

= Patient X (The X @-@ Files) =

" Patient X " is the thirteenth episode of the fifth season of American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It was written by series creator Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz , directed by Kim Manners and aired in the United States on March 1 , 1998 on the Fox network . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 12 @.@ 6 , being watched by 20 @.@ 21 million people in its initial broadcast . The episode received moderately positive 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 . Mulder is a believer in the paranormal , while the skeptical Scully has been assigned to debunk his work . In this episode , as a rebel alien race secretly attacks several groups of former alien abductees , the agents meet Cassandra Spender (Veronica Cartwright) , a woman who claims to be a multiple abductee and wants to deliver a positive message about aliens . Agent Mulder , now skeptical about extraterrestrial activity , is disturbed when Agent Scully forms a special bond with the woman .

" Patient X " was a story milestone for the series . It introduced several new recurring characters for the series . It was the first episode to feature Chris Owens as Jeffrey Spender and Veronica Cartwright as Cassandra Spender . It is the first of a two @-@ part story that concludes with the following episode , " The Red and the Black " .

= = Plot = =

In Kazakhstan , two young boys see an unknown object fall from the sky . Seconds later , they witness a man being burned alive and are captured by an Alien Bounty Hunter who has his eyes and mouth sewn shut . The next day , Marita Covarrubias (Laurie Holden) leads an investigation of U.N. troops of the area . She runs into Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) , who has caught Dimitri , one of the Kazakh boys . Krycek tells Marita to tell her superiors that " it is all going to hell " .

Meanwhile , Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) attends a lecture at MIT , where the testimony of Cassandra Spender (Veronica Cartwright) , an alien abductee , is being presented . Mulder argues against other members of the lecture over the existence of alien life , claiming that it is a lie created to cover up a program of medical experimentation on civilians run by the military industrial complex . When the lecture ends , Mulder is met by Dr. Heitz Werber , who is surprised to see that Mulder has lost his belief in alien life since the last time they met . Werber tells Mulder that he is Cassandra 's doctor , and asks him to visit her .

Meanwhile , Krycek , who has beaten Dimitri into telling him what he saw , orders his Russian colleagues to infect him with the black oil . Back in the United States , Werber introduces Mulder to the wheelchair @-@ bound Cassandra , who considers him a hero of hers . She claims that the aliens are in a state of upheaval and that she will be abducted by them again . Mulder tells Cassandra there is nothing he can do for her and leaves .

In Russia , Krycek , working against the orders of his superiors , kidnaps the infected Dimitri and flees to the U.S. , sewing shut the boy 's eyes , nose , and mouth to keep the black oil from leaving his body . At FBI headquarters , Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) meets Agent Jeffrey Spender (Chris Owens) , Cassandra 's son , who fears the damage to his reputation if his colleagues learn about his mother . He tells Scully to keep Mulder away from her .

Marita reports to the Syndicate , which expected colonization at a much later date . Krycek offers Dimitri to the Syndicate in exchange for all their research on a vaccine . Meanwhile , Scully talks to Mulder about his meeting with Cassandra . She realizes that she has much in common with Cassandra , including being abducted at Skyland Mountain and having an implant inserted in the base of her neck . Scully visits Cassandra , who immediately realizes that she 's a fellow abductee . Scully tells her not to remove the implant . Cassandra assures Scully that she never will , as she looks forward to being abducted again .

A group of abductees meet at Skyland Mountain and are burned alive by more faceless Alien Bounty Hunters . Scully and Mulder visit the scene , with Mulder continuing to be very skeptical of any alien involvement . The Syndicate is shocked by the massacre . Mulder and Scully visit

Cassandra again , who knew many of the people who died . They encounter Spender , who is upset about their visit with his mother . Krycek is met by Marita . When Krycek returns to the cell where Dmitri is held , he finds him gone , and the Well @-@ Manicured Man there instead .

Scully finds that the victims of the attack had implants in their necks and all claimed to be abductees . Mulder believes they were led there by the military , not aliens . Mulder is called by Marita , who kidnapped Dmitri . Dmitri pulls the stitches off his eyes , resulting in Marita getting infected with the black oil . Mulder calls Cassandra , looking for Scully , but Jeffrey answers and reveals that Cassandra is gone . At that moment Cassandra is with a group of abductees , including Scully , at the Ruskin Dam , brought there by Syndicate assassin Quiet Willy . The abductees see a UFO appear in the sky . Suddenly screams are uttered as two faceless aliens arrive .

= = Production = =

= = = Casting = = =

This episode marks the first appearance of Chris Owens as Jeffrey Spender . Owens previously appeared in earlier episodes , the first being " Musings of a Cigarette Smoking Man " , in which he played the younger version of The Smoking Man . Owens later reprised this role in episode " Demons " . During the fifth season of the show , Owen was cast to play the part of The Great Mutato in " The Post @-@ Modern Prometheus " . After his stint on The X @-@ Files , Owens attempted to get a job as a waiter in Vancouver , to no avail . One day , however , he ran into series creator Chris Carter at a bar , who humorously told him , " I didn 't know they served guys with two faces here " , a reference to his portrayal of The Great Mutato . Carter explained that David Duchovny had " taken careful notice " of Owens acting abilities and requested that he return to the series in some capacity . Heeding Duchovny 's advice , Carter created the role of Jeffrey Spender just for him . In addition , the episode was the first to introduce the recurring character of Cassandra Spender , played by Veronica Cartwright . Rick Millikan , the series ' casting director , was very pleased with Cartwright 's performance , noting , " She 's got a voice that adds a little creepiness and a little mystery that I thought played really well . She was just the perfect X @-@ Files person . " " Patient X " was the first episode in which Nicholas Lea was credited under the Also Starring tag , alongside Mitch Pileggi and William B. Davis .

