

= Dreamland (The X @-@ Files) =

" Dreamland " is the collective name for the fourth and fifth episodes of the sixth season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . Part one first aired on November 29 , and part two aired on December 6 , 1998 on Fox in the United States and Canada . The episode was written by Vince Gilligan , John Shiban , and Frank Spotnitz , and directed by Kim Manners (" Dreamland ") and Michael Watkins (" Dreamland II ") . Although dealing with a member of the Men in Black , the episode is largely unconnected to the mythology of The X @-@ Files , and is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story . Part one of " Dreamland " earned a Nielsen household rating of 10 @. @ 1 , being watched by 17 @. @ 48 million people in its initial broadcast ; Part two received a rating of 10 and was watched by 17 @. @ 01 million people . The episode received mostly mixed reviews from critics , with many reviews critical of the episode 's reliance on humor .

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 the episode , Mulder and Scully visit Area 51 . But when the agents witness the flight of a mysterious craft , Mulder and a member of the Men in Black switch bodies , unbeknownst to the others . In part two , Scully begins to suspect that her partner 's strange behavior is more than it appears to be , while Mulder fights to return his life to normal before it is too late .

" Dreamland " became the first non @-@ mythology story to be spread across two episodes . Originally , the writers for the episode contacted Garry Shandling to play the part of Fletcher but he was unavailable for filming . Michael McKean was then cast in his place . The episode is notable for a scene featuring Mulder @-@ as @-@ Fletcher encountering his reflection and proceeding to do the dance from the 1933 Marx Brothers comedy film Duck Soup . The scene required Duchovny and McKean to synchronize their movements perfectly . Dreamland is one of the names used for the Area 51 facility .

= = Plot = =

= = = Part one = = =

Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) visit the Area 51 installation in Nevada after receiving a tip from an inside source concerning alien spacecraft . As they drive on the highway , the agents are surrounded by Jeeps carrying soldiers led by a Man in Black named Morris Fletcher (Michael McKean) . A rumbling noise is heard as a mysterious craft flies overhead and a bright light from the object passes over them . Mulder and Fletcher find that their minds have been swapped into each other 's bodies , but nobody else present is aware of this . Fletcher and Scully depart , watched by the soldiers .

Mulder is driven back to Area 51 along with two other Men in Black , Howard Grodin and Jeff Smoodge . After an angry telephone call from Fletcher 's wife , Joanne , Mulder 's still inside Fletcher 's body ' goes to Fletcher 's home . Instead of sleeping in the bedroom , he decides to sleep downstairs in an easy chair and watch pornography . When he is awoken by Joanne , he mumbles Scully 's name . While changing his clothes , Mulder receives a telephone call from Smoodge , who explains that the military has surveyed the wreckage of the craft from the night before , finding one of the human pilots merged into a rock but still alive . Another soldier , Captain Robert McDonough , had switched bodies with an elderly Hopi woman , as evident from McDonough 's aberrant behavior ,

Mulder telephones Scully and tries to explain that he 's the real Mulder . Scully does not believe him and asks Fletcher 's in Mulder 's body ' to pick up and listen to the conversation . Fletcher decides they should immediately report this incident , which further confuses Scully . She goes to Mulder 's apartment (where Fletcher is having a tryst with Kersh 's assistant) and tells Fletcher that they traced the telephone call to a pay phone near Area 51 and she suspects it is Mulder 's informant .

Fletcher is indifferent to this news and Scully yells at him , sensing that his behavior is very strange and his lack of concern for the X @-@ Files is completely out of character . Scully decides to investigate , and drives through the desert towards Area 51 . She stops at a burned out gas station and finds a penny and a dime merged . Later , when Scully arrives at Fletcher 's house , Mulder tries desperately to convince Scully that he is really Mulder . Scully remains skeptical and thinks that any information Mulder describes could be obtained in other ways . Mulder tells Scully that he will bring proof of the defect of the UFO and the resultant problems that night , but Fletcher , having eavesdropped on the conversation , calls his old office posing as Mulder to inform them of the source of the leak ? Mulder posing as Fletcher . Military police arrive at the appointed hour , and Mulder is dragged away , kicking and screaming , desperately trying to convince Scully . Mulder asks if he would turn in an informant to the authorities in this manner as he is carried away , and Scully begins to realize that Mulder may be telling the truth .

