

= Three of a Kind ( The X @-@ Files ) =

" Three of a Kind " is the twentieth episode of the sixth season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on May 2 , 1999 in the United States . The episode was written by Vince Gilligan and John Shiban , and directed by Bryan Spicer . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Three of a Kind " earned a Nielsen household rating of 8 @. @ 2 , being watched by 12 @. @ 9 million people in its initial broadcast . The episode received mixed to positive reviews from critics , with some noting that the episode served as a stop @-@ gap .

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 , The Lone Gunmen run into the enigmatic Susanne Modeski . After deceiving Scully into joining them , the trio soon find out that Susanne 's fiancé is planning to use her new brainwashing drug for political assassinations .

" Three of a Kind " functions as a sequel of sorts to the fifth season episode " Unusual Suspects " , concluding the story of The Lone Gunmen and Susanne Modeski , the woman who led to the creation of the trio . While Mulder played a supporting role in " Unusual Suspects " , the concept is reversed in " Three of a Kind " , with Scully helping out The Lone Gunmen .

= = Plot = =

During a high @-@ stakes poker game Lone Gunman John Fitzgerald Byers ( Bruce Harwood ) is thrown out after being exposed as a fraud at a government convention in Las Vegas . Unbeknownst to Richard Langly ( Dean Haglund ) and Melvin Frohike ( Tom Braidwood ) , Byers is still harboring an attraction to Susanne Modeski , a fellow conspirator who mysteriously disappeared almost ten years ago . Byers hopes that he will meet her at the convention .

The Gunmen cleverly trick Agent Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) into coming to Las Vegas using a text to speech program . Their friend Jimmy uses his special technique for gaining access to a secret meeting room where he believes he will learn about new assassination techniques employed by the government . However , Jimmy is discovered and injected with a mystery drug which forces him to kill himself . Meanwhile , Byers discovers that Susanne is alive and well , but has seemingly become a secretive government agent .

Scully performs Jimmy 's autopsy when she is attacked by an agent who injects something into her , who collapses . After being confronted by Byers , Susanne reveals that she is pretending to have switched sides so she , along with her fiancée Grant Ellis , can slow progress on the government 's harmful initiatives . She works alongside the Gunmen to set up Grant , whom she discovers has been lying to her .

Timmy , the late Jimmy 's friend , asks Langly to attend a Dungeons & Dragons game in Jimmy 's honor . The game , however , is a setup to inject Langly with a drug that effectively controls the subject 's mind , much like Scully and Jimmy . Frohike finds an extremely flirtatious Scully at the bar with a large cluster of men around her . He takes her back to the suite where Susanne recognizes the effects of the drug , which she identifies as anoetic histamine . She reveals that she had not actually made the compound , except for a small batch accessible only to her and Grant , confirming his betrayal .

Susanne counteracts the weapon 's effect on Scully as Langly returns . Langly reports to Timmy the next morning and is given his instructions : Enter the meeting room using the provided pass and fire three rounds into Susanne Modeski . Scully attempts to enter the meeting hall but is stopped by security outside . Langly draws a gun and shoots Susanne Modeski three times in the chest during the break . Scully comes in with the guard and has him call for an ambulance . Byers and Frohike arrive as the EMTs and take her away on a stretcher . It is revealed that Susanne realized Langly had been injected and counteracted the drug 's effect on him . Together , Scully , Susanne , and the Lone Gunmen orchestrated an elaborate ruse to allow Susanne to escape . Unfortunately the ruse

fails , as Timmy Landau tastes the " blood " on the floor and realizes it is just corn syrup .

Grant Ellis is taken to Susanne Modeski by Scully so she can confront him about why he gave the drug to the government . She is furious as she could have been killed had she not checked Langly the night before . Ellis admits that he only betrayed her because the government threatened his own life . Timmy arrives , guns down Grant Ellis , and takes Susanne to the Lone Gunmen 's suite .

Timmy prepares to gun down Langly and Frohike , but is injected with the mind control drug by Byers . As it takes hold of him and he collapses , and the Lone Gunmen successfully mind control him into turning himself in . Byers explains to Susanne Modeski that , for all intents and purposes , she is deceased and that she has a new identity . She asks Byers to go with her to start a new life , but he explains he has to keep up the fight . She kisses him goodbye and hands over a wedding ring meant for Grant Ellis .

