

= Young at Heart (The X @-@ Files) =

" Young at Heart " is the sixteenth episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on February 11 , 1994 . It was written by Scott Kaufer and series creator Chris Carter , and directed by Michael Lange . The episode featured guest appearances by Dick Anthony Williams , William B. Davis and Alan Boyce , and saw Jerry Hardin reprise his role as Deep Throat . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Young at Heart " earned a Nielsen household rating of 7 @.@ 2 , being watched by 6 @.@ 8 million households in its initial broadcast ; and received mostly negative reviews from 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 . When Mulder and Scully aid a former colleague of Mulder 's in an investigation into a series of robberies , it becomes apparent that the culprit is an old nemesis of Mulder 's ? who had seemingly died in prison several years previously .

" Young at Heart " originated as a script from freelance writer Scott Kaufer , who was a friend of series creator Chris Carter and former employee of California magazine and Warner Bros comedy development department . Chris Carter rewrote the script , which included the addition of Barnett 's salamander hand . Director Michael Lange felt the episode offered him excellent scope to try new techniques , noting that the series producers " encourage cinematic stuff " . William B. Davis makes his second appearance of the series in this episode , although his role is simply credited as " CIA Agent " , rather than the more well @-@ known " Smoking Man " .

= = Plot = =

In 1989 , Joe Crandall , an inmate at a federal penitentiary in Pennsylvania , hears screaming from the infirmary . Inside , he discovers the prison 's doctor , Joe Ridley , amputating the hand of fellow inmate John Barnett . Ridley tells Crandall that Barnett is dead , threatening him with a scalpel . However , as Crandall leaves the room , he sees Barnett blinking at him .

Four years later , Fox Mulder is notified by his former FBI supervisor , Reggie Purdue , about a note from a jewelry store robbery mocking Mulder by name . Mulder recognizes the message as being from Barnett , a sociopathic multiple murderer whom he helped capture on his first case with the Bureau . Even though Barnett supposedly died in prison , the note bears his handwriting . Purdue shows Dana Scully a video of Barnett 's capture , which shows that Mulder didn 't fire on Barnett due to him having a hostage , per FBI regulations . Mulder 's hesitancy allowed Barnett to kill both the hostage and a fellow agent .

Scully looks into Barnett 's cause of death and discovers that despite it being listed as heart attack , he had no history of heart problems ; he had been sent to the infirmary over problems with his hand . Meanwhile , Barnett leaves Mulder another note in his car , along with photos of him and Scully .

Mulder and Scully visit the prison and meet Crandall , who recounts his experiences with Barnett and Ridley . Barnett makes taunting phone calls to Mulder , and strangles Purdue with his salamander @-@ like hand . Scully looks into Ridley 's past and finds that his medical license was revoked in 1979 due to malpractice ; he had performed illegal medical trials on children with progeria , a disease that causes premature aging . Mulder theorizes that Ridley 's experiments helped him find a way to reverse the aging process .

Scully summons Mulder when Ridley suddenly appears at her apartment . He tells the agents that he succeeded in making Barnett age in reverse after replacing his hand using salamander cells . However , Barnett stole Ridley 's government @-@ sponsored research . Deep Throat meets with Mulder and confirms Ridley 's story , saying that the government is negotiating with Barnett to purchase Ridley 's work .

Scully hears someone dialing into her answering machine and spots Barnett 's fingerprint on it . After Barnett calls again , Mulder decides to set up a sting operation at the cello recital for a friend of Scully 's , which Barnett learned about from her answering @-@ machine .

That night , FBI agents wait at the concert hall for Barnett 's arrival . Barnett , who goes completely unseen due to his youthful appearance , poses as a piano tuner . He shoots Scully in the chest during the recital and then flees , taking the cellist hostage . Mulder doesn 't hesitate this time around and fires at Barnett , fatally wounding him . Scully is revealed to have survived the attack , having worn a bullet @-@ proof vest . Despite the efforts of doctors and a mysterious CIA agent to resuscitate Barnett , he dies , and takes the secrets of Ridley 's research to the grave . The episode ends with the camera zooming in on locker number 935 in a train station , implying the secrets along with Barnett 's precaution , a bomb , are contained within and one day will be discovered .

= = Production = =

This episode originated as a script from freelance writer Scott Kaufer , who was an acquaintance of Chris Carter and former employee of California magazine and Warner Bros comedy development department . Chris Carter rewrote the script , which included the addition of Barnett 's salamander hand . Fox 's standards and practices department fought with the producers over the scene where Barnett strangles Reggie Purdue , and as a result the producers were forced to reduce the length of the scene . The footage of the young girl with progeria was filmed after the production crew contacted the Progeria Society and were put in touch with the family of Courtney Arciaga , who was a young girl with the disease . She and her family were fans of the series , and were flown from their San Diego home to Vancouver to shoot the scene .

Director Michael Lange felt the episode offered him excellent scope to try new techniques , noting that the series producers " encourage cinematic stuff " . He felt a highlight of this approach was in shooting the episode 's climactic stand @-@ off , explaining that " instead of shooting at a normal eye level as the Salamander Man takes the gun , I tilt up , and now I 'm shooting up his nose almost , and it was kind of like very disorienting . The show 's got a certain ennui that appeals to me , the film noir @-@ y movies of the ' 40s look , an undercurrent of tension and anxiety ' cause of all the weird things going on " .

William B. Davis makes his second appearance of the series in this episode , although his role is simply credited as " CIA Agent " , rather than " Smoking Man " , as per his credit in the pilot episode . The character of Reggie Purdue would later be referenced in the fourth season episode " Paper Hearts " , and the fifth season episode " Unusual Suspects " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Young at Heart " premiered on the Fox network on February 11 , 1994 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on January 12 , 1995 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 7 @. @ 2 with an 11 share , meaning that roughly 7 @. @ 2 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 11 percent of households watching TV , were tuned in to the episode . A total of 6 @. @ 8 million households watched this episode during its original airing .

Director Michael Lange said that he " liked the script very much , and I think I stayed fairly close to the original draft . I liked it because it had a good spookiness to it . To me , the intriguing part was the doctor 's research into being able to reverse the aging process , which I wish we could have explored more . " Executive Producer Robert Goodwin considered the episode one of the most emotional episodes of the first season , due to the time spent working with Courtney Arciaga , the little girl with progeria . In a retrospective of the first season in Entertainment Weekly , the episode was rated a C , being called " far @-@ fetched " and criticised for its unoriginal themes . Zack Handlen , writing for The A.V. Club , described it as " sloppy , poorly edited " and " thoroughly unexciting " , pointing out the " forced " nature of the supporting characters ' past involvement with Fox Mulder . Matt Haigh , writing for Den of Geek , expressed mixed feelings over the episode , comparing it to Quincy , M.E. and stating that it " just wasn 't weird enough " for an episode of The X @-@ Files . " Young at Heart " has been cited , along with the fourth season episode " Paper Hearts " , as representing " the supreme irony and the hidden agenda of the series " ? in both cases , Mulder , directly through his work on the X @-@ Files , puts information permanently beyond reach

by killing those who hold it , showing that " despite the fact that Mulder drives the car , he frequently ends up ? and goes ? nowhere " .