

= Drive (The X @-@ Files) =

" Drive " is the second episode of the sixth season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network in the United States on November 15 , 1998 . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Drive " earned a Nielsen household rating of 11 @.@ 0 , being watched by 18 @.@ 5 million people in its initial broadcast . The episode received largely positive reviews from television 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 the episode , Mulder is trapped in a car by a seemingly deranged man , and Scully races to determine if the man is suffering from a deadly illness ? and if Mulder is in danger of becoming the next victim of some sort of government conspiracy .

The episode was written by Vince Gilligan , directed by Rob Bowman , and featured a guest appearance by Bryan Cranston . Gilligan cast Cranston to play the antagonist because he felt he could successfully humanize the role . Cranston 's success in " Drive " later led to his casting as Walter White in Gilligan 's AMC series Breaking Bad .

= = Plot = =

Via a live news report , a high @-@ speed car chase comes to an end in the Nevada desert . Assuming it to be a kidnapping , the female passenger is pulled from the vehicle and placed into the protective custody of a police vehicle . The driver , Patrick Crump (Bryan Cranston) , is pushed to the asphalt and handcuffed . The woman in the police car begins violently banging her head against the car window . As the news chopper catches all of this on film , the woman 's head explodes , sending a spray of blood across the window .

Mulder and Scully get wind of this bizarre car chase as they 're doing work in Buhl , Idaho investigating possible domestic terrorism . Mulder coerces Scully into taking a detour to Elko , Nevada on a hunch that this may be an X @-@ File . Crump , who has started to develop symptoms of a sickness , is put in an ambulance . Mulder , wishing to speak to Crump , follows the ambulance , and ends up being kidnapped by Crump , who has escaped from the police .

Mulder realizes that Crump is in a considerable amount of pain and that the only way to ease the pain is to drive west . At first , Scully believes that Crump is suffering from some sort of biological contagion , but after investigating the Crumps ' home , she discovers a U.S. Navy antenna array emitting ELF waves stretches beneath their property . Scully deduces that an abnormal surge in these waves somehow caused a rising pressure in the inner ear of the nearby inhabitants . Westward motion and an increase in speed seems to be the only thing to help ease the pain of the increasing pressure .

Initially , Crump , thinking that Mulder is in on some sort of government conspiracy , forces Mulder to drive by brandishing a gun . He further infuriates Mulder by calling him antisemitic slurs . Eventually , Mulder and Crump make amends and attempt to work out a solution before it is too late . Mulder explains to Crump that Scully will meet them at the Pacific Coast , the end of the highway . There she will insert a needle into Crump 's inner ear , hopefully relieving the pressure . Unfortunately , when Scully arrives , it is too late and the pressure in Crump 's ear has already exploded , killing him .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception , writing , and filming = = =

The idea for the episode can be traced back to an early idea Vince Gilligan , the writer of the

episode , had . His original idea featured a man holding an individual hostage on a Tilt @-@ A @-@ Whirl . Gilligan pitched this idea at several meetings and it soon became a recurring joke . Most of the comments Gilligan received noted that his premise lacked an explicit mystery to investigate and so Gilligan decided that after the ride was shut off , the man 's head would explode . Researching various government experiments , Gilligan discovered the controversial use of low @-@ frequency waves . The secret military experiment featured in this episode is based on two real @-@ life military experiments , Project HAARP and Project ELF . The former is a U.S. Army experiment dealing with electromagnetic radiation in the Earth 's ionosphere , and the second is a U.S. Navy experiment dealing with long wavelengths . Thus , a script was crafted that featured an individual that , due to a secret experiment , could not slow down for fear of rupturing his head .

Gilligan admitted that the episode was partially an homage to the 1994 film *Speed* , and the episode even features an explicit reference to the film : when Crump and Mulder discover that speed is the key to success , Mulder mentions that he thinks he " saw this movie . " The opening teaser footage is done in the style of a news report , a stylistic direction that IGN suggested was intended to echo the O.J. Simpson incident of just a few years earlier .

== Casting ==

Vince Gilligan , the writer of the episode , wanted Bryan Cranston to play the antagonist because he felt he would humanize the role . " We needed a guy who could be scary and kind of loathsome but at the same time had a deep , resounding humanity , " he later said . In an interview with *The New York Times* , Gilligan stated , " We had this villain , and we needed the audience to feel bad for him when he died . Bryan alone was the only actor who could do that , who could pull off that trick . And it is a trick . I have no idea how he does it . " Rick Millikan , the casting director for *The X @-@ Files* noted that Cranston was nearly not chosen for this episode . Initially , the part of Crump had been assigned to a different actor , but Cranston came prepared to audition for the part . Although the character had already been cast , Millikan allowed him to audition and was very pleased with his performance and chose him for the part instead .

Cranston 's work on this episode later impacted his career ; Gilligan cast him in the series *Breaking Bad* , but AMC executives were initially unsure of this decision as they were familiar only with Cranston 's work on the sitcom *Malcolm in the Middle* . They were convinced after viewing his performance in " *Drive* " . Gilligan , a fan of country musician Junior Brown , cast Brown as Virgil Nokes , the farmer who Mulder and Scully investigate at the beginning of the episode . Brown was flown in at the request and personal expense of Gilligan , and would later perform a song on the trailer for the *Breaking Bad* spin @-@ off *Better Call Saul* .

== Reception ==

== Ratings ==

" *Drive* " first aired in the United States on November 15 , 1998 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 0 , with a 16 share , meaning that roughly 11 @. @ 0 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 16 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 18 @. @ 50 million viewers . The episode aired in the United Kingdom and Ireland on Sky1 on March 14 , 1999 and was watched by 0 @. @ 70 million viewers , making it the sixth most viewed episode that week . Fox promoted the episode with the tagline " He 'll stop at nothing . "

== Reviews ==

" *Drive* " received largely positive reviews from critics . Zack Handlen from *The A.V. Club* wrote positively of the episode , awarding it an A , and writing that the entry was " a great example of the

engine that keeps great television moving . " Handlen noted that the climax of the episode was " as moving as it is suspenseful " and drew parallels between Bryan Cranston 's portrayal of Mr. Crump and his eventual portrayal of Walter White from Breaking Bad , noting that both illustrate the idea that " you have to keep moving . If you stop , you die . " Review website IGN named it the ninth best standalone X @-@ Files episode of the entire series and complimented the interaction between Crump and Mulder , writing " it 's the interplay between Mulder and Crump that makes this episode a standout . [...] Crump here is an antagonistic yet heartbreaking character , and as he and Mulder become unlikely allies in their ' drive , ' ' Drive ' in turn becomes a memorably scary X @-@ Files episode [...] because of the perhaps most frightening element of the show 's world ever : mankind itself , and the governments that supposedly protect us . "

Colin Ellis from The Dashing Fellows called " Drive , " " arguably one of the best episodes post @-@ Fight the Future of [The X @-@ Files] . " Tom Kessenich , in his book Examination : An Unauthorized Look at Seasons 6 ? 9 of the X @-@ Files wrote positively of the episode , saying " [T] hank God for ' Drive ' , which taps into the idea of Speed , the hit movie starring [Keanu] Reeves , but pushes it in an excitingly different direction . " Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a largely positive review and awarded it three stars out of four . Although she slightly criticized the case being investigated as " pure hokum " , Vitaris praised Mulder and Scully 's teamwork , and their ability to work together despite being separated .

= = = Awards = = =

" Drive " earned an ASC Award by the American Society of Cinematographers for Outstanding Achievement in Cinematography ? Regular Series .