= = Production = =

= = = Background and writing = = =

" Three of a Kind " functions as a sequel of sorts to the fifth season episode " Unusual Suspects " , concluding a minor story @-@ arc featuring The Lone Gunmen and Susanne Modeski , the woman who led to the creation of the trio . At the time of filming for " Three of a Kind " , David Duchovny , who portrays Fox Mulder , was unavailable for filming because he was preparing his directing debut , " The Unnatural " . Only David Duchovny 's voice appears in the episode , during a scene when The Lone Gunmen electronically synthesize it in order to convince Scully to travel to Las Vegas . In order to compensate for this loss , co @-@ executive producers Vince Gilligan and John Shiban decided to write an episode based around The Lone Gunmen . The two wanted to bring back several characters and unresolved plot lines , mostly notably the disappearance of Susanne Modeski . Gilligan explained , " I 'd been thinking a lot about what happened to Susanne Modeski ? what happened to her after she drove off with X in that mysterious car at the end of ' Unusual Suspects ' " . Gilligan and Shiban soon formulated a plot that revolved around the Lone Gunmen in Las Vegas . " Las Vegas just seemed a really good place to put these guys . First of all , because the idea of them running through a casino is instantly hilarious . But the other thing [ ... ] is that Las Vegas is in some ways the most watched city in the world " . Furthermore , Michael McKean , who portrayed Morris Fletcher in the two @-@ part episode " Dreamland " , makes a brief cameo as one of the men flirting with Scully .

The entire sub @-@ plot featuring Susanne Modeski caused a minor continuity error that had to be retconned . Bruce Harwood , the actor who portrayed Byers , originally wore a wedding ring when he first portrayed the character , noting , " I 'd worn my wedding ring [ during the first part of the series ] so I imagined a married life for Byers " . During the filming of " Unusual Suspects " ? an episode that would largely feature Byers feeling a romantic connection to Susanne ? Harwood removed his wedding ring , deducing that in 1989 , when the episode took place , Byers had not been married yet . However , " Three of a Kind " ? which takes place in 1999 ? features Byers once again romantically drawn to Susanne . Harwood explained , " And then [ the producers ] brought back the character Suzanne [ sic ] Modeski back in season six , and that was supposed to be in the present . So I had to redo my back story ; I said Byers had been divorced " .

= = = Filming = = =

Despite budgetary constraints , the crew of The X @-@ Files were given the green @-@ light to film on location in Las Vegas . This would make Las Vegas only one of the few cities to effectively " play itself " in the series . However , only two days were scheduled for Las Vegas , and most of the scenes were filmed in California at the Century Plaza and Park Hyatt , two hotels relatively close to the Fox studio . Furthermore , Gillian Anderson never had to leave Los Angeles to film the episode . Location manager Ilt Jones noted that The X @-@ Files crew 's desire to film on location at various

hotels in Las Vegas caused a bidding war , " We went down this list of forty or fifty hotels known to be film @-@ friendly . [ ... ] At first , the reaction was sort of luke @-@ warm , then all of a sudden someone realized that this was The X @-@ Files , for heavens sake , seen by I @-@ can 't @-@ tell @-@ you @-@ how @-@ many millions [ ... ] then this huge bidding war broke out " . Eventually , Monte Carlo Resort and Casino was selected for shooting . In exchange for a special billing denoting " Production Assistance Provided by " and several shots of the hotel 's name appearing in the episode , The X @-@ Files crew received fee @-@ free permission to film anywhere in the hotel during day hours , as well as full access to the hotel 's illuminated message board .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Three of a Kind " first aired in the United States on May 2 , 1999 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 8 @. @ 2 , with a 12 share , meaning that roughly 8 @. @ 2 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 12 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 12 @. @ 94 million viewers . The episode aired in the United Kingdom and Ireland on Sky1 on July 4 , 1999 and received 0 @. @ 87 million viewers , making it the second most watched episode that week . Fox promoted the episode with the tagline " What 's gotten into Scully ? Tonight , when Scully hits Vegas , you 'll see a side of her you 've never seen before . "

The episode received mostly mixed reviews from critics , with many noting that the episode served as a stop @-@ gap . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book *Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen* , rated " Three of a Kind " two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five , calling the episode " likeable and good @-@ natured , and utterly redundant , this passes forty @-@ five minutes pleasantly enough , but you 'll be hard pushed to remember them afterwards " . Paula Vitaris from *Cinefantastique* gave the episode a moderately positive review and awarded it two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of four . Vitaris noted that the episode did " an adequate job , but all in all , this is a filler episode , more substitutes than the real thing " .

Tom Kessenich , in his book *Examination : An Unauthorized Look at Seasons 6 ? 9 of the X @-@ Files* wrote that , " ' Three of a Kind ' took the premise [ of the Lone Gunmen ] and ran with it , offering up a quasi @-@ entertaining effort that indulges [ the trio ] ' s paranoia , banishes Mulder from sight and offers up a very flirtatious Dana Scully . It was all cute and harmless . Kinda like The Lone Gunmen themselves . " Zack Handlen of *The A.V. Club* awarded the episode a " B + " and called it " the second part of a story which didn 't really need one " but also noted that the " laid @-@ back , let 's just hang out and have some fun vibe " of the episode made the entry " very , very easy to watch . " Furthermore , he praised the scene wherein Scully is drugged , calling it " hilarious " and " glorious " .