The Russian characters from the start of the episode came from a " great " Russian acting community in Vancouver , British Columbia who had defected from the Soviet Union . Both Lea and Laurie Holden were required to learn Russian for the first scene following the opening credits . Alex Shostak Jr . , who portrayed Dmitri , worked 12 ? 14 hours a day ; make @-@ up was applied to give the appearance that his eyes and mouth had been sewed up , and a small straw was pushed between his lips to give him water . During the filming of the episode , he was " literally " blind and guided by the crew members throughout the filming of his scenes . Shostak provided the translation for his own lines from English to Russian . Holden and Lea worked diligently together to perfect their lines in Russian . Holden explained , " we 'd come up with these fun ways to test ourselves to know if we had really nailed it . Show tunes come to mind , but I also remember this one time my dialect coach had me call a Russian friend of his on his cell phone to see if he could understand me . I passed the test . "

= = = Filming and visual effects = = =

Filming the scene with the burning camp was " tricky " , according to Kim Manners . When they were filming the scene , they had huge " safety precautions " ready for the cast and crew . The fires seen in the episode , were in reality propane fires . Manners wanted the shots to be as close to the fire as possible , so they used fireproof cameras . According to Manners , " they used a half a million dollar camera on a crane wrapped in asbestos " and ran it through the flames . For the following scene , the production crew set a man on fire , while using a fire suit . This stunt is known as a " full

burn . " Scenes like this are " very dangerous " as one can 't breathe . In total , he was on fire between 25 ? 30 seconds , which is seen as a lot by filming standards . Special effects supervisor Tony Lindala supervised the creation of the faceless alien rebels , Dmitri 's mutilation , and the incinerated victims of the rebels . Lindala also designed the rig used to infect Dmitri with the black oil .

The set for the Russian gulag was built at North Shore Studios . Graeme Murray was the production designer at the time . The following scene with Dmitri in the gulag was " difficult . " The ship scenes were filmed at a warehouse in Vancouver . When filming the Syndicate meeting , Manners wanted Marita Covarrubias to look as strong as possible since this marked the first appearance of a woman in the Syndicate meeting room . Since there was very little movement among the actors when filming the scene , they were forced to film in different angles and wide shots .

= = Reception = =

" Patient X " premiered in the United States on the Fox network on March 1 , 1998 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 12 @. @ 6 , with a 19 share , meaning that roughly 12 @. @ 6 percent of all television @- @ equipped households , and 19 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 20 @. @ 21 million viewers . Veronica Cartwright was nominated in the category " Outstanding Guest Actress in a Drama Series " in the 1998 Emmy Awards for her performance in this episode and its follow @- @ up , " The Red and the Black " . The episode was later included on The X @- @ Files Mythology , Volume 3 ? Colonization , a DVD collection that contains episodes involved with the alien Colonist 's plans to take over the earth .

Critical reception to the episode was largely positive . Television Without Pity ranked " Patient X " the eighth most nightmare @- @ inducing episode of the show , citing , in particular the abuse of Dmitri . The article noted that " If The X @- @ Files has taught us anything , it ? s that if a G @- @ Man asks us if we know anything about anything and we foolishly say yes , our mouths and eyelids will be sewn shut and we will be brainwashed to kill on demand . " The A.V. Club reviewer Todd VanDerWerff gave " Patient X " a B + , and wrote that the episode " feels epic , in a way the mythology episodes do at their best " . However , VanDerWerff noted that " The problem with breaking the status quo on a TV series is that your audience is always going to know in the back of its head that the status quo isn ? t really broken . " He reasoned that the audience never fully believed that " Mulder could lose his belief in the all @- @ consuming alien conspiracy " or accept the idea that " Scully could find herself dabbling with belief in [aliens] . " Despite these set @- @ backs , however , he noted that " Patient X " was the episode where the series ' mythology " gets moving again , after chasing its own tail throughout much of season four and reaching a sort of climax in the opening episodes of season five . " 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 described the tone of " Patient X " as " truly visceral " , citing the faceless men incinerating people as well as the mutilation of the innocent Dmitri , who was " at the wrong place at the wrong time " . Furthermore , Shearman and Pearson praised the episode for " shift [ing] the goalposts " and allowing Mulder and Scully to switch roles as the believer and skeptic . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a moderately positive review and awarded it two @- @ and @- @ a @- @ half stars out of four . Vitaris praised the episode 's premise and writing . " ' Patient X ' is a rare episode in that it actually advances The X @- @ Files mythology , with the news of a vaccine to combat the black oil " . However , she was critical of the episode 's reliance on shock value , noting that the " camera seems to take a perverse delight in death , pain , and mutilation , with the distressing effect of numbing the viewer to the horror . "