

= First Person Shooter ( The X @-@ Files ) =

" First Person Shooter " is the thirteenth episode of the seventh season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network in the United States on February 27 , 2000 . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " First Person Shooter " earned a Nielsen household rating of 9 @.@ 3 , being watched by 15 @.@ 31 million people in its initial broadcast . The episode received mostly negative reviews from critics .

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 , The Lone Gunmen summon Mulder and Scully to the headquarters of a video game design company after a new virtual reality game , which the Gunmen helped design , is taken over by a bizarre female computer character whose power is much more than virtual .

" First Person Shooter " was written by noted authors William Gibson and Tom Maddox , and directed by series creator Chris Carter . In addition , the episode serves as the spiritual successor to Gibson and Maddox 's earlier episode " Kill Switch . " Gibson was motivated to write the episode after the success of " Kill Switch . " The episode featured several elaborate special effects sequences that nearly put the episode over budget .

= = Plot = =

The episode opens with three men , fitted with futuristic combat gear and automatic weapons , entering the virtual reality game First Person Shooter . In a control room , Ivan and Phoebe , the game 's programmers , are monitoring the players ' vital signs . Only one of the players makes it to the second level of the violent game , where he encounters a female character in a fetishistic leather outfit . She introduces herself as Maitreya , stating , " This is my game " . She then kills the player with a flintlock pistol .

Fox Mulder ( David Duchovny ) and Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) visit the headquarters of First Person Shooters 's developers in Inland Empire , California , where they meet the Lone Gunmen , who work as consultants for the game . They look at the body of the player , which clearly displays a gunshot wound . Ivan claims there is no way a real gun could have been brought into the highly @-@ secured building . The agents are shown a video from the game , featuring the female character who killed the player . Mulder takes the printout of the character and shows it to a detective , as he believes she is the killer .

Daryl Musashi , a famous computer hacker , arrives at the building and enters the game to kill Maitreya . However , the character cuts off Musashi 's head and hands with a large medieval sword . Mulder receives a call from the Sheriff 's Department that a woman similar to the one in the printout has been picked up . The woman , a stripper named Jade Blue Afterglow , tells the agents that she was paid by a medical imaging facility in Culver City , California to scan her body .

Mulder and Scully find out that the Lone Gunmen have become trapped inside First Person Shooter , with somebody trying to kill them . Mulder enters the game , where he sees Maitreya and follows her . In the real world , Phoebe tearfully admits to Scully that the female warrior was created by her as a sort of personal estrogenic outlet in a testosterone @-@ fuelled environment . Maitreya was to be contained within Phoebe 's personal separate project , but the character found her way into the First Person Shooter program .

Scully decides to join Mulder in the game , and the two fight Maitreya together . Maitreya begins to duplicate herself , making the task of killing her more difficult . Finally , Maitreya sits atop a virtual tank and aims it at the agents . Phoebe admits there is one way to stop the game , but doing so will erase the entire program . Despite protests from Ivan , Phoebe gives Byers the kill command , effectively destroying Maitreya along with the game while saving Mulder and Scully . During Mulder 's narration , we see that in the control room one of the monitors is still active . There , Ivan sees Maitreya 's avatar , but with Scully 's face .

= = Production = =

= = = Background and writing = = =

The episode is notable for being written by William Gibson , together with fellow science fiction novelist and long @-@ time friend Tom Maddox . " First Person Shooter " was the second episode written by the authors , after the success of the fifth season episode " Kill Switch " , which first aired on February 15 , 1998 and subsequently made frequent appearances in reruns , encouraging Gibson to continue working in television . According to executive producer Frank Spotnitz , the writing process for " First Person Shooter " was slow . Initially , Gibson and Maddox presented the first two acts of their idea , which was tweaked by series creator Chris Carter and Spotnitz in order to make it feel more like an X @-@ File . After the rewriting process , the writers then returned with the subsequent acts . Gibson and Maddox were fans of The Lone Gunmen and purposely wrote them into the episode .