= = = Part two = = =

As Mulder ? in Fletcher 's body ? is dragged away by the soldiers , Scully begins to question whether what Mulder told her about the body @-@ swap was true . Fletcher ? in Mulder 's body ? approaches Scully and apologizes for telling Kersh and she feigns acceptance of it . After being reprimanded , Fletcher arranges a dinner date with Scully at Mulder 's apartment . Meanwhile , Mulder is confined in a cell next to the mind @-@ switched Lana Chee . Military police arrive and take Mulder to a meeting with General Wegman , Grodin and Smoodge . They believe that Mulder @-@ as @-@ Fletcher was trying to defraud the FBI , not help them . Mulder bluffs his way through the meeting , and claims that the real proof is safe and that he did not tell them about the scheme because he did not know if he could trust his colleagues , thinking any one of them could be the source of the leak . Mulder returns to Fletcher 's house and tells Joanne Fletcher that he is Agent Fox Mulder , but Joanne thinks her husband must be undergoing a mid @-@ life crisis .

At Mulder 's apartment , Scully announces that because of Mulder 's odd behavior , she realized Mulder 's body contains Morris Fletcher . Scully demands to know how to restore Mulder to his own body . Mulder 's informant calls again and Scully forces Fletcher to take the call and set up a meeting . Mulder , Joanne , Fletcher and Scully arrive at a bar in Rachel , Nevada , where Mulder 's informant is revealed to be General Wegman . Wegman admits that he sabotaged the UFO , but maintains that he only tried to merely disable the stealth module so that Mulder could see it . Wegman gives Fletcher , who he thinks is Mulder , the proof of the encounter , a flight data recorder in a paper bag . Meanwhile , Mulder leaves and talks to Scully in the car . Later , Mulder and Fletcher meet in the bar 's bathroom and argue about the flight data recorder . As they argue , General Wegman enters the bathroom and discovers the two . Mulder meets with General Wegman to discuss the UFO . Wegman believes that now that Fletcher knows Wegman 's identity , when restored to his own body , Fletcher will turn him in . Wegman explains that he hoped that Mulder could explain whether aliens actually exist ; apparently the craft are simply given to the military without knowing where they are from or how they work .

After the fiasco at the bar , Mulder and Scully meet . She sadly tells Mulder that she does not think he and Fletcher can be returned to their own bodies . However , soon after that , the warp caused by the alien craft begins to snap back and repair the natural order of the universe . Grodin , realizing that everything will be fixed naturally , gathers up Lana Chee and the pilot . Scully and Fletcher arrive at Fletcher ? s home , and see Mulder standing by the moving truck . The shrill Joanne Fletcher berates Mulder about Scully but he insists that he and Fletcher have swapped bodies . Fletcher goes to help Joanne move a chair and confesses that Mulder is telling the truth . He tells her enough of their past to convince her he is Morris Fletcher . Jeff Smoodge and a group of troops appear at Fletcher 's home and detain Mulder , Fletcher , Scully and the flight data recorder in their car . Grodin explains that he is restoring everything and that he reversed the body @-@ swap between the pilot and the old Hopi woman . The warp passes over them and the past few days are rewritten . Mulder and Fletcher are restored to their own bodies and returned to the moment when Fletcher ? s troops pulled them over on the highway . This time no ship passes overhead and

Mulder and Scully leave uneventfully . After Mulder and Scully leave the highway near area 51 , Scully calls from FBI headquarters to tell Mulder that they have escaped reprimand from Director Kersh for going to Nevada . Scully opens her desk drawer to place a file inside and finds the penny and dime that were fused together from the event at the gas station in her desk drawer indicating that while some things have reversed themselves , not everything has . Mulder enters his apartment and finds that Morris Fletcher has completely reorganized and cleaned his apartment and both Mulder and Scully are left to puzzle over their recollection of events .

