

= Two Fathers =

" Two Fathers " is the eleventh episode of the sixth season and the 128th episode overall of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . The episode first aired in the United States and Canada on February 7 , 1999 , on the Fox Network and subsequently aired in the United Kingdom on Sky1 . It was written by executive producers Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz and directed by Kim Manners . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 5 and was viewed by a total of 18 @. @ 81 million viewers . The episode received mostly positive reviews .

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 . " Two Fathers " follows a story which would lead to the destruction of the Syndicate : with the unexpected return of Cassandra Spender and the alien rebels , members of the Syndicate prepare themselves for the final invasion .

" Two Fathers " was written in order to eliminate the Syndicate and relaunch the series ' mythology . With the series being shot in Los Angeles , many members of The X @-@ Files crew had to adjust scenes and filming techniques in order to achieve the " dark and gray feel " that had been a result of filming in Vancouver . The episode is the first of a two @-@ part episode and continues with the episode " One Son " .

= = Plot = =

In a train car , doctors in chemical suits are making incisions on an unseen patient 's stomach ; green fluid seeps out of the wounds , which heal themselves . When Dr. Eugene Openshaw arrives , he is informed that their twenty @-@ five @-@ year @-@ old project is finally completed . Moments later , rebel aliens begin to appear and start burning all the doctors , the only survivor being Dr. Openshaw . The patient , Cassandra Spender , had been missing for over a year . Walter Skinner takes her son , Jeffrey Spender , to the scene , where he meets with his mother . Cassandra refuses to talk with Jeffrey about what happened to her because she knows that he won 't believe her . She asks for Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) . Spender asks Mulder to join him to meet his mother , but Mulder sees it as an attempt to entrap him . Later on , Dr. Openshaw informs the Cigarette Smoking Man (William B. Davis) about the completion of the project , saying he needs to kill his former wife since she is the first successful alien @-@ human hybrid . The Cigarette Smoking Man 's reaction leads to Dr. Openshaw 's death . Meanwhile one of the Syndicate elders is killed by an alien rebel , who takes on his form .

Mulder and partner Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) go over the crime scene photos from the train car incident and immediately recognize similarities to murders from a year earlier . Afterwards , Mulder and Scully visit Cassandra who informs them that the aliens are here to destroy all life on Earth , further stating that this alien threat moves through the Universe to colonize other planets . She claims that a rebel force of aliens are mutilating their faces to prevent infection by the black oil .

Alex Krycek reports to the Syndicate on the rebel 's recent attacks . The rebel , masquerading as the elder he killed , proposes that the Syndicate align themselves with the rebels . The Cigarette Smoking Man seems to recognize that the elder has opposed his own previous opinion- that siding with the rebels is suicide .

Mulder and Scully use the X @-@ Files office to find the Cigarette Smoking Man 's real identity , that he is Agent Spender 's father , C.G.B. Spender . Their unauthorized entry at the X @-@ Files office is discovered resulting in both agents ' immediate suspension from the FBI . Agent Spender reports to the Cigarette Smoking Man demanding the truth . Scully meets with Mulder , telling him that C.G.B. Spender is likely another alias and that the man is linked with Mulder 's father , William , who he had worked with on a secret state project . The Cigarette Smoking Man decides to give Agent Spender more responsibility by having him kill the alien rebel masquerading as a Syndicate elder . Spender fails in his task , but Krycek comes to his aid and finishes . Krycek reveals to Spender that his father was responsible for Cassandra 's abductions and that his role is to protect

his father 's stake in the project , facts that upset Agent Spender .

The Cigarette Smoking Man reveals everything to Diana Fowley , who agrees to help him . Mulder tells Skinner that Cassandra is in danger because she is the first successful alien @-@ human hybrid ; Skinner goes to the hospital to check on Cassandra but finds her gone . Cassandra , having escaped from the hospital , arrives at Mulder 's apartment and demands that he shoot her because she is the embodiment of fifty years of work by the Syndicate ? an alien @-@ human hybrid that will trigger colonization if the aliens learn of her existence .

