

= Vienen =

" Vienen " is the eighteenth episode of the eighth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files , and is the 179th episode overall . The episode first aired in the United States and Canada on April 29 , 2001 , on the Fox Network , and in the United Kingdom on June 7 . It was written by staff member Steven Maeda , was directed by Rod Hardy , and forms part of the series ' overarching mythology . The episode received a Nielsen household rating of 7 @. @ 4 and was viewed by 11 @. @ 8 million viewers . " Vienen " received mixed to positive reviews from critics , many of whom appreciated its hearkening @-@ back to the older mythology of The X @-@ Files .

The season centers on FBI special agents Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) , her new partner John Doggett (Robert Patrick) , and Scully 's former partner Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) , who work on X @-@ Files ? cases linked to the paranormal . In this episode , Mulder disobeys orders to stay away from the X @-@ Files and finds himself stranded on a quarantined oil platform with Doggett . They soon discover that the crew has been infected with the black oil , an alien virus that Mulder and Scully have encountered many times before . Despite their dislike for each other , Mulder and Doggett team up and escape before the infected crew members are able to capture and kill them .

The episode was a series milestone , and features the last appearance of the alien black oil before the series finale , where it appeared via flashback ? a plot device that plays a significant role in the series and in the 1998 X @-@ Files movie . The oil effects were created using chocolate syrup and molasses . Principal filming for " Vienen " was carried out at three locations : an oil platform , an oil refinery , and on a specially @-@ created set . The episode 's title is a Spanish word meaning " they come " or " they are coming " , and has been interpreted as foreshadowing the show 's Super Soldier narrative arc . Elements of the plot have been compared to the ancient Greek religious and mythological figure Orpheus .

= = Plot = =

Simon de la Cruz , a worker on an oil platform in the Gulf of Mexico , fatally stabs fellow crew member Ed Dell , the radio operator . He then starts destroying the platform 's radio equipment but is confronted by Bo Taylor , whose body begins to glow .

At FBI headquarters , Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) tells John Doggett (Robert Patrick) about the murder and explains that ninety percent of de la Cruz 's body was covered with apparent radiation burns . Galpex Petroleum , the platform 's owner , officially attributes the burns to an explosion but Mulder suspects the involvement of black oil . Mulder and Doggett meet Galpex 's vice @-@ president Martin Ortega (Miguel Sandoval) , who tells them that the company has discovered a large oil reserve in the Gulf . Alvin Kersh (James Pickens , Jr .) sends Doggett to the Gulf to investigate , but Mulder is already present when Doggett arrives . The agents meet Taylor , who claims de la Cruz tried to blow up the platform .

Meanwhile , Dana Scully finds black oil in de la Cruz 's skull during an autopsy ? the oil is dead and seems to have been irradiated . She concludes that he may have had some immunity to the black oil because he is a Huecha Indian , or an indigenous Mexican national . Doggett and Mulder find proof of black oil on the platform and quarantine it , but de la Cruz 's friend Diego Garza is missing . Ortega threatens to bring back the crew unless the agents can provide proof of an infection . Doggett and Mulder search for Garza who , like de la Cruz , also has Native American heritage . Mulder and Doggett later discover that somebody has set fire to the communications room . As the agents tackle the fire , Garza attacks Doggett and renders him unconscious . When he awakens , Garza , now mentally unstable , cuts his arm to check for the presence of black oil .

Meanwhile , an annoyed Kersh tells Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) that he is lifting the quarantine of the oil platform . Scully opposes the idea but she has no choice other than to obey . Scully then realizes that de la Cruz is immune to the black oil , and because of it , he suffered from radiation burns instead of infection . After talking to Garza , Doggett leaves to find Mulder but is attacked by Taylor . Mulder arrives and overpowers Taylor , and Mulder and Doggett barricade themselves in the communication room , and try to relay a message while the platform 's crew attack the door .

Scully receives Doggett and Mulder 's message , and tells them that Kersh has broken the quarantine . Mulder destroys the platform 's radio so that the black oil @-@ infected crew cannot communicate with the aliens . Suddenly , the platform workers stop their attack and begin to sabotage the rig . Doggett and Mulder leave the radio room , and jump off the rig when they realize that the crew are going to destroy it . They are rescued by the helicopters Kersh has sent to break the quarantine . Later , at the FBI , Mulder tells Doggett that he has been dismissed from the bureau .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing and filming = = =

" Vienen " was written by Steven Maeda as a vehicle for Mulder to pass on the X @-@ Files legacy to Doggett . Patrick compared Mulder to a Greek chorus and said that the episode was a " way to have Mulder give Doggett his blessing and pass him The X @-@ Files baton . " Maeda complimented the show 's producers for deciding to pass the X @-@ Files division over to Doggett , noting that they were " aware of what 's going on in the audience 's head " . The title , " Vienen , " is Spanish ; it is the third @-@ person plural present indicative form of venir , which means " they come " or " they are coming " .