= = Production = =

= = = Casting = = =

When the episode was being cast , Michael McKean was not slated to play Morris Fletcher . Originally , the writers for the episode contacted Garry Shandling to play the part of Fletcher . Shandling , who was good friends with David Duchovny , was unavailable because he was filming a movie called Town and Country . Shandling would later appear in the seventh season episode " Hollywood A.D. " playing himself . In the meantime , the production staff began looking for a replacement . Rick Millikan , the casting director for The X @-@ Files , stated that they went through " lists and lists " of potential actors . Vince Gilligan noted , however , that McKean was at the top of the list for inclusion . McKean was very happy to play the part , although he did specifically ask the writers not to kill off his character .

Julia Vera was cast in the role of Lana Chee , the Hopi woman whose mind was switched with a young air force pilot . In order to age her , Vera wore special make @-@ up and facial appliances . Special contact lenses were also crafted to give her eyes a clouded look . It took five takes for her to flick her cigarette butt into Mulder 's lap because the lenses obstructed her vision .

= = = Filming = = =

In order to simulate the desert environment of Area 51 , production was temporarily relocated to " Club Ed " , a movie ranch located on the outskirts of Lancaster , California . Club Ed was two hours drive and almost 100 miles away from the Fox Studios , so most of the cast and crew camped out in motels in the desert . Because Club Ed was outside the 30 @-@ mile zone around Los Angeles , overtime , meal allowances , and per diem expenses had to be added to the budget . In the middle of filming , Duchovny was reported as saying , " When is this show moving back to Los Angeles ? " Within days , T @-@ shirts were made for the crew that featured exactly the same question .

Many of the locations in the episode were created from scratch , either through conventional means or through computer technology . The gas station , which could not be rented , was created by building a store on the side of the road on the outskirts of Lancaster and fitting it with gas pumps from a station that had recently gone out of business . The store was then loaded with merchandise obtained from restaurant supply houses and cooperative food manufactures . The last scene filmed was of the station exploding . After filming ceased , the station was demolished and the road returned to its previous state . Duke Tomasick , The X @-@ Files construction coordinator , later said that , " it was if the whole thing never even existed " . Area 51 , the government airplanes , and the alien craft were constructed by visual effects producer Bill Millar on a Macintosh computer . Originally , the time warp effect resembled a " blue sheet " , according to producer John Shiban , sans the blurring effect visible in the finished episode . Eventually , the production crew felt that the sheet effect was not effective , and so the footage was blurred in order to create a " molecular transferal " effect .

Several of the locations either were real , or were filmed with the use of stand @-@ ins . The gate for the Area 51 set was filmed at a fence on the San Bernardino county line , one hundred and twenty miles away from Los Angeles . The restaurant that the characters visit , the Little A 'Le 'Inn , is an actual cafe off Highway 375 in Rachel , Nevada . The inside , however , was an elaborate set ,

as the original is much too small .

== Choreography ==

The scene where Mulder @-@ as @-@ Fletcher encounters his reflection and proceeds to dance is an homage to the 1933 Marx Brothers comedy film Duck Soup . Originally , during production meetings , the staff of The X @-@ Files decided to create the scene by using digital technology , although this method would raise the budget significantly . Duchovny and McKean , however , volunteered to shoot the film the " old fashioned way " by choreographing their moves so that they would be in @-@ synch . Duchovny and McKean each watched Duck Soup and then practiced for a week and a half in order to perfect the scene . When the scene was filmed , a metronome was present so that the two actors could keep time with each other . This was then erased from the mix during post @-@ production . In addition , the set was actually two bedrooms , both mirror images of each other . The only part that featured any CGI was when Mulder blows on the mirror , producing fog . According to director Kim Manners , Duchovny and McKean filmed the shot that was used on the twelfth take .

