

= Jump the Shark (The X @-@ Files) =

" Jump the Shark " is the 15th episode of the ninth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . The episode first aired in the United States on April 21 , 2002 on the Fox network . It was written by executive producers Vince Gilligan , John Shiban and Frank Spotnitz , and directed by Cliff Bole . The episode is a " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week " episode ? unconnected to the series ' wider mythology ? and was created to give closure for The Lone Gunmen television series , which was a spin off of The X @-@ Files . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 5 @.@ 1 and was viewed by 8 @.@ 6 million viewers . The episode received mixed to negative reviews from television critics .

The show centers on FBI special agents who work on cases linked to the paranormal , called X @-@ Files ; this season focuses on the investigations of John Doggett (Robert Patrick) , Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) , and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) . In this episode , Doggett and Reyes attempt to locate a female friend of The Lone Gunmen after former Area 51 Man @-@ in @-@ Black Morris Fletcher appears and claims that she is actually a super @-@ soldier . What Doggett and Reyes soon discover is a bizarre plot to unleash a biological weapon via the use of grafted shark organs .

" Jump the Shark " features the death of The Lone Gunmen ? popular recurring characters who first appeared in the first season episode " E.B.E. " , although this plot was later retconned in the comic book series The X @-@ Files Season 10 . The episode proved difficult to make because , after the cancellation of The Lone Gunmen television series , Fox was adamant that the characters not have a featured role back on The X @-@ Files . (The characters did appear in four previous season 9 episodes , but always very briefly .) The choice to kill off the trio was controversial . Writers Spotnitz and Gilligan later revealed some regret with the way the episode was handled . However , actors Bruce Harwood and Dean Haglund were happy with the way the episode ended . The episode title is a humorous reference to the phrase " jumping the shark " , which is used to describe shows that are in decline to try a gimmick to get attention .

= = Plot = =

= = = Events = = =

The episode begins with Morris Fletcher (Michael McKean) on a boat in the Bahamas , where he is accosted by armed men and his vessel is blown up . When he is rescued and detained , he approaches FBI agents Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) and John Doggett (Robert Patrick) with information related to the super @-@ soldiers in exchange for his release . Doggett and Reyes turn to The Lone Gunmen when Fletcher provides an alleged photo of the super soldier , which The Lone Gunmen recognize as being Yves Adele Harlow (Zuleikha Robinson) , a fellow hacker who went missing a year ago . The Gunmen refuse to believe the evidence , especially when they find that Fletcher provided it , although the agents continue to pursue the trail .

Meanwhile , Harlow murders a biology professor , cuts out an organ and disposes of it in a furnace . After the Gunmen capture her , she reveals that he had been experimenting with the immune system of sharks and had been grafting pieces of shark onto his body in order to become a living host to a biological weapon . His research had been funded by Yves 's arms dealing father , who had commissioned Fletcher to find her and prevent her from stopping his biological terrorism plot . She further informs them that there is another host , whom she is trying to identify and locate before he can unleash his deadly payload .

Once Fletcher realizes that he has been used by Harlow 's father , he teams with the Gunmen to help Harlow find the second bioterrorist . After a few false starts and chases , the Lone Gunmen corner the bioterrorist with only a few minutes before his virus is due to be released . They realize that they lack the time to destroy his virus @-@ filled organ and therefore pull a fire alarm , causing large emergency doors to seal shut , simultaneously containing the virus and entrapping them with it

. Their sacrifice earns them a final resting place in Arlington National Cemetery , where Fletcher , Doggett , Reyes , Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) , Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) , Harlow and Jimmy Bond (Stephen Snedden) pay their respects to them .

== Retcon ==

In the comic book adaptation of the series The X @-@ Files Season 10 ? which takes place after the events of The X @-@ Files : I Want to Believe ? it is revealed that the Lone Gunmen are alive and well , having faked their deaths during the events of " Jump the Shark " . The group was aided by the FBI and have since been working underground , aiding the US government ; for instance , Langly mentions that he was responsible for the Stuxnet virus in 2010 .