= = Production = =

The plan to eliminate the Syndicate and relaunch the series ' mythology in a new direction was originally conceived in September 1998 . Director Kim Manners stated " I 've said for years that the show really resolved itself , if you will , by accident . The whole story line of the Syndicate and the bees and the aliens and the chips in the neck , they all seemed to just accidentally fall into place and create an intriguing , mysterious storyline that eventually got so mysterious and so intriguing that Chris had to blow it up , because he couldn 't deal with it anymore . " The original script featured various flashback sequences to the actors Peter Donat , William B. Davis and Veronica Cartwright , all from scenes around twenty @-@ to @-@ thirty years earlier in the show . They did various makeup jobs on the actors to make them look younger . However , the writers eventually came to the conclusion that it " just didn 't [...] work " , so they cut out most of that storyline , which ultimately led to the creation of a whole new direction in which the Cigarette Smoking Man provided a monologue explaining the history of the project instead . The first scene was shot in Long Beach , California .

The scene in which Jeffrey Spender visited his mother , Cassandra Spender , was shot in Los Angeles . Those members of The X @-@ Files crew who had moved with the show from Vancouver to Los Angeles still had problems adjusting to the changes when filming an episode . They were forced to adjust to changes in the sunlight , since Vancouver had this " dark and gray feel " compared to California 's sunny atmosphere . Kim Manners said that it was difficult to get used to the new area of filming . This episode marks the first time new stock footage was used for the J. Edgar Hoover Building in over five years .

The Second Elder 's house was in a relatively expensive neighborhood in Los Angeles . Manners stated that he was " very nervous " when filming this scene because the crew needed to create a fire inside the house , which was done by Kelly Kerby and Bobby Calvert . When the faceless alien attacks the Second Elder , a special effects crew member can be seen behind a window " running with his rig " , according to Manners .

= = Release and reception = =

The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 11 @.@ 5 , with a 16 share . It was viewed by a total of 18 @.@ 81 million viewers in the United States . The episode was the third highest rated episode of the sixth season . The episode debuted in the United States and Canada on February 7 , 1999 , at the Fox Network . The episode aired in the United Kingdom and Ireland on Sky1 on May 16 , 1999 and received 0 @.@ 72 million viewers , making it the third most watched episode that week . Veronica Cartwright was nominated for an Emmy for " Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series " for her role in this episode and " One Son " , and the make @-@ up department was nominated for an Emmy award in the category " Outstanding Makeup for a Series " and won . The episode was later included on The X @-@ Files Mythology , Volume 3 ? Colonization , a DVD collection that contains episodes involved with the alien Colonist 's plans to take over the earth .

The episode received mostly positive reviews from critics . Tom Kessenich , in his book Examination : An Unauthorized Look at Seasons 6 ? 9 of the X @-@ Files wrote positively of the episode , saying it " wonderfully " developed the show 's characters as " it unveiled many of the answers to the questions that have been dangling about for some time with out using Mulder or Scully as conduits for many of these answers . " The main reason behind creating a resolution to the

Syndicate arc was that Chris Carter thought the series was going to be cancelled by early 2000 . While promoting the episode , Carter said it would give many long @-@ waited answers but at the same time create new ones . Earl Cressey from DVD Talk named " Two Fathers , " along with its follow @-@ up " One Son , " as one of the " highlights of season six . " Joyce Millman from Salon magazine said the episode (along with " One Son ") was one " of the most coherent , [...] almost unbearably tense , hours in the series ' run " . The Michigan Daily reviewer Melissa Runstrom said " Two Fathers " along with " One Son " and season finale " Biogenesis " were the highlights of the sixth season .

Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club awarded the episode a " B ? " rating . He concluded that the episode is an example of " propulsive fun " and applauded its myriad of attention @-@ grabbing sequences . However , he was critical of its plot , noting that " the series pretty much just picks Cassandra to be the answer to a lot of questions " concerning the show 's mythology . Not all reviews were so glowing . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a mixed review and awarded it two stars out of four . Vitaris wrote positively of the episode 's filming , writing , " visually , the episode looks good [?] but the scenes in the hangar are eye @-@ poppers , with doors slowly opening and aliens walking forward , obscured by bright light . " However , she criticized the episode 's plot , noting that " Two Fathers " was " heading straight down a path already trodden by dozens of books , short stories , movies , and other television shows . "