

= Herrenvolk (The X @-@ Files) =

" Herrenvolk " is the fourth season premiere of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on October 4 , 1996 . It was directed by R.W. Goodwin , and written by series creator Chris Carter . " Herrenvolk " featured guest appearances by Roy Thinnes and Brian Thompson , and introduced Laurie Holden as recurring character Marita Covarrubias . The episode helped to explore the overarching mythology , or fictional history of The X @-@ Files . " Herrenvolk " earned a Nielsen household rating of 13 @.@ 2 , being watched by 21 @.@ 11 million people in its initial broadcast .

FBI special agent Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) is shown more evidence of his sister 's abduction by the mysterious Jeremiah Smith (Thinnes) and makes a desperate attempt to rescue her , whilst being pursued by the Alien Bounty Hunter . Mulder 's informant X is found out by those he has betrayed ? with fatal consequences . " Herrenvolk " is the second part of a two @-@ part episode , continuing the plot from the third season finale , " Talitha Cumi " .

" Herrenvolk " saw the death of Steven Williams ' character X , and featured the first appearance of Mulder 's sister Samantha , a character described by Carter as the " lifeblood " of the series , since the second season premiere , " Little Green Men " . The episode featured scenes filmed using swarms of bees , which caused problems due to the difficulty of taming and directing the animals . Other special effects in the episode were achieved through motion control photography .

= = Plot = =

In rural Alberta , Canada , a telephone lineman is stung by a bee as he works at the top of a pole . Five identical boys approach and watch as the lineman adversely reacts to the sting , causing him to fall to the ground and die . The boys look down at his body , then walk off silently .

At a remote industrial site , Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) , Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) , and Jeremiah Smith (Roy Thinnes) are approached by the Alien Bounty Hunter (Brian Thompson) . Mulder and Smith flee with both Scully and the Bounty Hunter in pursuit , eventually reaching a waterfront . Mulder sneaks up on the Bounty Hunter and stabs him in the neck with the alien stiletto . Both he and Jeremiah escape on a boat , leaving Scully alone with the seemingly dead Bounty Hunter . When she approaches the body , the Bounty Hunter wakes up and chokes her , demanding to know where Mulder and Smith are heading . He releases her after realizing she has no such knowledge .

On the boat , Mulder and Smith debate whether they should save Mulder ? s mother Teena , despite the risk of Men in Black awaiting them . Mulder ultimately agrees that it would be too dangerous to visit her . Instead , they head towards Canada , where Smith says Mulder will find his sister , Samantha . Meanwhile , the First Elder (Don S. Williams) meets with The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) in Teena 's hospital room , confronting him with photos of his prior meeting with her , taken by X (Steven Williams) . They realize that there is a leak , and plan to smoke out its source by releasing false information about Teena being in danger .

The Bounty Hunter learns of Mulder 's whereabouts by listening in on a phone call between him and a captive Scully , leaving her to pursue him and Smith . In Washington , Scully reports to Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) , who informs her that the other Jeremiah Smiths have all disappeared . Scully and Agent Pendrell investigate the data that the Smiths were compiling , trying to decipher the encrypted files . Scully contacts X , who tells her that it is related to the government 's long @-@ running smallpox eradication program . X also tells her that he believes Teena 's life is in danger .

Meanwhile , in Canada , Smith and Mulder 's car runs out of gas . Walking the last few miles on foot , they come across the corpse of the electrician , grossly decomposed and covered in ants . Jeremiah takes Mulder to a mysterious field where they find a group of identical children ; the girls all resemble Samantha at the age when she was abducted . Jeremiah tells Mulder that the cloned children are mindless chattel used to tend the fields , incapable of speaking . After retrieving a gasoline can , Mulder tries to take one of the female clones with him . However , the Bounty Hunter arrives and chases them . As he corners them in a large bee hive , the Bounty Hunter is crushed

and stung repeatedly in a trap set up by the trio .