Mulder later makes reference to The Lone Gunmen 's survival in the tenth season episode , " Babylon " .

== Production ==

" Jump the Shark " was written by Vince Gilligan , John Shiban , and Frank Spotnitz ; it was directed by Cliff Bole . The episode proved difficult to make . After the cancellation of The Lone Gunmen television series , which aired in 2001 , Fox reportedly " hated [the] characters " . Executive producer and co @-@ writer Frank Spotnitz had to fight to get the episode made ; the studio informed Spotnitz that they did not want to bring the characters back in any capacity in the ninth season . Actor Bruce Harwood later explained that " I think if the studio objected to anything , it was wasting time on our characters long enough to kill us off . " Co @-@ writer Gilligan later recalled " The Lone Gunmen was still kind of an open wound for me . " Thus , the episode was crafted as a way to wrap up the series . Due to the nature of the episode ? which effectively works as a tie @-@ in ? various long @-@ term characters from both The X @-@ Files and The Lone Gunmen make cameo appearances .

The episode title is a humorous reference to the phrase " jumping the shark " , coined when Fonzie did a water ski jump of a shark pen on Happy Days , which is used to describe shows that have reached their peak and started to decline in quality . Executive producer Chris Carter said that the title was tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek , and further stated that it was their " way of lowering the boom on anybody who thought that it did " . He further stated that the series was " good " until the end , even after the departure of David Duchovny as Fox Mulder . According to IGN , the episode 's title was a homage to the popular website Jump the Shark . In fact , during the commentary for " Jump the Shark " , Vince Gilligan makes a direct reference to the website .

Various plotlines leaked before the episode 's release , the most notable being the death of the Lone Gunmen . The choice to kill off the trio was controversial ; Gilligan himself later admitted that " I still think we made the wrong choice on that one . " Spotnitz later said , " I can 't say I regret killing them off , as you know , no one really dies in The X @-@ Files [...] But I do feel tonally it was a mistake to end the episode on such a somber note . I wish we 'd ended it on a laugh or smile . " The actors who played The Lone Gunmen complimented the script . Harwood admitted that the episode would have either featured the trio 's death or would have featured them " walk [ing] off into the sunset without hobo bags over our shoulders . " Ultimately , he concluded that " I was glad we were killed off in the end " . Dean Haglund said that he " liked the way we were sent off " , and called the ending " cool " .

== Reception ==

" Jump the Shark " first aired on the Fox network in the United States on April 21 , 2002 . The episode later aired in the United Kingdom on Sky One and later on BBC One on 23 February 2003 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 5 @.@ 1 , meaning that it was seen by 5 @.@ 1 % of the nation 's estimated households and was viewed by 5 @.@ 38 million households , and 8 @.@ 6 million viewers . " Jump the Shark " was the 58th most watched episode of television that

aired during the week ending April 21 .

The episode received mixed to negative reviews from television critics . Aaron Kinney from Salon magazine said that the episode title showed that the creators at least still had a sense of humor , but that the episode demonstrated some of the flaws that caused the series to jump the shark in the first place : " cheesy melodrama , deathly slow pacing , and a lack of coherence " . John Keegan from Critical Myth was also negative about the episode and awarded it a 4 out of 10 . He called it " one of the worst episodes of the season " , and hoped that it was no indication of what the series finale was going to be like . Furthermore , Keegan criticized the fact that David Duchovny did not make a cameo appearance " either full frame or in the distance " , given his history with the Lone Gunmen . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen , rated the episode one star out of five , and noted that " there 's nothing celebratory " about the entry . The two were highly critical of the episode 's conclusion , calling it " such a bland way of dying that for a moment , you feel you must have missed the point " . Shearman and Pearson , furthermore , argued that " The Lone Gunmen deserved better . No , worse than that ? we deserved better . " M.A. Crang , in his book Denying the Truth : Revisiting The X @-@ Files after 9 / 11 , criticized the " goofy tone " of the episode , saying it felt " very out of place " within the context of the series .