

= Per Manum =

" Per Manum " is the thirteenth episode of the eighth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on February 18 , 2001 . Written by Frank Spotnitz and series creator Chris Carter , and directed by Kim Manners , the episode helps to explore the series ' overarching mythology . " Per Manum " received a Nielsen rating of 9 @. @ 4 and was watched by 9 @. @ 61 million households . Overall , the episode received mostly positive reviews from critics .

The series centers on FBI special agents Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and her new partner John Doggett (Robert Patrick) ? following the alien abduction of her former partner , Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) ? who work on cases linked to the paranormal , called X @-@ Files . In this episode , Scully and Doggett investigate several women who had no way of naturally conceiving but who claim to have been abducted and impregnated with alien babies . Soon , Scully begins to worry about the future of her pregnancy .

" Per Manum " featured a substantial appearance by Duchovny who had elected not to return to the show as a full @-@ time main character following the ending of season seven . In addition , the episode marks the first appearance of Knowle Rohrer , played by Adam Baldwin .

= = Plot = =

Pregnant Kathy McCready is undergoing an emergency caesarian . As her husband prepares , the ward is locked down , and the child delivered is seen to be an alien .

FBI special agents John Doggett (Robert Patrick) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) meet Duffy Haskell (Jay Acovone) , who tells them about his wife ? a multiple @-@ abductee who he believes was killed by her doctors upon giving birth to an alien child . He also describes how his wife 's cancer was both caused and cured by her abductors . Duffy refers the agents to Zeus Genetics in Maryland , and shows them an ultrasound scan that seems to vindicate his story . As the agents leave , Doggett notes similarities between the case and Scully 's history , although he does not yet know that Scully is pregnant . In a flashback , Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) tells Scully that her abduction (in the second season episodes " Ascension and " One Breath ") has rendered her infertile , as her ova were harvested for genetic experiments . Mulder later found them in a secret facility (in fourth season 's " Memento Mori ") , but they were not viable .

Scully investigates a Zeus Genetics clinic , overhearing a pregnant woman , Mary Hendershot (Saxon Trainor) , telling her doctor that she does not want to be under his care any more . Scully hides in a storeroom , finding it full of preserved fetuses that resemble the alien child seen earlier . In another flashback Scully seeks a second opinion about her ova from her doctor , Dr. Parenti , and is told that her ova might be viable with a sperm donor .

In the present , Scully phones Parenti , who is dissecting an alien fetus . She asks him to compare her ultrasound scan with the one given to her earlier . When she visits later , she is assured her scans are in order , but she sees Parenti speaking with Dr. Lev , the doctor she overheard at Zeus Genetics . Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) and Doggett confront Duffy about threatening letters he has been sending to both Mulder and Dr. Lev . However , when the agents leave , Duffy makes a phone call to Lev , warning him that they are being investigated . Back in the past , Scully asks Mulder to be the donor and he accepts .

Scully is warned by Hendershot , the woman from Zeus Genetics , that their unborn children are in danger . Scully meets Doggett and Skinner , having requested a leave of absence from the FBI . After Doggett leaves , Skinner tries to convince Scully to reveal her pregnancy to Doggett . Scully and Hendershot visit an army research hospital to have Hendershot 's labor induced . Whilst Hendershot is being prepped for the operation , Scully asks to have an ultrasound performed on herself . The scan appears normal , but Scully realises the monitor they are watching is simply a video of another woman 's scan . Realising they have been tricked , Scully finds Hendershot and the two sneak out of the exam room .

Doggett has Duffy 's fingerprints examined , and finds that they belong to a man who died thirty

years previously . Doggett contacts an old military partner , Knowle Rohrer (Adam Baldwin) to find Duffy 's real identity . Although Rohrer assures Doggett he will investigate , the agent is not convinced , believing that Duffy is a CIA agent . He confides this to Skinner , who tells him to aid Scully at the military hospital . As Scully and Hendershot sneak out of the building , they are found by Rohrer and several marines , claiming Doggett has sent them to rescue her . Scully and Hendershot are driven away , but Hendershot enters labour . The women are separated , and Scully is drugged . When she awakens , Doggett informs her that Hendershot 's baby was delivered and is normal . However , Scully is convinced something is amiss , but nothing more can be done about it . In another flashback , Scully tells Mulder that her attempt at in vitro fertilization has failed , but he tells her to " never give up on a miracle " .