= = = Filming and casting = = =

The concepts behind the episode were difficult to transfer from script to film . Spotnitz later explained that , " William Gibson and Tom Maddox always get us into trouble . They always come up with these great ideas that are always hard to execute . " In addition , budgetary challenges faced the production of " First Person Shooter . " Due to all the special effects needed for the episode , the episode nearly drastically went over budget . In order to not over @-@ spend , the production crew was lent various virtual game layouts from video game companies . Not wishing to simply " copy existing designs , " production designer Corey Kaplan and his design team created " some pretty pictures " to differentiate the crews ' design from the video game companies ' . Much of the opening action was filmed at a Rykoff food distribution company in Los Angeles . At the time , the company 's owner was the uncle of X @-@ Files producer Paul Rabwin . In addition , a warehouse in downtown Los Angeles filled in for the backdrop of the opening scene .

Carter later noted that the hardest part of " First Person Shooter " was casting a suitable actress for the part of Maitreya . Casting director Rick Millikan looked into every possible avenue ? including strippers , porn stars , and erotic thriller / direct @-@ to @-@ video actresses ? before settling upon Krista Allen for the role . Initially , there was a " wholesome quality " that bothered Carter , but as the episode was being filmed , both Carter and Millikan recognized that Allen was right for the part . In addition to the part of Maitreya , several stuntmen were needed for the episode , including doubles for Mulder and Maitreya for their martial art fight scene . Experienced gymnast Dana Heath was hired for several scenes that required Maitreya to execute a series of handstands . Fourteen stuntmen were needed to ride Kawasaki 600s and fire gas @-@ powered machine @-@ guns .

= = = Action and effects = = =

The tank scene was created completely using CGI . The only actual footage from the scene was the background . A computer @-@ generated tank , along with women , were designed on a computer . Then , special effects shots of smoke and explosions were layered on top of the vehicle to give it a more life @-@ like appearance . Bruce Harwood , who portrayed Byers , noted that the action sequences in the episode were a challenge . He explained , " It 's pretty difficult on a set when the stuntmen come up to you and go , ' Don 't worry , you 'll be safe , Nothing to worry about . Okay . Everyone put their safety glasses on . ' "

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" First Person Shooter " first aired in the United States on February 27 , 2000 . This episode earned

a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 3 , with a 13 share , meaning that roughly 9 @. @ 3 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 13 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 15 @. @ 31 million viewers . The episode aired in the United Kingdom and Ireland on Sky1 on June 11 , 2000 and received 0 @. @ 67 million viewers , making it the third most watched episode that week . Fox promoted the episode with the tagline " Tonight , Mulder and Scully must track down a video game killer whose killing spree is real . "

Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club awarded the episode a " D ? " and largely panned it , calling it " legendarily bad " . He likened the overall experience of watching ? First Person Shooter ? to " feeling as if the show is slowly but surely letting the air out of its own tires . " He was , however , moderately pleased with the performances of Duchovny and Anderson , writing that they both were " really trying " . Kenneth Silber from Space.com criticized the lack of emotion in the episode , writing , " ' First Person Shooter ' achieves considerable mayhem but remarkably little drama . There seems little reason to care what happens to any of the characters , whether virtual or real , regulars or guests . Even as a man 's hands are cut into bloody stumps , one never gets the sense that anything important is going on . "

Rich Rosell from Digitally Obsessed awarded the episode 2 @. @ 5 out of 5 stars and wrote that " this Chris Carter @-@ directed ep [ sic ] oddly enough doesn 't center on the series mythology arc , but instead opts for a stab at the tired ol ' virtual reality genre . [ ... ] The only saving grace here is the appearance of hip conspiracy buffs The Lone Gunmen , who always brighten up any episode they appeared in . " Cyriaque Lamar from i09 called Maitreya one of " The 10 Most Ridiculous X @-@ Files Monsters " . Lamar derided the plot , calling it " Scully And Mulder Do Doom " , and expressed disappointment that the episode was written by William Gibson . 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 . Regardless of the negative press , " First Person Shooter " became one of Gillian Anderson 's favorite episodes , despite " its reliance on big guns and raging testosterone . " Anderson explained that she enjoyed the opportunity " to show Scully wearing heavy metal and firing oversized weapons . "

Although " First Person Shooter " was not as well @-@ received as the first episode written by William Gibson and Tom Maddox , " Kill Switch " , the episode later won Emmy Awards for Outstanding Sound Mixing for a Drama Series and Outstanding Visual Effects for a Series , and received a nomination for Outstanding Sound Editing for a Series .