

= Scary Monsters (The X @-@ Files) =

" Scary Monsters " is the fourteenth episode of the ninth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It originally aired on the Fox network on April 14 , 2002 . It was written by Thomas Schnauz and directed by Dwight H. Little . The episode is a " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week " episode , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the mythology , or overarching fictional history , of The X @-@ Files . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 5 @. @ 1 and was viewed by 8 @. @ 2 million viewers in its initial broadcast . It received mixed to positive 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 , Special Agent Leyla Harrison (Jolie Jenkins) takes Reyes and Doggett on a drive into the mountains after a woman stabs herself repeatedly and her widowed husband refuses to let anyone see their son . The three soon discover that the boy 's imagination can bring killer bug @-@ like creatures to life .

The idea for " Scary Monsters " stemmed from an idea that became the episode 's teaser . Fellow writer Vince Gilligan suggested making Tommy the episode 's villain . Originally , the story featured Doggett and Reyes investigating the case with a new agent . Executive producer Frank Spotnitz suggested to Schnauz that the new FBI agent should be Leyla Harrison , played by Jolie Jenkins , who had first appeared in the Spotnitz @-@ penned eighth season episode " Alone " . The writing staff used Leyla 's character to comment on the state of the show and , most notably , the members of the audience who preferred Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) over Doggett .

= = Plot = =

In his room in Fairhope , Pennsylvania , Tommy Conlon (Gavin Fink) believes he sees a monster reflected in his mirror . He calls for his dad , Jeffrey Conlon (Scott Paulin) , who looks under the bed and sees a crawling bug @-@ like creature . He lies to his son and tells him to go back to sleep . Tommy sees the creature again and calls for his dad ; Jeffrey holds the door shut .

Meanwhile , Agent Leyla Harrison (Jolie Jenkins) tells Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) about a woman who stabbed herself repeatedly . Harrison insists that the case is an X @-@ File and that the woman was killed by monsters that her son Tommy saw . She also believes that the monster killed the family cat , Spanky . Although Scully dismisses Harrison 's claims , John Doggett (Robert Patrick) and Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) decide to investigate . The three arrive in Fairhope , Pennsylvania where Tommy and Jeffrey are living . The agents talk to Tommy and conclude that something is going on . They soon discover that their car will not start . Back at her apartment , Scully is visited by Gabe Rotter (Brian Poth) , a potential suitor of Harrison 's . He presents Scully with the corpse of Spanky . Scully does an ad hoc necropsy and concludes that the cat bit its stomach open to try to get something out . She also discovers a cavity , where it appears something had lived inside the cat .

Doggett , Reyes , and Harrison camp out at the Conlon 's house and soon stumble upon the monsters that Tommy sees : insect @-@ like creatures that divide in half if shot by bullets . The local sheriff (Steve Ryan) arrives , alerted by Scully , but a scuffle ensues . The sheriff draws a gun , and Doggett punches him , only to have his hand go completely through the man 's chest . Upon investigation , Reyes is unable to find any organs in the man 's body . Tommy soon shows Reyes the pictures he has been drawing . They include the insect creatures , the sheriff with a gun , and Reyes with an insect creature bursting out of her stomach .

Suddenly , the sheriff 's body disappears , and Reyes doubles over in pain . Doggett and Harrison pull up her shirt to reveal bulges in her stomach , as if something is trying to get out . Harrison then begins to bleed from her eyes . Doggett is tricked into falling into a blackened abyss , where he is attacked by the insects , but , due to his skepticism , he is able to fight off the illusions . He explains to Jeffrey that all of the creatures are imaginary and are produced by Tommy 's imagination . This includes the bugs , as well as the " sheriff " who had no organs . Jeffrey 's wife and their cat Spanky

killed themselves trying to remove the insect creatures , believing they were real .

