

= The Erlenmeyer Flask =

" The Erlenmeyer Flask " is the 24th episode and the first season finale of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . Written by executive producer Chris Carter , and directed by R. W. Goodwin , the episode continues with the mythology story arc which started with " Pilot " . The episode first aired in the United States on May 13 , 1994 on the Fox network . With 8 @.@ 3 million households turning in during its initial broadcast , the episode was the most @-@ viewed episode of the show 's first season . The episode received an Edgar Award nomination in the Best Episode in a TV Series category , and has , since broadcast , received positive responses from both critics and crew members .

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 . In this episode , Mulder and Scully discover evidence of a secret government experimentation with alien DNA , but the evidence and everyone who has seen it are quickly targeted for elimination .

" The Erlenmeyer Flask " introduced several new plot elements which would continue in later seasons and featured the death of recurring character " Deep Throat " ( Jerry Hardin ) . Carter described the inspiration for the episode as " the result of a year @-@ long learning experience " .

= = Plot = =

In Ardis , Maryland , a high @-@ speed police chase unfolds at a waterfront . The driver of the car , Dr. William Secare , is cornered by officers but fights them off with surprising ease . Secare is shot as he runs up a gangplank and leaps off a ship into the water . The police fail to locate him but discover that his blood is green .

Soon afterwards , Deep Throat ( Jerry Hardin ) approaches Fox Mulder with Secare 's case , saying he is of major importance to revealing the truth . When investigating the case , Mulder and Dana Scully visit Dr. Terrance Berube ( Ken Kramer ) , a scientist working in Gaithersburg , Maryland , whose car was being driven by Secare . That night , Deep Throat meets a second time with Mulder and insists he continue , despite Mulder 's uncertainty on what he should be looking for . That night , Berube is confronted by the " Crew Cut Man " ( Lindsey Ginter ) , who kills him and makes the death look like a suicide .

While investigating the crime scene , Mulder finds an Erlenmeyer flask labeled " Purity Control . " Scully takes the flask to Georgetown University , where Dr. Anne Carpenter ( Anne De Salvo ) helps her analyze its contents . Meanwhile , Mulder heads to Berube 's home and finds keys for a storage facility . Secare calls Berube 's home office and Mulder answers , pretending to be Berube . Secare tells who he believes to be Berube that he 's been in the water for three days , and is hurt . Meanwhile , the Crew Cut Man eavesdrops on the conversation . Secare collapses due to blood loss before he can tell Mulder where he is . While he is driven away in an ambulance , a poisonous gas emits from Secare 's body when the paramedics perform a needle decompression . Secare recovers and flees from the ambulance .

Mulder arrives at the storage facility and finds five men suspended in tanks , as well as a sixth empty tank . Mulder is pursued when he leaves the facility but escapes . Carpenter reveals that the " Purity Control " flask contains a sample of bacteria that doesn 't exist anywhere in nature and can only be described as extraterrestrial . Upon revisiting the storage facility the next day with Scully , Mulder discovers the room to be completely empty . Deep Throat arrives , revealing that Berube was experimenting on humans with extraterrestrial viruses . Six terminally ill volunteers were experimented on , and all had begun recovering . When it was ordered that they be destroyed , Berube helped Secare escape .

Scully learns that Carpenter and her entire family have been killed in an automobile accident . Mulder returns to Berube 's home and finds Secare , who is killed by the Crew Cut Man . Mulder passes out from exposure to the gas escaping from Secare 's wound and is captured . Deep Throat meets Scully outside of Mulder 's apartment and says that he may be able to make a deal with Mulder 's captors . He gives Scully the credentials necessary to enter the High Containment Facility

at Fort Marlene , where Scully finds an alien fetus contained within liquid nitrogen . At an exchange on a freeway overpass , Deep Throat presents the fetus to the Crew Cut Man , who shoots him seconds later . Mulder is thrown out of the Crew Cut Man 's van as he drives off . Scully tends to Deep Throat , whose last words before dying are , " Trust no one " .

Several weeks later , a despondent Mulder calls Scully to inform her that the X @-@ Files have been shut down . Meanwhile , in a scene mirroring the conclusion to the pilot , the Smoking Man stores the alien fetus in the massive evidence room within the Pentagon .

