

= Demons ( The X @-@ Files ) =

" Demons " is the twenty @-@ third episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network in the United States on May 11 , 1997 and in the United Kingdom on BBC One on February 25 , 1998 . It was written by R. W. Goodwin and directed by Kim Manners . The episode helps explore the series ' overarching mythology . " Demons " received a Nielsen rating of 11 @.@ 8 , being watched by 19 @.@ 1 million viewers in its initial broadcast . The episode received mostly positive reviews from television critics , with many complimenting the episode 's look in Mulder 's mind .

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 . In this episode , Mulder wakes up in a hotel with blood all over him and no memory what happened . Mulder and Scully soon discover that Mulder was involved in a double homicide and may have been the killer . It is soon revealed that Mulder had been seeing a doctor who had allowed him to view glimpses of his past memories . After evidence becomes paramount , Mulder is cleared of the murder charges .

The episode was written by R. W. Goodwin , an executive producer and director for the show . This marked the second instance where a member of the production crew wrote an episode , after the third season entry " Wetwired " , written by Mat Beck . The episode was influenced by An Anthropologist on Mars , a series of essays by Oliver Sacks , in particular The Landscape of Dreams featuring a man who could recall every detail of his childhood . During the flashback sequences in the episode , various effects were created by manipulating the camera and its film .

= = Plot = =

Fox Mulder 's ( David Duchovny ) mind flashes back to being in the attic with his sister Samantha while their parents are arguing downstairs . Back in the present , Mulder awakens in a hotel room in Providence , Rhode Island , covered in blood . Mulder calls Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) , who arrives , finding him in shock . Mulder has a pounding headache and has no memory of what he has done in the past two days . Scully finds that two bullets have been fired from Mulder 's gun and that he has keys belonging to a David and Amy Cassandra . Scully wants Mulder to check into a hospital , but he wants to find out if he was involved in a crime before doing so . The agents arrive at the Cassandra 's house where the housekeeper tells them they are not at home . Mulder recognizes a house in many of Cassandra 's paintings : a house that is near his parent 's summer home in Rhode Island . When they arrive there , Mulder has striking pains in his head and flashes back again to when he was a child , seeing a younger version of The Smoking Man ( Chris Owens ) in his home . The agents enter the home , where they find the Cassandras dead from gunshot wounds .

The agents call the police , who take Mulder with them due to the circumstantial evidence against him . Scully performs an autopsy on Amy Cassandra , finding a scab on her forehead . The detective in charge of the case tells Mulder that they have found David and Amy 's blood on his shirt . Mulder refuses to confess to the murders , not remembering anything . Scully arrives , saying she found in Amy 's blood traces of ketamine , an anesthetic substance that has hallucinogenic properties . The substance was detected in Mulder 's blood as well . Meanwhile , one of the officers at the station kills himself ; he has similar symptoms to that of the Cassandras . Mulder suffers a seizure and flashes back to his childhood again , witnessing his parents arguing with The Smoking Man . Scully sees Mulder the next day , telling him that she believes that the Cassandras killed themselves after receiving psychiatric treatment and that Mulder was visiting them about their alien abduction experiences .

The agents visit Dr. Goldstein in Warwick , Rhode Island , who was treating Amy with an aggressive method to help her recover her abduction memories . Goldstein also treated the police officer , but says he has not met Mulder before . Mulder has another painful flashback of The Smoking Man arguing with his mother , Teena Mulder . Mulder declines Scully 's request that he go to the hospital and goes to visit his mother , demanding she explain what really happened when they had to make

a choice between him and Samantha . Mulder believes that The Smoking Man forced them to take Samantha . Mulder also questions who his father really is . Mulder 's mother gets upset and refuses to provide him answers . Later Mulder visits Goldstein , and convinces him to again treat him so he will remember what really happened . Mulder has further visions of the past . Scully and the police arrive soon after to arrest Goldstein but find Mulder gone . Scully finds him at the family 's summer home in Rhode Island and is able to calm him down . While Mulder is cleared in the deaths of the Cassandras , what truly happened when he was a child remains a mystery .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

The episode was written by R. W. Goodwin , an executive producer and director for the show . This was the second instance where a member of the production crew wrote an episode , the first being Mat Beck 's " Wetwired " . Goodwin was inspired to write the episode after reading An Anthropologist on Mars , a series of essays by Oliver Sacks , in particular The Landscape of Dreams featuring a man who could recall every detail of his childhood . Goodwin came up with the idea of having Fox Mulder waking up in a strange place with no idea how he got there . After receiving approval from series creator Chris Carter , Goodwin spent approximately six weeks writing the episode .