The episode was directed by Rod Hardy , who directed the earlier season eight episodes " Roadrunners " and " Salvage " . Hardy was offered the role after an unknown individual working on The X @-@ Files saw his TBS remake of the film High Noon . Of the three season eight episodes that he helmed , Hardy enjoyed directing this episode most due to its adherence to the series ' mythology ; he later described the episode as " classic X @-@ Files . " The eighth season was filmed out of order ; " Vienen " was the sixteenth episode produced but the eighteenth aired , largely due to Duchovny 's availability . Each episode of The X @-@ Files usually took about eighteen days to film , including seven days for pre @-@ production , nine for main unit shooting , and two for second unit filming . " Vienen " was produced in eleven days because the crew worked thirteen- to fourteen @-@ hour shifts .

" Vienen " was shot in three locations : a studio in Los Angeles , a closed down CENCO oil refinery in Santa Fe Springs , and an offshore oil platform in the Pacific Ocean off the coast of Santa Barbara . During the show 's previous seasons , location manager Ilt Jones had been required to scout for locations after scripts were submitted . Starting with the eighth season , however , he was allowed to go on several " scouting roadshow [s] " in order to find new and interesting locations that could be written into scripts . Jones , who discovered the oil platform and the refinery during his first scouting trip , later said the oil platform was " his favorite example " of places he was able to find . Because the platform and refinery were scouted in advance , Jones was given six weeks to prepare the shoot ? a " far cry " from the usual two . This added time also saved the series a considerable amount of money . Filming on the oil platform occurred between sunrise and sunset in one day . The film crew used Steadicams for filming on the oil platform because the decks were slick with oil and , according to Hardy , the cameras " sort of fit and blend [ed] in quite well " on the platform .

The series ' leading actors were required to film in three separate locations . Anderson 's scenes were filmed solely on the show 's sets in Los Angeles . Since her character did not accompany Mulder and Doggett , Anderson had no scenes with Patrick and Duchovny , except for the opening sequence that takes place in Kersh 's office . Most of Patrick and Duchovny 's scenes were filmed on the oil platform and at the refinery , although several key scenes , including the destruction of the oil platform , were filmed on the show 's set in Los Angeles . Patrick and Duchovny were flown between the three locations . Others scenes were filmed in the studio . Production designer Corey Kaplan was tasked with recreating the oil platform 's control room , mess hall , and some operational sections , which required " a brilliant piece of synergy between all [of the series '] departments " in order to come together . The scene in which the oil platform bursts into flame was created in the studio on the mock @-@ rig set . Although the set was made of wood , the art department was

tasked with trying to create the illusion of fire burning steel .

= = = Special effects = = =

The scene in which Mulder and Doggett agree to jump from the oil platform , which was shot in a way that recalls a scene in the 1969 film *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* , was filmed by having Patrick and Duchovny jump in front of a green screen . Separate footage of the rig exploding ? created by combining actual shots of the rig with CGI ? was then filmed , and the two shots were composited on top of one another .

The episode featured the penultimate appearance of the alien black oil ; it would appear for a final time via flashback in the series ' finale . Visual effects for the black oil were created with molasses , chocolate syrup , and computer @-@ generated imagery (CGI) . A scene showing black oil coming out of a worker 's eyes , ears , and mouth was mostly filmed on a visual effects stage . Nine takes were needed to get the syrupy mixture to spill correctly .

= = Themes = =

Michelle Bush , in her book *Myth @-@ X* , noted that the oil platform is named " Galpex @-@ Orpheus " , a reference to the ancient Greek religious and mythological figure Orpheus , who was a legendary musician , poet , and prophet . According to the myth , Orpheus 's wife Eurydice was killed by a serpent . Hades , the god of the underworld ? after hearing Orpheus ' moving music ? allowed Orpheus to retrieve his wife as long as he does not look back at her until they are safely out of the underworld . Orpheus fails , and his wife 's soul slips back into the underworld . Bush compared Orpheus 's otherworldly singing to the " broadband signal which is the catalyst for the events on the rig " . In the episode , Mulder , Doggett , and the two Huecha Indians " wreck havoc " because of their fear , and the " black oil slips back to the underworld " .

