

= Clyde Bruckman 's Final Repose =

" Clyde Bruckman 's Final Repose " is the fourth episode of the third season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . Directed by David Nutter and written by Darin Morgan , the installment serves as a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story ? a stand @-@ alone plot unconnected to the overarching mythology of The X @-@ Files . Originally aired by the Fox network on October 13 , 1995 , " Clyde Bruckman 's Final Repose " received a Nielsen rating of 10 @. @ 2 and was seen by 15 @. @ 38 million viewers . The episode received critical acclaim , and several writers named it among the best in the series . The episode won both an Emmy for Outstanding Writing in a Drama Series as well as an Emmy for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Drama Series .

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 abnormal ; the skeptical Scully has been assigned to debunk his work , but the two have developed a deep friendship . In this episode , Mulder and Scully investigate a series of murders of psychics and fortune tellers . The two are assisted by Clyde Bruckman (Peter Boyle) , an enigmatic and reluctant individual who possesses the ability to foresee how people are going to die .

Morgan wished to write an episode of The X @-@ Files wherein one of the characters commits suicide at the end . Although Morgan was initially afraid to add humor to his script , he created a compromise by making the episode as dark as possible . Several of the characters ' names are references to silent film @-@ era actors and screenwriters . Notably , the episode features a prediction by Bruckman ? that Agent Scully will not die ? that is later bookended by the sixth season episode " Tithonus . "

= = Plot = =

St. Paul , Minnesota : In a store , Clyde Bruckman (Peter Boyle) , a life insurance salesman , purchases a paper and a lottery ticket and leaves . In the street , he almost bumps into an inconspicuous man (Stuart Charno) , who heads to a gypsy palm reader named Madame Zelma (Karin Konoval) . After seeking his fortune , the inconspicuous man attacks and kills her . A few days later , the eyes and entrails of a tea leaf reader , who was also a doll collector , have been found in her apartment , her body being missing . FBI agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) arrive at the scene of that murder to help the local cops , who have recruited the help of a psychic , the eccentric Stupendous Yappi (Jaap Broeker) . Although the psychic delivers extremely vague clues , the cops are thoroughly impressed ; both Scully and Mulder , however , are not , especially after Yappi diagnoses that it is Mulder ? not Scully ? who is a skeptic .

Meanwhile , after Bruckman takes the trash out for his neighbor , he discovers the body of Madame Zelma outside in his dumpster . When interviewed by Mulder and Scully , he reveals details about the crime that he could not have known from the media accounts , which causes Mulder to believe that Bruckman has psychic ability . Mulder insists that Bruckman join them in a visit to the crime scene at the doll collector 's apartment . Thanks to seemingly psychically gained information from Bruckman , her body is soon found in a nearby lake .

At the police station , Mulder tests Bruckman 's ability by having him handle various objects to see what they " tell " him . It becomes apparent that Bruckman 's only real psychic talent is an ability to see details of people 's deaths . Scully arrives with a key chain bearing the insignia of an investment company that uses astrology to make financial predictions , taken from the doll collector 's body - the same key chain was found on two of the other dead fortunetellers . Bruckman knows that the firm is owned by one Claude Dukenfield , not through a psychic revelation but because he coincidentally sold the man an insurance policy recently . He says that Mulder and Scully will not be able to talk to Dukenfield though , because he has been murdered .

Mulder and Scully drive Bruckman to a wooded spot where Bruckman has said they will find Dukenfield 's body . As they tromp through the woods , Bruckman explains how he gained his ability

following the death of Buddy Holly and The Big Bopper in a plane crash . Bruckman cannot pinpoint the exact spot where the body is , however , so they return to the parked car , where they see a lifeless hand sticking out of the wet mud underneath . Traces of silk fibers are subsequently found on Dukenfield similar to fibers found on previous victims - they are later analyzed and found to be from lace .

At his home Bruckman has gotten a note from the killer saying he is going to die when they first meet , and telling him to say " hi " to the FBI agents . The killer apparently also has some psychic ability - the postmark is dated before Bruckman joined the murder investigation . Bruckman describes Mulder 's death as the killer sees it : getting his throat slit by the killer after stepping in a pie in a kitchen . However Bruckman tells Mulder he 's not able to see what happens afterwards . Meanwhile , the inconspicuous man consults a tarot card reader , who says that the killer seeks answers from " a man with special wisdom " and that his confusion will soon abruptly end " with the arrival of a woman - a blonde or a brunette , possibly a redhead . " When there is just one card left unturned , the killer says that it is not meant for him but for the reader , and turns it over to reveal the " death " card .

Since the killer knows Bruckman 's home address , the agents bring him to a hotel where they take turns guarding him . While Scully does not believe in Bruckman 's power , the two develop a fast friendship . Bruckman asks Scully why she is not interested in knowing how she will die . Scully finally breaks down and asks him to tell her , to which Bruckman , joyfully , but cryptically , replies , " You don 't . " Bruckman later tells Scully that they will end up in bed together , in a very special moment neither of them will forget . This reinforces her skepticism .

