

= The Walk (The X @-@ Files) =

" The Walk " is the seventh episode of the third season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It was written by John Shiban and directed by Rob Bowman . The episode aired in the United States on November 10 , 1995 on the Fox network . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " The Walk " earned a Nielsen household rating of 10 @. @ 4 , being watched by 15 @. @ 91 million people in its initial broadcast . Critical reception was mixed .

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 , a failed suicide attempt by a patient in a U.S. Army hospital interests Mulder with the talk of a " phantom soldier " who has prevented the man 's death . The U.S. Army General in charge of the hospital is initially opposed to the FBI 's involvement until the invisible killer begins stalking him . Everyone involved in the case is shocked to learn that the primary suspect could in fact , be a quadruple amputee .

" The Walk " is the first X @-@ Files script by John Shiban , who commented that it was a challenge for him . He was inspired by the film The Men , which features a character who has lost his legs in war and wishes to be able to walk again . The episode required several visual effects which were almost not completed in time .

= = Plot = =

At a VA hospital in Fort Evanston , Maryland , Lieutenant Colonel Victor Stans makes his third suicide attempt ; he claims that a mysterious figure will not let him die . Stans attempts to drown in a tub of scalding water , but is rescued by the hospital staff and subsequently is disfigured due to the hot water .

When Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) question Stans , they learn that his wife and children died in a house fire he claims was started by the mysterious soldier he says will not allow him to die himself . Captain Janet Draper stops the questioning , as Mulder and Scully were not granted permission to see Stans by his superior officer , General Thomas Callahan . After meeting with the agents , Callahan glimpses the phantom soldier Stans described . He also finds his answering machine replaying an unintelligible message . Later , while using the base 's swimming pool , Draper is killed by an invisible force .

Callahan tells the agents about the soldier and the voicemail , which was received twice before at his home . When they visit his house , his young son , Trevor , believes he saw someone go inside ; Scully herself glimpses someone in the backyard . Fingerprints are found on the property which belong to the hospital mailman , Quinton " Roach " Freely . As Mulder and Scully take Roach into custody , Trevor is attacked and killed by the invisible force in his sandbox . Under the agent 's questioning , Roach admits to his role in the deaths and states he is " Rappo 's mailman " .

" Rappo " turns out to be Leonard Trimble (Ian Tracey) , a Gulf War veteran and quadruple amputee . Scully doesn 't believe Roach , even though he insists that Rappo will kill him next . Scully later finds Roach dead in his cell with a bedsheet shoved down his throat . Scully assumes that he committed suicide , but Mulder shows her X @-@ ray dental plates he had carried in the rehab room , the pool , Callahan 's office , and Callahan 's house ; all show signs of radiation . Mulder thinks that Rappo is leaving his body through astral projection , doing so with a psychic connection forged through Roach 's letters . He also plays the voicemail backwards ; it is actually a warning from the phantom soldier .

Under questioning , an embittered Rappo states his belief that the Gulf War took his life away . Meanwhile , Callahan finds his wife 's dead body . He goes to the hospital to talk to Stans , who reveals that Rappo ? whom he doesn 't know ? is responsible for the deaths . When Callahan confronts Rappo , he openly admits his crimes . Rappo tries to goad Callahan to killing him , but Callahan decides to " stand down , " shooting over Rappo 's head . The agents arrive and find

Rappo in a trance ; Mulder realizes what is happening and tries to find Callahan . Rappo 's apparition attacks Callahan with steam from the pipes in the hospital 's basement . Stans enters Rappo 's room , locks the door , and smothers Rappo with a pillow . With Rappo dead , his apparition disappears before it attacks Mulder . Callahan remains unharmed .

Since there is no physical evidence to prove that Rappo killed Callahan 's wife and son , the case remains unsolved . Mulder 's narration states that Rappo 's family tries to have him buried at Arlington National Cemetery ; he is instead buried in a civilian cemetery in Pennsylvania .

= = Production = =

" The Walk " is the first X @-@ Files script by John Shiban . He found it challenging to write , particularly Mulder and Scully 's first scene where " they have to come together on a case , yet they have to be at odds " . Shiban was inspired by the film The Men and realizing that the main character , who had been injured in war and lost his legs , wanted to walk more than anything . He stated that the paranormal concept of astral projection " just sort of fit " . Some members of the writing staff were concerned about killing Callahan 's young son , Trevor , but Shiban was not bothered by it and felt that Rappo wanted to take everything from Callahan , and the worst blow would be to kill his son .

Director Rob Bowman felt that Ian Tracey , who played Rappo , was " an incredibly strong actor " and fit the role . Deryl Hayes , who played an army psychiatrist in this episode , previously appeared as a CIA operative in the first season episode " Shadows " . Draper 's drowning was achieved by pulling actress Nancy Sorel down with a cable that was attached to the bottom of the pool . The image of the wave launching over Draper in the pool was accomplished by the teamwork of special effects department members Mat Beck and David Gauthier . One of the crew members was also buried in sand in the scene where Trevor is killed . The effect in the climax when Rappo 's apparition throws Callahan and Mulder across the room was accomplished with a device called the " Air @-@ Ram " that uses compressed air . The visual effects were almost not completed in time .

= = Reception = =

" The Walk " was first broadcast on the Fox network on November 10 , 1995 . It earned a Nielsen rating of 10 @.@ 4 , with an 18 share , meaning that roughly 10 @.@ 4 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 18 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was watched by a total of 15 @.@ 91 million viewers .

In a retrospective of the third season by Entertainment Weekly , " The Walk " was given a grade of C , noting its similarities to other episodes and being critical of the characters . Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club gave it a grade of B , describing it as " straightforward " , with a " well @-@ realized " military hospital and " terrific " directing . However , he felt that Ian Tracey was not a good enough actor to make Rappo 's motives seem believable . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode two and a half stars out of four , calling it a " solid episode " with a good supporting cast and effects . However , she felt the characterization of Mulder and Scully was " off @-@ balance " and noted that some of the military detail was wrong . 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 three and a half stars out of five , noting its similarities to other episodes such as the previous " 2Shy " , but felt that Shiban " has put real blood and passion into it which raises it high above the trappings of its clichés " . They criticized the plot for being too predictable and formulaic , but said it succeeded in emotion and was " well @-@ written " and " well @-@ directed " .