again glances at the LED display . This time it flashes the words " Can 't Breathe " and then " Kill ' Em All . "

Agent Fox Mulder arrives at the civic center after what looks like a massacre ; bodies lie on the sidewalk and in the foyer . Sheriff Spencer (John Cygan) explains that the suspect murdered four people from the elevator with his bare hands . His rampage ended when he was shot by a security guard . Spencer notes that seven other individuals have murdered twenty @-@ two people in Franklin in the past six months . Mulder discovers that the LED display in the elevator has been damaged , and that the dead suspect has a green residue on his fingertips .

At the FBI Academy , Dana Scully reads Mulder 's initial report . The only connection between the murders that he can see is that the suspects all destroyed an electronic device during the killings . Meanwhile , Bonnie McRoberts , another Franklin resident , drops by a repair shop to pick up her car , where a message on an engine diagnostic display warns her that the mechanic is going to rape her . She impulsively kills him with an oil can spout . When Mulder and Spencer question her the next morning , her kitchen microwave instructs her to kill them . When she grabs a knife and attacks Mulder , she is shot and killed by Spencer .

Scully performs an autopsy on McRoberts ' body and discovers signs of phobia including high levels of adrenaline and the same substance found on the elevator killer . She hypothesizes that the substance , when combined with other neurochemicals , produces an LSD @-@ like reaction . While Mulder and Scully build a case , Funsch becomes more psychotic , continuing to see violent messages on electronic gadgets . Blood is associated in some way with each incident ; a volunteer asks Ed to donate blood at a department store and seconds later he sees violent images , including a video of the 1993 Waco siege burning , flash across a sales display of TV sets , followed by a message to get a gun from the sporting goods department .

Late at night , while investigating an orchard , Mulder is sprayed by a crop @-@ dusting helicopter and ends up in the hospital . There , Mulder sees the message " Do It Now " on a TV and realizes that when people are exposed to the pesticide , which contains a chemical called LSDM designed to provoke fear in insects , they see these subliminal messages , and their phobias are exacerbated enough to cause them to kill . Eventually , after being confronted , the city councilman agrees to stop the spraying and blood test the community under the guise of a cholesterol study . Mulder and Scully , reading that Funsch has not been tested yet , arrive at his house to find it strewn with smashed electronic devices . Mulder deduces that blood is Ed 's phobia and that he has seen the

subliminal messages , and an empty rifle case signals that Funsch is going to act on his paranoia . Funsch positions himself at the top of a clock tower overlooking a blood drive and begins shooting randomly . Mulder climbs up to Funsch and overpowers him ; Funsch is taken away on a stretcher . Mulder makes a call to Scully and sees the message " All done . Bye Bye " on his cell phone display . Scully calls out to Mulder but he is speechless .

= = Production = =

The genesis for " Blood " was Glen Morgan 's own hematophobia , combined with the controversy over malathion spraying in Southern California and a note between writers Morgan and Wong that simply read " Postal Workers " . In addition , series creator Chris Carter had been wanting an episode of The X @-@ Files to feature a story revolving around digital readouts . Morgan and Wong decided to use the digital readout idea , crafting a script that turned " regular things , " like fax machines and cell phones , into something " scary . " The 1966 shooting massacre at the University of Texas was the inspiration for the story 's climax , which was only partially filmed at the University of British Columbia because firearms were not allowed on location at the actual university . A replica of its clock tower 's interior was used for several key scenes . This episode marks the first time that Darin Morgan , Glen 's brother , helped with a script of The X @-@ Files with a " story by " credit . Darin was asked to help flesh out the episode 's story . He would later contribute to the second season episode " Humbug " .

The episode marks the second appearance of The Lone Gunmen , a trio of conspiracy theorists consisting of John Fitzgerald Byers (Bruce Harwood) , Richard Langly (Dean Haglund) and Melvin Frohike (Tom Braidwood) . The characters first appeared in the first season episode " E.B.E. " to make Mulder appear more credible . Initially only intended to appear in that episode , they were brought back as recurring characters starting with " Blood " due to their popularity on the Internet . The episode also has a guest appearance by pornographic actress Ashlyn Gere . Gere plays Bonnie McRoberts , the woman driven to attack Mulder after seeing a subliminal message on her microwave . Glen Morgan joked that The X @-@ Files was so cutting edge that they used an adult film star who was still working in the industry ? an allusion to an NYPD Blue episode that guest starred retired adult film actress Ginger Lynn .

= = Reception = =

" Blood " premiered on the Fox network on September 30 , 1994 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on September 11 , 1995 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 9 @.@ 1 , with a 16 share , meaning that roughly 9 @.@ 1 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 16 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 8 @.@ 7 million households .

The episode received positive reviews from critics . Entertainment Weekly gave the episode a B + , considering that despite the " convoluted plot " the episode " pays off in white @-@ knuckle tension . " Reviewer Zack Handlen of The A.V. Club labeled the episode as a " good " stand @-@ alone story . He described it as " a memorable episode , due in no small part to its humor " , praising the " simultaneously absurd and frightening " story with scenes that make the viewer " snicker even as you shudder " . In addition , Handlen praised William Sanderson 's performance , as well as the ending , calling it " the punchline [...] of Mulder 's deepest fears , a group [The Syndicate] so secret that you never be sure they exist at all " . Starpulse named the episode the tenth best of the series , defining it as " very creepy " and what turned The X @-@ Files " from a mere creepfest to a show that offered real psychological thrills " . 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 . The two wrote positively of the episode 's flourishes , noting " minute by minute , there is tons to enjoy . " However , Shearman and Pearson argue that the premise is " disjointed and not a little frustrating " due to the lack of overall coherence and narrative .