The episode helped to elaborate the backstory of The Smoking Man , the series ' chief antagonist . William B. Davis , the actor who played the character , later noted , " As the story developed , we developed a relationship between Cigarette @-@ Smoking Man and Mulder 's apparent father , and Cigarette @-@ Smoking Man and Mulder 's mother ; then we started backfilling with an historical connection . " Carter explained that the episode was the start of the series ' greater conspiracy : " It 's an interesting development because it really was the development of the conspiracy . The elements of the conspiracy were part of his development . But [ The Smoking Man 's ] back story , of course , intertwined with Mulder 's . " Actor Chris Owens reprised his role as The Smoking Man ; he had previously played him in the season 's earlier episode " Musings of a Cigarette Smoking Man " .

The crux of the episode relied on the idea that Geschwind syndrome ? the ability to recall every memory of one 's younger life ? could be incurred via a combination of technology and drugs , a situation that is certainly not supported by modern medicine . Goodwin , however , himself admitted that this was completely a creative license he took with the disorder . In addition , he also based a majority of Dr. Goldstein 's equipment on various New Age equipment , including a " brain stimulator " .

= = = Filming = = =

The home where the Cassandras were murdered was filmed at a farmhouse in South Surrey , near locations used for filming the episodes " Home " and " Tunguska " . The farmhouse was rented and refurbished by the show 's art department , although this restoration was only used for pre @-@ production photographs and the farmhouse was returned to its original state for the actual filming . The paintings of the house were created with Adobe Photoshop and Fractal Painter .

During the flashback sequences in the episode , various effects were created by manipulating the camera and its film . The camera 's shuttering mechanism was " continuously stopped and started " to give the scene an " out @-@ of @-@ time " feel . A majority of the effects were created in post @-@ production . The entire sequence 's colors were manipulated during film development ; the film 's negatives were filtered with strobe lights . Furthermore , the scene 's dialogue was mixed with background noise and then filtered by Paul Rabwin .

= = Reception = =

" Demons " was originally broadcast in the United States on the Fox network on May 11 , 1997 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC One on February 25 , 1998 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 8 , with an 18 share , meaning that roughly 11 @. @ 8 percent of all television @- @ equipped households , and 18 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 19 @. @ 10 million viewers .

Critical response to the episode was mostly positive . Zack Handlen from The A.V. Club wrote highly of the episode and awarded it an A ? . Handlen praised the episode 's exploration of Mulder 's mind , noting that the entry allowed the audience to see Mulder 's views of the world . He argued that " Mulder 's desperate need to understand what happened to his sister [ ? ] drives him to expect betrayal , because at least with betrayal , the world makes some kind of sense . " He did write , however , that he was " a little disappointed at how " Demons " doesn 't really hold up in retrospect from a story perspective , " but noted that " what does work here is great . " John Keegan from Critical Myth awarded the episode an 8 out of 10 and wrote , " Overall , this episode continued to strip away , in methodical fashion , Mulder ? s psychological support system . [ ? ] While there are some plot contrivances that are troubling , the episode as a whole comes together very well . " Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a largely positive review and awarded it three @- @ and @- @ a @- @ half stars out of four . She wrote that " Demons " works " as a character study of Mulder " and praised the episode 's " hyper @- @ realistic flashback " sequences . Vitaris , while calling the structure of the story " not particularly imaginative " , wrote that " Mulder 's condition is intriguing " . Not all reviews were positive . 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 @- @ and @- @ a @- @ half stars out of five , calling it " the wrong episode at the wrong time . " The two argued that the attention given to Mulder 's potential " aneurysm " are oddly juxtaposed next to Scully 's real , life @- @ threatening brain cancer . However , they did call the flashback sequences " masterpieces of editing " , but noted that their contents " lack [ ed ] information " .