= = Production = =

= = = Development = = =

Chris Carter wrote the teleplay for the episode , which he described as " the result of an year @-@ long learning experience " . Carter tried to firmly establish the mythology of the series , " where we explored the different avenues of government conspiracy , and turning it into more than just flying saucers " , and having what the writer called a " defining moment " for Scully , where the agent would hear from a fellow scientist that she was dealing with truly extraterrestrial material . The scene where poisonous fumes were emitted by Dr. Secare was inspired by the case of Gloria Ramirez , which occurred in California in February 1994 ; Carter remembered this when writing the script , and it became an established aspect of the mythology in subsequent seasons .

The writers killed off the recurring character " Deep Throat " to give audiences the impression that anyone outside of Fox Mulder and Dana Scully were expendable . The decision to shut down the X @-@ Files was done to separate Mulder and Scully , allowing the producers to work around Gillian Anderson 's pregnancy ( which contributed to an important plot development in the second season and affected the rest of the series ) . Fox initially opposed the idea , fearing that closing down the X @-@ Files would lead viewers to believe that the show had been cancelled .

The ending of this episode mirrors that of the " Pilot " , including Mulder calling Scully at 11 : 21 pm and the " Cigarette Smoking Man " storing evidence in The Pentagon . The tagline for this episode is " Trust No One " , replacing the usual phrase " The Truth is Out There " and referencing " Deep Throat " ' s last words . Executive producer R. W. Goodwin decided to make his directorial debut with the episode , as he considered it " the best script by far " , offering " a combination of elation and stark terror " .

= = = Filming and effects = = =

The opening car chase was shot by crew member J.P. Finn , who was the lone producer and directed much of the second unit . It was shot at an abandoned shipyard in North Vancouver known as Versatal Shipyard . Goodwin went so far as saying that the location " was perfect " for them to shoot in ; it would be reused in the third season episode " 2Shy . " The scene with Fox Mulder and Dana Scully visiting Doctor Berube ( Ken Kramer ) was a " big challenge " due to the use of monkeys ; Goodwin wanted the monkeys to all act " crazy " at the same time on cue when filming . When looking back , he said they did a " pretty good job " . The location used for the warehouse where Mulder finds the tanks had the address " 1616 Pandora " , which the producers decided to incorporate into the episode itself as a symbol of Mulder " opening Pandora 's box " .

The scene where Mulder has entered in the warehouse and searched for the room number utilizes an in @-@ camera dolly zoom effect .

The shot of Dr. Secare resurfacing out of the water was created by the visual effects unit . Actor Simon Webb was raised up on a crane under the water , which had been levered so that he could " actually " be raised out of the bay . According to Goodwin , the timing was not quite right , but that failed shot " worked " on a different level and proved to be a " fascinating shot " . The scene had to be re @-@ shot later , however . When filming the episode the production crew did not know that Webb had a phobia towards water . The first test shot of Scully removing the alien fetus doll from

liquid nitrogen went right , but under the hot studio lights the model started falling apart , leading the following take to flash the lighting in another direction .

= = Reception = =

This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 8 @. @ 8 , with a 16 share . It was viewed by 8 @. @ 3 million households , making it the most viewed episode of the first season . The Mystery Writers of America nominated " The Erlenmeyer Flask " for an Edgar Award in the Best Episode in a TV Series category ; the eventual recipient of the award was " Simone Says " of NYPD Blue . John Keegan from Critical Myth gave the episode 9 out of 10 , saying it was " the perfect ending to the first season " and a good introduction to The X @- @ Files mythology . Manuel Medoza from The Dallas Morning News said the episode was able to blend " absolutely chilling " moments with " completely silly " moments " at the same time " . Entertainment Weekly writer Bruce Fretts concluded that the death of " Deep Throat " made the character " very real " .

Crew members have also reacted positively towards the episode . Carter said of the episode : " The Erlenmeyer Flask brings back nothing but good memories . It just has terrific images in it ; it really brought the series in its first year full circle . It was successful in doing what we wanted to do , which was to close down the X @- @ Files . It shocked a lot of people " . Goodwin commented : " Everything about that episode is absolutely first class . The acting , the art direction , the camera work . There 's nothing in it that isn 't the best you can get , and that 's really a credit to a lot of very talented people " . The episode introduced many concepts and themes that would appear in the mythology episodes for the show throughout the years including genetic experiments , alien @- @ human hybrids , toxic alien blood , government conspiracies , alien fetuses and deadly assassins .