== Reception ==

== Ratings ==

" Dreamland " first aired in the United States on November 29 , and " Dreamland II " aired on December 6 , 1998 . The first part of the episode earned a Nielsen rating of 10 @. @ 1 , with a 15 share , meaning that roughly 10 @. @ 1 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 15 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 17 @. @ 48 million people . The second part received a 10 rating , with a 15 share . It was subsequently viewed by 17 @. @ 01 million people . The first part aired in the United Kingdom and Ireland on Sky1 on March 28 , 1999 and the second part aired on April 4 ; part one received 0 @. @ 73 million viewers and was the fourth most watched episode that week , and part two later received 0 @. @ 88 million viewers and was the second most watched episode that week , after an episode of Friends . Fox promoted the first part of the episode with the tagline " what if you could discover the truth by living inside another man 's body ? " They promoted the second part of the episode with the line " Can he get back ? "

== Reviews ==

The episode received mostly mixed reviews from critics , with many commenting on the episode 's reliance on humor . In a review of part one , a critic from the Knight Ridder wrote , " As disorienting as this body transfer had to be for Mulder , the experience provided amusing television . And that seems to be a problem for some X @-@ Files fans . Knowing that the human population 's survival is imperiled by the colonization plans of a fierce extraterrestrial race , a large number of X @-@ Philes want the show to focus on our heroes ' efforts to come to the rescue " . The newspaper 's review of Part 2 was much more negative , with the article saying " by the end of the latest X @-@ Files episode , we were wishing we could push a reset button on Dreamland II , just to forget some of the silly stuff that transpired in this show " . 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 two stars out of five and noted that the episode lacked " structure and point " . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave both episodes mixed reviews , awarding the first part two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of four , and the second part two stars . Vitaris was unhappy with the amount of comedy used in the episode , noting that once Mulder visited Fletcher 's house , " the comedy turns sour " : she argued that the members of Fletcher 's family were examples of caricatures . Despite this , she praised the scene featuring the murder of the gas station attendant ,

claiming that " for a moment , this episode really clicks " . Vitaris , in her review for part two , called the episode " purely illogical " , although she noted it did feature " minor fun " , pointing out the scene wherein Scully catches Fletcher by handcuffing him .

Not all reviews were completely negative . Zack Handlen from The A.V. Club wrote positively of the first part of the episode 's humor and awarded it a B + . Handlen noted that " the context of seeing actors in the wrong places " is " what ? s funny about the episode " . However , he did slightly criticize the episode 's padding ? specifically Nora Dunn 's role as Fletcher 's wife and the Duck Soup mirror gag ? but argued that " for every bit that doesn ? t play in the episode , there are three that do . " Todd VanDerWerff , also from The A.V. Club , gave the second half of the episode a B ? and wrote , " I have basically nothing to add to what Zack said about the first ' Dreamland ' last week . ' Dreamland II ' is a fairly unnecessary hour of television , and there ? s no reason this logy two @-@ parter couldn ? t have become a much tighter one @-@ hour episode . " Tom Kessenich , in his book Examination : An Unauthorized Look at Seasons 6 ? 9 of the X @-@ Files wrote that " my final judgement on ' Dreamland ' [part one] is that I enjoyed the entertainment value it presented . It was fun and I 'm not one to begrudge a little romp now and then . " Kessenich , however , did note that the second part " felt strung out " . Den of Geek writer Juliette Harrison , however , saw the episode in a more positive light and said , " Season six included some more excellent episodes only peripherally related to the main story arc , [such as] Dreamland parts one and two " . Kerry Fall from DVD Journal wrote positively of the episodes and described them , together as " one of the best episodes in years " . Gareth Wigmore of TV Zone gave the first part of the episode an 8 out of 10 rating and highlighted the " strong story @-@ telling , clever dialogue , and good acting " . Earl Cressey from DVD Talk concluded that both " Dreamland " parts one and two were among the " highlights of season six " . Topless Robot named " Dreamland " the fourth funniest episode of the series .