

= Well @-@ Manicured Man =

The Well @-@ Manicured Man is a fictional character in the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . He serves as an antagonist to FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) , being a member of the sinister Syndicate the agents seek to foil . Introduced in the third season , the Well @-@ Manicured Man served to highlight discord within the ranks of the Syndicate , and ultimately betrayed them by leaking information to Mulder before committing suicide in the series ' first feature film .

The character of the Well @-@ Manicured Man was portrayed by John Neville in all his appearances (eight episodes , and the feature film) . According to the series ' writers , the character represents a non @-@ violent " voice of reason " amongst the series ' antagonists . Neville 's portrayal of the Well @-@ Manicured Man has been positively received by critics , who have noted his " moral ambivalence " and " unnervingly genteel " manner .

= = Character arc = =

Introduced at the beginning of the third season , the Well @-@ Manicured Man is an English member of the Syndicate , a shadow organization within the United States government that exists to hide from the public the fact that aliens are planning to colonize the Earth . He is an important member of the Syndicate , along with The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) and The Elder , and was a friend of William Mulder earlier in his life .

The Well @-@ Manicured Man prefers subtlety to brute force , and will attempt to manipulate those in his way before using physical violence . Although the Syndicate 's goals are opposed to those of Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) , the Well @-@ Manicured Man will , at times , aid them with clues or information , believing that letting out a certain amount of information would help to keep the two close , and consequently allow for them to be controlled . The Well @-@ Manicured Man openly despises The Smoking Man , seeing him as impulsive and unprofessional . The two maintain a bitter relationship within the Syndicate throughout the series . The Well @-@ Manicured Man is instrumental in the Syndicate 's secondary agenda , to develop a vaccination against the black oil used by the aliens as a means of mind control . To this end , he works with Russian double agent Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) to develop a vaccine , eventually testing it ? successfully ? on a Syndicate mole , Marita Covarrubias (Laurie Holden) .

In the 1998 feature film The X @-@ Files , when Scully is infected with the black oil and taken to Antarctica , it is the Well @-@ Manicured Man who , having grown disillusioned with the Syndicate , gives Mulder the coordinates needed to find her and a sample of the vaccine needed to cure Scully . The colonists had kept secret a secondary characteristic of the black oil ? that those infected with it for prolonged periods would gestate a new colonist lifeform , killing the host . Upon discovering this , the Syndicate vowed to work more closely with the colonists in the hope of being spared this fate , while only the Well @-@ Manicured Man wished to continue working on a vaccination for resistance . This rejection led to his betrayal of the Syndicate , and to him committing suicide by car bomb before his duplicity was discovered .

= = Conceptual history = =

John Neville has stated that he was originally hired for just two episodes of the series , but that his character " was regularly brought back , because the audience simply doesn 't know if he stands for good or evil " . Series creator Chris Carter has described the character in terms of his relationship with The Smoking Man , noting that the two characters can be seen as " differing in approach , differing in philosophy and differing in personality " . Writer Frank Spotnitz has described the Well @-@ Manicured Man as " sort of the white knight to the Cigarette @-@ Smoking Man 's black knight in this chess game that we were playing " .

The character has also been described by Carter and Spotnitz as the " voice of reason " within the Syndicate , who " believes that violence is the wrong way to protect the secret " which they guard .

The Well @-@ Manicured Man 's suicide scene in the series ' film adaptation went through several conceptual iterations , with outcomes being considered including an imploding car or suicide by concussion grenade , although ultimately a car bomb scene was decided upon .

= = Reception = =

The character of the Well @-@ Manicured Man has been positively received by critics . MTV 's Tami Katzoff has called him a " legendary TV character " , noting his " moral ambivalence about the work of his shadow organization " and his ability to show " empathy for Mulder and Scully " . Writing for The A.V. Club , Sean O 'Neal praised the character 's " unnervingly genteel " manner , noting that he represented the polar opposite of The Smoking Man . Fellow A.V. Club writer Todd VanDerWerff has also been positive towards the Well @-@ Manicured Man , feeling that the series would have benefited from making more use of the character . The San Francisco Chronicle 's Bob Graham has praised Neville 's portrayal of the character in the feature film , calling his expository monologue " a Wagnerian demonstration of the art of declamation " . Writing for the Los Angeles Daily News , Michael Liedtke and George Avalos described the character as " white @-@ haired , urbane , genteel [?] and dangerous " , noting that he was " equally at ease in Virginia 's horse country , the tony rooms of Manhattan 's Upper West Side and the antiseptic halls of facilities that house bizarre medical experiments " . Den of Geek 's countdown of " The Top 10 X @-@ Files Baddies " described the Well @-@ Manicured Man as a " super @-@ smooth , super @-@ creep Brit " , noting that he served as " a ' boss ' of sorts " for the Smoking Man . Speaking of how the role eclipsed his other acting work , Neville has been quoted as saying " It 's OK , though . [The X @-@ Files] gave me a kind of profile that I didn 't have before , and one shouldn 't grumble about that " .