Scully and Pendrell report to Skinner and the Office of Professional Responsibility on the data being tracked by the Smiths , which appears to be a cataloging of human beings . Meanwhile , the Bounty Hunter catches up to Mulder , Smith , and the clone , plowing into their car with a van . After knocking Mulder unconscious , the Bounty Hunter pursues a fleeing Jeremiah . Mulder returns to the hospital to see his mother , resigned to the fact that he cannot save her . The Syndicate leads X to a trap at Mulder 's apartment , where he is shot by the Grey @-@ Haired Man . X crawls into the apartment and writes the letters " SRSB " in his blood before dying . The letters lead Mulder to Marita Covarrubias (Laurie Holden) , the assistant to the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations . Covarrubias tells Mulder that the fields in Canada have been abandoned , but shows him a picture of the drone children tending to the shrubs . At the hospital , the Smoking Man directs the Bounty Hunter to heal Mulder 's mother , telling him that the fiercest enemy is the one with nothing to lose .

= = Production = =

The appearance of Samantha Mulder , this time as a clone of her from when she was still a little girl , was due to series creator Chris Carter 's desire to bring her back . Carter felt Samantha was an important element of the show , referring to her as being part of the lifeblood of the series . The decision to kill the character X was made at the end of the third season . The writers felt that they could only do so much with the character and decided that they would either make him a bigger player on the show , or have him pay the price for collaborating with Fox Mulder . Ultimately they decided on the latter . This led to the introduction of Marita Covarrubias at the end of the episode , Mulder 's latest informant .

The exterior shots of the crop fields in the episodes were filmed in ginseng fields , which writer Frank Spotnitz felt had an " otherworldly " quality to them . These fields were located near the city of Kamloops , which is approximately a three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half @-@ hour drive from Vancouver ; a location from which the production had rarely strayed during its first five seasons . The hair , makeup and wardrobe truck ended up getting lost while driving there . A fiberglass composite lattice used by the aircraft industry was used to create the honeycombs through which the alien bounty hunter chases Mulder .

The death of X was a prominent scene in the episode , and it took several takes to complete the final scene ; with Spotnitz feeling that " it was a good way to send him off " . Director R. W. Goodwin has noted that he is responsible for directing the episodes that featured the deaths of X , Deep Throat , Mulder 's father , and Scully 's sister .

Thousands of live bees were used during production , with the understanding that the bees would not sting without a queen present . However , this theory proved incorrect , and Vanessa Morley , who played the Samantha Mulder clones , was stung during filming . She kept quiet and did not react until the scene had finished filming , leading Spotnitz to call her " a trooper " . The cold open for the episode , with multiple cloned boys , was achieved with motion control photography , allowing for two children to play all five of the clones ; multiple takes were recorded with the boys in different positions , and with the camera controlled by a computer to follow exactly the same motions for each take , these could be seamlessly composited together .

The episode title comes from the German word for " Master Race " . The tagline for this episode is " Everything Dies " instead of the usual " The Truth is Out There " . This phrase is uttered by the bounty hunter to Mulder during the episode . During the production of " Herrenvolk " , Carter had already begun the pre @-@ production phases of the series ' feature film adaptation , which would be released in 1998 .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Herrenvolk " premiered on the Fox network on October 4 , 1996 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on September 10 , 1997 . The episode earned a Nielsen household

rating of 13 @. @ 2 with a 23 share , meaning that roughly 13 @. @ 2 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 23 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . A total of 21 @. @ 11 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing , making it the first episode of The X @-@ Files watched by more than 20 million people .

In an overview of the fourth season in Entertainment Weekly , " Herrenvolk " was rated an A- . It was noted that the episode " makes good use of locations " , and the ambiguous resolution to Jeremiah Smith 's plot arc was seen as a positive , as it " opens the door to all sorts of provocative potentialities " . Writing for The A.V. Club , Zack Handlen rated the episode a B + , though he felt it suffered from " treading @-@ water plotting " . Handlen also described the episode as being tense on its own , but suffering from " stagnation " when held as part of the series ' ongoing mythology . He cited the death of X as an example of this , feeling that the scene was " appropriately shocking " and perhaps " one of the most memorable deaths in the series " ? however , the almost immediate introduction of a successor character , Marita Covarrubias , was seen as " deflat [ing] the importance " of the events .