A detective named Havez (Dwight McFee) takes over as Bruckman 's guard when Mulder and Scully are called to investigate yet another new murder victim : the tarot card reader . As they leave they bump into a bellhop who is delivering food to Bruckman 's room . The bellhop is actually the killer , and when he enters the room (while Havez is in the washroom) , he is delighted to discover that Bruckman has been brought right to where he works . As he is about to kill Bruckman , Havez re @-@ enters and the killer attacks and kills him instead . Meanwhile , Scully finds the same silk fiber at the new crime scene , and realizing that the bellhop had it on his tray , deduces that he is the murderer . They rush back to the hotel . Mulder chases the killer to the basement kitchen and the scene plays out as described in Bruckman 's earlier premonition , but when the killer attacks Mulder , Scully arrives in the nick of time and shoots him ? what Bruckman had seen was the dying killer 's last thoughts , not Mulder 's death .

Unable to find Bruckman in the hotel , Mulder and Scully return to Bruckman 's apartment to find that Bruckman has committed suicide ; Scully sees a plastic bag has been tied around his head , and that he is clutching a bottle of pills in his hand . Scully sits on Bruckman 's bed holding his hand , deeply moved , just as he had predicted . That night Scully sees a commercial for the Stupendous Yappi on TV , causing her to throw her phone at it .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception and writing = = =

This episode was the second of four episodes written for the series by Darin Morgan . Morgan had previously written the second season episode " Humbug " , which was more overtly humorous than any other episode of the series . Morgan , who felt he had scripted the episode the " wrong " way , sought to return to " what the show is really about " in his next episode . For inspiration , Morgan watched the first season episode " Beyond the Sea " , which features a questionable psychic ; after viewing it multiple times , he expressed a desire to write an episode with a similar feel . After the scripting of " Humbug " , Morgan claims that he entered into a state of depression . Using this period of his life as inspiration , he decided to write a plot about a character who committed suicide at the end of the episode . Another reason for this stylistic choice was because Morgan feared putting too much comedy into the episode , like his previous effort " Humbug " . As such , he purposely tried to

make it as serious and dark as possible , only to end up adding more jokes by the time the final draft was completed .

The episode 's concern with the nature of free will and determinism grew out of Morgan 's difficulties with plotting and constructing plot @-@ twists ; he explained that Bruckman and the killer interact in ways " that were really easy to plot , but which makes the story seem complicated . " While writing the character 's lines , Morgan realized that Mulder , were he to interact with a " normal person " , would come off as sounding insane when in fact he is supposed to be a smart person . As such , Morgan decided to " shake up Mulder 's image " to make him look slightly ridiculous ; in the episode , Mulder views Bruckman " only as a phenomenon " and not as a person . To counter this , Morgan wrote Scully to see Bruckman , not as a psychic , but as a human .

Bruckman 's cryptic prediction that Scully would not die " sent fans into a frenzy " due to its implications . Morgan explained that the line merely was a reference to Bruckman knowing how Scully would die , but liking her too much to divulge the information . However , many interpreted the warning to mean that Scully could not actually die and was , in essence , immortal . This interpretation , popular with fans on the internet , was verified by Frank Spotnitz . However , Spotnitz later admitted that this sub @-@ plot was bookended by the sixth season episode " Tithonus , " which showed Scully starting to die , only to have her come back , fulfilling Bruckman 's prophecy . Spotnitz later called this ending " very satisfying . " Series creator Chris Carter , however , stated in a 2014 reddit AMA that Scully is in fact , immortal .

The joke in the episode about Fox Mulder 's predicted death being by autoerotic asphyxiation was inspired by previous jokes in the series about Mulder 's interest in pornography . It was also inspired by a book Morgan had read on homicide investigations . While Morgan noted that he hypothesized that might be a way that Mulder would die , the line was meant as a joke . Many of the names used in the episode are homages to the silent film era . The name " Clyde Bruckman " refers to an actual screenwriter and director of silent comedies of the same name who committed suicide . The names of characters Detective Havez and Detective Cline are also references to a writer and director from that era : Jean Havez and Eddie Cline , respectively . One of the victims , Claude Dukenfield , is a reference to the real name of W.C. Fields . The name of the hotel in this episode , " Le Damfino " is a reference to a boat used by Buster Keaton in the movie The Boat .

= = = Casting and filming = = =

The role of the title character Clyde Bruckman ? who was based on Morgan 's " depressive " father ? was originally written with Bob Newhart in mind , but Peter Boyle later won the part . Although Chris Carter preferred to not cast well @-@ known actors , he felt that Boyle was such a gifted character actor that he ignored his usual prejudice for this episode . The character of the Stupendous Yappi was specifically written for Jaap Broeker , David Duchovny 's stand @-@ in . Morgan described the character as a cross between Uri Geller and the Amazing Kreskin . The character later appeared again in the episode " Jose Chung 's From Outer Space " . Stuart Charno ? credited as Stu Charno in the episode ? played the part of the killer in this episode ; he is the husband of Sara Charno , a former writer on the show who wrote the second season episode " Aubrey " .

