

= Excelsis Dei =

" Excelsis Dei " is the eleventh episode of the second season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered in the United States on the Fox network on December 16 , 1994 . It was written by Paul Brown and directed by Stephen Surjik . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Excelsis Dei " earned a Nielsen household rating of 8 @. @ 9 , being watched by 8 @. @ 5 million households in its initial broadcast . The episode received mixed reviews from television critics ; although some complimented the episode 's effects , others were critical of the way the show handled rape .

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 the episode Mulder and Scully are called in to investigate a claim of rape made by a nurse at a nursing home ; the case falls into the purview of the X @-@ Files because the assailant appears to have been a disembodied spirit .

Surjik personally asked if he could direct the episode because he was a fan of the series ; this was his only credit for the series . Filming the episode was difficult for the cast and crew due largely to the fact that the script arrived for the cast and crew to film only two days in advance . Other issues arose because of technical reasons ; one scene required flooding a hallway with 3 @, @ 300 gallons of water . Many of the scenes were filmed at Riverview Hospital , a mental health facility located in Coquitlam , British Columbia .

= = Plot = =

Agents Fox Mulder ( David Duchovny ) and Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) are called to the Excelsis Dei private nursing home in Worcester , Massachusetts in order to investigate a nurse 's claim that she was raped by an invisible entity . Severely bruised , Michelle Charters ( Teryl Rothery ) claims that she knows who was responsible and names the attacker as Hal Arden , an elderly resident of Excelsis Dei . When questioned , Arden admits that he made sexual overtures to her , but claims that it was harmless and that he is too elderly to have done anything .

As Mulder and Scully investigate , they discover a Malaysian orderly is illicitly giving the patients an herbal drug made of mushrooms he cultures in the building 's basement . The drug cures their Alzheimer 's , but also allows them to see the spirits of people who have died in the nursing home and channel them into existence . In this state , the spirits assault and murder the orderlies that have looked down on them and treated them poorly while they were patients . When a patient overdoses on the drug , the spirits once again attack Charters , trapping her and Mulder in the bathroom , which begins flooding .

As Scully and the home 's head doctor manage to stop the patient 's seizures , the spirits disappear and the bathroom door gives way , freeing Mulder and Charters . The government of Massachusetts takes over the facility , and the orderly supplying the medicine is turned over to immigration services . The remaining original patients , no longer having access to the drug , revert to their previous state of dementia .

= = Production = =

" Excelsis Dei " was written by Paul Brown , his second and last script after the earlier episode " Ascension " . The episode was directed by Stephen Surjik , his only credit for the series . Surjik requested to direct an episode because he was a fan of the show . The episode was noticeably difficult to create ; the book The Complete X @-@ Files notes that the entry " gave the staff headaches ? both during the shoot and editing process " . This was due largely to the fact that the script arrived for the cast and crew to film only two days in advance . In order to film the scene featuring the bathroom door bursting with water ? a scene Matt Hurwitz and Chris Knowles called " nail @-@ biting " ? special effects supervisor Dave Gauthier built a tank and flooded the set hallway

with 3 @, @ 300 gallons of water . One part of the episode that never made the final cut was an extended look at Michelle 's love life . In the script , she is explicitly described as a lesbian and her lover enters her apartment to talk to her . Series creator Chris Carter eventually decided to remove the scene because he felt it " felt gratuitous at that point " .

Many of the scenes were filmed at Riverview Hospital , a mental health facility located in Coquitlam , British Columbia . While filming at the site , several of the members of the production staff claimed they heard mysterious voices and did not dare to " venture into the bowels of the building " for fear that the location was haunted . The episode features several actresses that had previously had parts in other episode of The X @-@ Files . Tasha Simms , who portrayed the daughter of Stan Phillips in the episode , had previously played the part of Cindy Reardon 's mother in the first season episode " Eve " . Sheila Moore , who had appeared as a background character in the episode " Deep Throat " appears in the episode as the director of the home .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Excelsis Dei " premiered in the United States on the Fox network on December 16 , 1994 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 8 @. @ 9 , with a 15 share , meaning that roughly 8 @. @ 9 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 15 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 8 @. @ 5 million households .

Critical reception to the episode was mostly mixed . Entertainment Weekly gave the episode a grade of B- , calling it " offbeat and cute " . Zack Handlen from The A.V. Club was mixed , writing that " the handling of the rape case left a bad taste in my mouth " and that the resolution was " a bit fuzzy " . John Keegan from Critical Myth gave the episode a mixed review and awarded it a 6 / 10 , noting " Overall , this episode focused on a very interesting concept , but the execution of that concept is so hopelessly convoluted that it ? s lost in the shuffle . However , using the disturbing and abusive atmosphere of a nursing home as a setting provides chills without the addition of sinister spirits , so on a gut level , the episode works well . " Sarah Stegall awarded the episode three stars out of five and noted " could have gotten five [ stars ] out of five " , but that the episode 's lack of closure and the presence of too many questions left unresolved caused it to be less than one of " the best episodes " . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen , gave the episode a largely critical review and rated it one star out of five . The two referred to the entry as " the idiot 's version " of the earlier episode " One Breath " . Shearman and Pearson derided the handling of the rape , noting that " there 's a sour atmosphere to the whole proceedings " , pointing out that " only Scully shows the slightest concern that a woman 's been sexually assaulted . " However , the two called the ghost effects " eerie " , but concluded that the scripting was " very stupid " .