

= Ghost in the Machine ( The X @-@ Files ) =

" Ghost in the Machine " is the seventh episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It was broadcast by the Fox Broadcasting Company on October 29 , 1993 . " Ghost in the Machine " was written by Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon and directed by Jerrold Freedman . The episode featured guest appearances by Wayne Duvall and Rob LaBelle , and saw Jerry Hardin reprise his role as Deep Throat for the first time since the character 's introduction . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Ghost in the Machine " earned a Nielsen household rating of 5 @. @ 9 , being watched by 5 @. @ 6 million households in its initial broadcast , and received mixed reviews from critics .

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 is asked by his old partner from the Behavioral Analysis Unit to aid an investigation into a murder at a software company . Soon , he and Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) uncover a malevolent artificial intelligence which has started killing to protect itself .

Writers Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa have admitted they were " not computer literate " , and felt this was a detriment to their writing . The scenes set at the software company Eurisko were filmed in Burnaby 's Metrotower complex , a building used by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service . The location was barely big enough for the actors to perform in after the crew had finished setting up the necessary equipment . The X @-@ Files team would once again face a malevolent AI in the William Gibson @-@ penned fifth season episode " Kill Switch " .

= = Plot = =

In the Crystal City , Virginia headquarters of the software company Eurisko , founder Brad Wilczek and chief executive officer Benjamin Drake argue about downsizing measures . After Wilczek leaves , Drake writes a memo proposing to shut down the Central Operating System , a computer which runs the Eurisko Building . Seeing this through a surveillance camera , the COS sets up a trap and lures Drake into a bathroom , locking the door behind him . Drake tries to use his keycard to open it , but it rejects the card . When he inserts a manual override key , he is fatally electrocuted .

FBI agent Jerry Lamana , Fox Mulder 's former partner , approaches him and Dana Scully for help in investigating Drake 's murder . On their way up to Drake 's office , the agents ' elevator stalls , causing Scully to call the front desk for help ; as she identifies herself , the COS records her contact information . While examining the crime scene , the agents meet Claude Peterson , Eurisko 's building systems engineer . Later , Lamana steals Mulder 's profile of the supposed killer and presents it under his name ; an outraged Mulder confronts him afterwards .

Mulder and Scully question Wilczek , who denies any involvement in the murder . Scully initially doubts Wilczek 's involvement , but finds that his voice matches a speaking clock Drake received before his death ; Lamana sets out to arrest him . Meanwhile , Wilczek fails to access the COS from his home computer . Concerned , he travels to Eurisko 's headquarters , followed by Lamana . There , he is still unable to access the COS , but discovers that it has learned to talk . Lamana arrives , but is killed when the COS causes his elevator to crash .

Mulder meets with Deep Throat , who explains that the COS is an artificial intelligence developed by Wilczek , and that the Department of Defense is trying to acquire it . Mulder also meets with Wilczek , who has falsely confessed to Lamana 's murder . Mulder convinces Wilczek to develop a computer virus that can destroy the COS . Scully doesn 't accept Mulder 's belief that the COS is sentient , but later discovers the machine hacking into her computer . She joins Mulder at the Eurisko Building to help him destroy the machine .

The COS hinders the agents as they make their way inside . When it shuts down the building 's power , Scully climbs through the air vents and is almost pulled into a giant fan , but manages to destroy it . Meanwhile , Mulder is permitted into the COS ' control room by Peterson . However , Peterson reveals himself as a mole for the Defense Department and tries to stop Mulder uploading

the virus . Scully arrives and holds Peterson at gunpoint , allowing Mulder to upload the virus and destroy the COS .

Meeting with Deep Throat again , Deep Throat explains that Wilczek is being detained by the government at an undisclosed location . When Mulder asks if the COS survived , Deep Throat assures him the virus left no trace of it , and that scientists from the Defense Department have unsuccessfully examined the machine for any remaining signs of the program . At the Eurisko Building , Peterson directs a team attempting to recover the COS , but is told by his superiors to destroy the machine in six hours . Unbeknownst to Peterson , the COS comes back to life and watches as he says to himself , " I 'm going to figure this thing out if it kills me " .

= = Production = =

The scenes set at the software company Eurisko were filmed in Burnaby 's Metrotower complex , a building used by the Canadian Security Intelligence Service . The location was barely big enough for the actors to perform in after the crew had finished setting up the necessary equipment . The scene with Dana Scully shooting the fan in the air shaft was a last minute change to the script , replacing an elevator shaft sequence that was deemed too expensive . The episode 's title is taken from the title of the book *The Ghost in the Machine* by Arthur Koestler . The Central Operating System and its actions in the episode are an homage to 2001 : A Space Odyssey 's HAL 9000 , who ? due to conflicted programming ? also became confused and killed people . The X @-@ Files team would once again face a malevolent AI in the William Gibson @-@ penned fifth season episode " Kill Switch " .

Writers Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa have admitted they were " not computer literate " , and felt this was a detriment to their writing . Gordon was disappointed in the episode , stating that it " still qualifies as one of my biggest disappointments " , ranking it as the worst episode of the first season . Glen Morgan felt that " parts of the episode worked . What maybe fell a little flat is that we were a little too afraid of doing HAL and , in a sense , I think that 's what the building needed ; to have a scary personality . " James Wong had mixed feelings , saying that the episode " had some neat stuff at the end ... although I think the ending was a little unsatisfying to me visually , as well as in terms of how Mulder comes to dismember the machine . Overall a fun episode . " Chris Carter was more supportive of the episode , stating that the script addressed the question of what made up an X @-@ File , and that it doesn 't always have to be paranormal . He also felt positive about the episode 's action scenes .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Ghost in the Machine " premiered on the Fox network on October 29 , 1993 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on November 3 , 1994 . Following its initial American broadcast , the episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 5 @.@ 9 , with an 11 share ? meaning that roughly 5 @.@ 9 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 11 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 5 @.@ 6 million households .

In a retrospective of the first season in *Entertainment Weekly* , " Ghost in the Machine " was rated a D + . The episode 's premise and the COS system were described as " unacknowledged 2001 rip @-@ offs " , while the presence of Deep Throat was called " gratuitous " ; with both cited , along with an " absence of humor " , as the episode 's main detractors . Keith Phipps , writing for *The A.V. Club* , was more favourable to the episode , rating it a B- . He felt that the similarities to 2001 : A Space Odyssey and *Demon Seed* were effective , adding however , that although the plot worked well , it had dated poorly . Matt Haigh , writing for *Den of Geek* , reviewed the episode negatively , feeling that the plot was " formulaic " , and that it " simply [ has ] not stood the test of time " . However , Haigh felt that Deep Throat 's appearance was a highlight of the episode , and praised Mark Snow 's score as " extremely atmospheric " . The plot for " Ghost in the Machine " was also adapted as a novel for young adults in 1997 by Les Martin .

The Guardian listed " Ghost in the Machine " as one of the " 13 best X @-@ Files episodes ever " .