Doggett manages to trick and subdue Tommy ? by pretending to set the house on fire ? and Tommy is transported to a psychiatric ward , where his imagination is stifled by watching several televisions all at the same time .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

" Scary Monsters " was written by Thomas Schnauz , who had previously penned the ninth season episode " Lord of the Flies " . The entry was directed by Dwight H. Little , his first and only directing credit for the series . Schnauz later admitted that his inspiration for the episode was " basically panic " . He explained that the writing staff needed to get the script done as quickly as possible , but Schnauz only had the teaser conceived . When he went to pitch it , he even had a " whole other story that wasn 't working . " Fellow writer Vince Gilligan suggested that Schnauz make the child the root of the all of the episode 's problems . However , the writing staff did not want the story to develop into a " kid @-@ in @-@ the @-@ cornfield " territory , according to Gilligan ? a reference to a 1961 episode of The Twilight Zone wherein a monster @-@ child can control the world through his mental powers . Eventually , when the writers began to piece the script together , they realized that they needed a villain , and the only character that could play the part would be Tommy .

= = = Filming = = =

Schnauz 's original story featured Doggett and Reyes investigating the case with a new agent . Executive producer Frank Spotnitz suggested to Schnauz that the new FBI agent should be Leyla Harrison , played by Jolie Jenkins . Harrison had first appeared in the Spotnitz @-@ penned eighth season episode " Alone " . Jenkins ' character was created and named in memory of a The X @-@ Files internet fan and prolific writer of fan fiction of the same name , who had died of cancer on February 10 , 2001 . Jenkins ' characterization , according to Spotnitz , brought out the " Clint [Eastwood] " in Robert Patrick 's character John Doggett and her performance was called " near perfection " by Spotnitz during the audio commentary for " Alone " . Near the end of " Scary Monsters " , Leyla and Gabe Rotter were supposed to walk off @-@ screen , holding hands , which prompted series director Kim Manners to sardonically ask " when did this turn into the fucking Brady Bunch ? " The sequence was subsequently cut .

The writing staff used Leyla 's character to comment on the state of the show and , most notably , the members of the audience who preferred Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) over Doggett . Due to Harrison 's extensive knowledge of the X @-@ Files , the episode contains several references to previous episodes . Harrison suggests early on that Doggett and Reyes may be dealing with a person capable of channeling electricity , a reference to the third season entry " D.P.O. " Doggett later suggests that the three of them may be experiencing some sort of hallucination , and cites the events in the sixth season episode " Field Trip " as an example . Furthermore , when Tommy shows Reyes his drawing , he tells her " I made this " , a potential reference to the tagline at the end of every Ten Thirteen Production .

During the filming of the episode , The X @-@ Files was canceled by the Fox network , meaning that the show would not return for a tenth season . Robert Patrick explained that series creator Chris Carter watched him film a scene ? an act which he had reportedly not done since Patrick had been hired in 2000 ? and then informed him of the show 's cancellation . Patrick noted that Fox 's new show 24 was being heavily promoted instead of The X @-@ Files , an act which he felt was like being " abandoned by Fox " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Scary Monsters " originally aired in the United States on the Fox network on April 14 , 2002 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on February 16 , 2003 . The episode 's initial broadcast was viewed by approximately 5 @. @ 4 million households and 8 @. @ 2 million viewers , making it the fifty @- @ seventh most watched episode of television that aired during the week ending January 27 . " Scary Monsters " earned a Nielsen household rating of 5 @. @ 1 , meaning that it was seen by 5 @. @ 1 % of the nation 's estimated households .

The episode received mixed to positive reviews from television critics . Jessica Morgan from Television Without Pity awarded the episode a " C ? " grade . John Keegan from Critical Myth gave the episode a largely positive review and awarded it an 8 out of 10 . He wrote , " Overall , this was a very enjoyable and balanced episode . It gave us the scares , the humor , and the layered commentary that we had come to expect from the series . With only five episodes to go , it ? s the perfect time for 1013 to be giving the series a good bit of resolution , even if it ? s more metaphorical than actual . " 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 four stars out of five . The two enjoyed Schnauz 's script , calling it " better than most " of season nine 's episodes , and noted that he wrote it with " pace and wit " . They noted , however , that the entry 's self @- @ references " feel like carping [?] at the audience who are still left to complain . " Despite this , Shearman and Pearson also positively critiqued several of the episode 's juxtapositions , such as the scene featuring Scully performing an autopsy on a cat while wearing a kitchen apron that says " something smells goooood " , calling them " the funniest of the season " . M.A. Crang , in his book *Denying the Truth : Revisiting The X @- @ Files after 9 / 11* , called the episode a " solid little entry " , saying that it was a " nice spin on the isolation stories that the series has always done so effectively " .