" Clyde Bruckman 's Final Repose " was filmed in British Columbia , as were the rest of the third season episodes . Visual effects producer Mat Beck and Toby Lindala created the elaborate dream sequence where Bruckman 's body decomposes . The two used a skeleton rib cage made of copper wire along with fake skin that melted into gelatin when the wires were heated . Eight different stages were used for the effect ? starting with Boyle in makeup , progressing to the dummy , and eventually a computer generated skeleton ? which were morphed together . Morgan explained that , because Nutter and fellow director Kim Manners were under time constraints , Morgan was allowed to function almost " as a producer of [the] episode . " After filming for the entry ceased , he was allowed to personally work with the series ' editor . The episode 's original cut was 10 minutes too long , resulting in multiple scenes with Bruckman and Scully being removed from the episode .

= = Reception = =

" Clyde Bruckman 's Final Repose " originally aired on the Fox network on October 13 , 1995 . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 10 @. @ 2 , with an 18 share , meaning that roughly 10 @. @ 2 percent of all television @- @ equipped households , and 18 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . The episode was watched by 15 @. @ 38 million viewers . The success of the episode led to it earning two Primetime Emmy Awards ? writer Darin Morgan won the Emmy for Outstanding Writing in a Drama Series , while Peter Boyle won the Emmy for Outstanding Guest Actor in a Drama Series .

" Clyde Bruckman 's Final Repose " has been critically lauded . 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 full five stars and called it " a little slice of genius " . The two applauded the episode 's rich humor , as well as its exploration of extremely dark themes in a lighthearted way . Shearman and Pearson concluded that " the troubled questions Morgan poses here " about free will and death " are best answered by the writing of the episode itself ? an episode like this isn 't random ? it 's finely wrought , and thoughtful , and compassionate , and is a triumph of individualism . " Author Phil Farrand rated the episode as his third favorite episode of the first four seasons in his book *The Nitpickers Guide to the X @- @ Files* . Both Paul Cornell and Keith Topping , in the book *Extreme Possibilities* applauded the episode ; Cornell called it " an extraordinary piece of work " and altogether gorgeous " , whereas Topping labelled it a " little gem " . Conversely , Martin Day , in the same book , wrote a negative review , calling it " duller than a dull thing with dull knobs " , despite noting that it was " clever and well @- @ acted " .

Paula Vitaris from *Cinefantastique* gave the episode four stars out of four and called it " one of those rare episodes where everything comes together ? funny , bizarre , absurd , ironies , and sad . " She applauded Boyle 's acting , noting that he " gives a performance that simply takes over the TV screen " , and argued that " only actors as strong as Duchovny and Anderson , with their blissfully deadpan delivery , could withstand such a titanic presence , but withstand it they do . " *Entertainment Weekly* gave the episode a rare " A + " , writing , " Boyle gets lots of help from another superlative , laugh @- @ a @- @ minute script [which] nicely captures one of the overarching themes of the show : fate and man 's isolation . " Reviewer Zack Handlen of *The A.V. Club* gave the episode an " A " and wrote positively of the ending , writing that , " for an episode that ends with a likable character killing himself , ' Bruckman ' isn 't what I 'd call a downer . " He called the entry his " favorite episode of *The X @- @ Files* because it 's funny , suspenseful , does well by Scully and Mulder , and creates some indelible characters . "

Since its original airing , critics have listed " Clyde Bruckman 's Final Repose " among the best X @- @ Files episodes . *TV Guide* called it the tenth greatest episode in television history . Review website *IGN* named it the best standalone X @- @ Files episode of the entire series , writing that the episode " is a distinctive episode of the series , mixing a healthy amount of humor [...] with some very nasty business [...] In just 44 minutes , Boyle creates a fully formed character who makes a big impact in his one and only appearance . " *Topless Robot* named it the ninth @- @ funniest episode of the series . *Starpulse* listed it as the third @- @ best X @- @ Files episode . Charlie Jane Anders and Javier Grillo @- @ Marxuach of *io9* included it on the list of " 10 TV Episodes that Changed Television " . Tom Kessenich , in *Examination : An Unauthorized Look at Seasons 6 ? 9 of the X @- @ Files* , named the episode the seventh @- @ best installment of the series , noting that it features " a wonderful blend of humor , drama , and pathos , something *The X @- @ Files* did better than just about any other show this past decade . " The cast and crew of the series have expressed their enjoyment of the installment . Duchovny considers " Clyde Bruckman 's Final Repose " to be one of his favorite episodes of the third season . Nutter highlighted it as one of the most enjoyable entries that he had worked on . He also noted that , " the writing was so tight and so crisp and so fresh that I think , as a director , the only thing you have to do is create the atmosphere , set up the characters , set up the shots and you are basically invisible . Then you step back and just let it happen . " Series writer and producer Frank Spotnitz stated that the episode worked on many levels and that it is his favorite of the episodes written for the show by Morgan . In 2016 , Ira Madison of

Vulture.com named it the best episode of the series and " one of the best episodes of television ever ", stating that the episode " takes every element that made the series so iconic and throws them all into one heartbreaking installment " .