In regards to the episode 's title , Bush argued that while the Spanish word *vienen* means " they come " , the episode does not explain who " they " are . She wrote that the verb could refer to either " the aliens " who are planning on colonizing the Earth or to " the humans that are disturbing the black oil " . Douglas Kellner , in his book *Media Spectacle* , wrote that , because the episode features the second major hinting after " This is Not Happening " towards the series ' " Super Soldiers " story arc ? a plot thread that would be explored near the end of the eighth season and throughout the ninth ? the title refers to the inevitable onslaught of these superior alien warriors .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings and release = = =

" *Vienen* " premiered on American television on April 29 , 2001 . It received a Nielsen household rating of 7 @. @ 4 , meaning that it was seen by an estimated 7 @. @ 4 % of US households and was viewed by 11 @. @ 8 million viewers overall . The episode debuted in Ireland and the United Kingdom on June 7 on Sky 1 , and was the channel 's sixth @-@ most watched program for that week with 0 @. @ 52 million viewers . On November 4 , 2003 , the episode was released as part of the eighth season DVD box set . *Vienen* was later included on *The X @-@ Files Mythology* , Volume 4 ? *Super Soldiers* , a DVD collection including episodes involving the alien super soldiers arc .

The episode 's casting and plot initially proved controversial when in early 2001 , Hispanic activists complained about the often negative portrayal of Latinos on television , particularly in the *Law & Order* episode " Sunday in the Park with Jorge " . In turn , the major broadcasters signed agreements that created a head of diversity at each network . When the episode 's title and synopsis were announced , some activists worried that it would further propagate negative stereotypes .

== Reviews ==

Michael Liedtke and George Avalos of the Contra Costa Times were pleased with the episode and wrote , " The latest episode also contained many of the elements of a classic mythology episode . The stakes were huge and the heroes faced the greatest of hazards . The use of the oil rig created a sense of isolation for Mulder and Doggett , and the paranoia levels were sky @-@ high . We still can 't figure out why we haven 't seen more episodes along the lines of " Vienen " during the past three seasons . " Jessica Morgan from Television Without Pity awarded the episode a " B ? " . Tom Kessenich , in his book Examinations , gave Vienen a positive review , and wrote , " after watching ' Vienen ' , I can honestly say that for once of the few times this season , it felt good to be an X @-@ Files fan again " . Kessenich praised the significant development in Mulder and Scully 's relationship and the return of the " fourth season version " of the black oil ; the 1998 movie had dramatically altered the nature of the substance ? infected hosts gestate aliens inside their bodies rather than merely being taken over .

Todd VanDerWerff from The A.V. Club named the episode one of the " 10 must @-@ see episodes " of The X @-@ Files , and wrote that it " abruptly makes the series ? alien @-@ conspiracy storyline relevant again . " His review concludes , " [i] t 's a fine example of a show past its glory days , nevertheless finding a way to make itself relevant again . " VanDerWerff later awarded the episode an " A ? " and praised ? in addition to its refreshing take on the alien mythology ? the episode 's location , noting that the oil rig 's " isolation and man @-@ made island status , was definitely the sort of place that would look and feel different from just about every other episode of the show . " He also applauded the dynamic between Mulder and Doggett , and wrote that the episode successfully was a way for " David Duchovny and Fox Mulder to pass the torch to Robert Patrick and John Doggett . "

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 two stars out of five and wrote that the installment 's return to the black oil mythos seemed " out of date " . They also wrote that Mulder and Doggett are " good at running away , which doesn 't give either of them much dignity . " Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a negative review and awarded it one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of four . She wrote , " as action @-@ adventure , ' Veinen ' is so @-@ so . Except for the big ' money shot ' explosion at the end , it doesn 't exploit the possibilities of the physical location . " Meghan Deans of Tor.com ultimately concluded that " while ' Vienen ' works hard to hit its marks ? a classic villain , a battle of dudes ? it can ? t measure up to all that ? s come before it . " She surmised that " the transfer [from Mulder to Doggett] is functional , but the transfer is hollow . " She did , however , applaud the return of the black oil , noting that she was " happy to have it back . "