= = Production = =

" Per Manum " featured the appearance of David Duchovny as Fox Mulder in various flashbacks . After settling his contract dispute with Fox , Duchovny quit full @-@ time participation in the show after the seventh season . In order to explain Mulder 's absence , Duchovny 's character was abducted by aliens in the seventh season finale , " Requiem " . After several rounds of contractual discussions , Duchovny agreed to return for a total of 11 season eight episodes . " Per Manum " marked the fourth appearance of Duchovny in the eighth season ; he had previously appeared in opening episodes of the season , " Within " and " Without " as well as the eleventh episode " The Gift " . Series creator Chris Carter later argued that Mulder 's absences from the series did not affect the characterization , noting that " there are characters who can be powerful as absent centers , as Mulder was through the eighth and ninth seasons . "

A deleted scene from early on within the episode , in which Scully questions her doctor about her ultrasound scans , was cut from the final broadcast as writer Frank Spotnitz felt it was too " confusing " for the viewers to place doubt on the actions of the doctor so early . Fellow series writer John Shiban said that the scene was not " subtle " enough to convey the right level of suspicion . Spotnitz has described " Per Manum " as being " a real paranoia episode " , concerning " the way you perceive connections between people , what are they saying , and is it suspicious or not " .

Adam Baldwin , who makes his first appearance as recurring character Knowle Rohrer , originally auditioned for the part of John Doggett , losing out to Robert Patrick . However , the crew remembered Baldwin 's audition later when casting " Per Manum " , and asked him to play the role . Jay Acovone , who portrays Duffy Haskel in this episode , returned in the same role in the season 's penultimate episode " Essence " ; and had also previously appeared in the fourth season episode " Demons " . " Per Manum " also featured a guest appearance by Mark Snow as an unnamed doctor . Snow had been the series ' composer since the first season .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Per Manum " premiered on the Fox network on February 18 , 2001 and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on June 9 , 2002 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 9 @. @ 4 , meaning that it was seen by 9 @. @ 4 % of the nation 's estimated households . It was viewed by 9 @. @ 61 million households and 16 million viewers , making it , at the time , the highest @-@ rated episode of The X @-@ Files to air during the season . " Per Manum " ranked as the 30th most @-@ watched episode for the week ending February 18 . Fox promoted the episode with the tagline " How did Scully get pregnant ? " The episode 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 .

" Per Manum " received mostly positive reviews from critics . Todd VanDerWerff of The A. V. Club awarded the episode a " B + " and called it " good " . He appreciated the fact that the show revealed that Mulder was possibly the father of Scully 's child , saying that it " ups the stakes in a lot of ways and redefines [Scully 's] mission " to find Mulder . Despite this , VanDerWerff noted that the episode " has some issues " , largely due to the convoluted nature of the mythology at this point in

the show 's run , as well as the fact that Duchovny looked " a little bored " at times . However , he wrote that the episode , along with the subsequent episode " This is Not Happening " was a showcase for Anderson 's acting ability , and her performance " knits all of this together " . Writing for Television Without Pity , Jessica Morgan rated the episode a " B + " , deriding some of the episode 's plot points , such as the hospital 's locking doors , and questioning the villainy of the antagonistic doctors .

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 , calling it a " return to form " for the series . Shearman and Pearson also felt that the episode gave the character of John Doggett a chance to be accepted by the series ' other characters ; and praised the " subtle " writing of the episode 's emotional dialogue . Tom Kessenich , in his book *Examinations : An Unauthorized Look at Seasons 6 @-@ 9 of ' The X @-@ Files '* , noted that the episode typifies the basic themes of the series ? " dark , foreboding terror , overriding sense of paranoia " and " the fear of the unknown " among others .

Writing for *The Vindicator* , Eric Mink felt that the episode was " intense , unsettling , sometimes gross , and suspenseful to the point of nerve @-@ racking [sic] " , feeling that its plot would " resonate instantly and ominously with viewers " . Meghan Deans of *Tor.com* felt that , while the episode did unfortunately reduce Scully down to a traditional idea of feminine identity for part of its run , it was " one of the most emotional Scully @-@ centric episodes the show has ever given us . " Furthermore , Deans reasoned that the episode was an example of " what The X @-@ Files would have been , had Scully been the believer : a woman being told that she is hysterical , a woman being told that she imagined it all [and] a woman being told that the evidence of her own body is invalid " , a direction that would have been " startling " .

Not all reviews were positive . Paula Vitaris from *Cinefantastique* gave the episode a scathing review and awarded it no stars out of four . She heavily derided the plot , noting that Haskell 's role as an " undercover operative " was not convincing . Furthermore , she reasoned that because the plot twists were so expected , Scully came off as " a moron " . Vitaris also criticized the use of flashbacks , noting that they were " the only way The X @-@ Files writers could figure out to use David Duchovny " .