

= Apocrypha (The X @-@ Files) =

" Apocrypha " is the sixteenth episode of the third season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on February 16 , 1996 . It was directed by Kim Manners , and written by Frank Spotnitz and series creator Chris Carter . " Apocrypha " included appearances by John Neville , Don S. Williams and Brendan Beiser . The episode helped to explore the overarching mythology , or fictional history of The X @-@ Files . " Apocrypha " earned a Nielsen household rating of 10 @. @ 8 , being watched by 16 @. @ 71 million people in its initial broadcast .

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 . In this episode , Mulder returns from Hong Kong , having found rogue agent Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) while investigating a mysterious mind @-@ altering black oil . Meanwhile , Scully pursues the man who she believes killed her sister . " Apocrypha " is the second part of a two @-@ part episode , continuing the plot from the previous episode , " Piper Maru " .

" Apocrypha " was the first mythology @-@ centered episode to be directed by Manners , and made use of a mixture of physical and digital effects to create the episode 's antagonistic black oil . The episode 's sets were also augmented with digital effects , amplifying what could be constructed within the given budget .

= = Plot = =

On August 19 , 1953 , a burned crewman talks to three government agents about his experience on the submarine Zeus Faber , completing the story told in the previous episode . He explains that he and other crew members were locked in with their captain , who was infected by the black oil . After being knocked out from behind , the black oil leaves the captain 's body and exits via a grate into the sea . It is revealed that Bill Mulder and the Smoking Man are two of the agents who are interviewing the crewman .

In the present , Fox Mulder and Alex Krycek return to the United States , but are run off the road by another vehicle . The assailants attempt to apprehend Krycek , but are severely injured when he emits a flashing light . The Smoking Man sees their bodies and orders their destruction . Mulder , who was knocked unconscious in the crash , awakens in the hospital . Dana Scully tells Mulder about Walter Skinner 's condition , and says that an analysis of saliva has identified his shooter as the same person who killed her sister Melissa .

The Syndicate meets to discuss the events surrounding the Piper Maru and realize someone is leaking information . Meanwhile , Skinner tells Scully that he recognizes his shooter as the man who was with Krycek when the digital tape was stolen from him . Mulder believes that the oil found on the diving suit and Gauthier is a medium used by an alien to transfer from body to body , and that Krycek is currently occupied by it . Mulder and the Lone Gunmen use Krycek 's key to recover the tape from a locker at an ice rink , but Mulder finds the case empty . Krycek returns the tape to the Smoking Man in exchange for the location of the recovered UFO .

As Luis Cardinal is identified as Skinner 's shooter , the Syndicate admonishes the Smoking Man for moving the UFO to a new location . By rubbing a pencil over the envelope containing the tape case , Mulder finds a phone number which connects him to the Syndicate 's office . Mulder speaks to the Well @-@ Manicured Man , who agrees to meet with him . The Well @-@ Manicured Man tells Mulder that a UFO was sunk during World War II and that a cover story of a sunken atomic bomb was used to cover up its attempted recovery . He reveals that anyone can be gotten to , causing Mulder to ask Scully to check on Skinner .

Scully accompanies Skinner as he is being transported in an ambulance . When Cardinal attempts to break in , she tracks him down and arrests him . Cardinal tells her that Krycek is headed to an abandoned missile silo in Black Crow , North Dakota . There , the agents are captured by the Smoking Man 's men and are escorted away . Deep inside , Krycek sits atop the UFO and coughs out the black oil , which seeps into the ship . Skinner recovers and returns to work . Mulder sees

Scully at Melissa 's grave , explaining that Cardinal was found dead in his cell . Meanwhile , Krycek is trapped within the silo , banging on the door in an attempt to be let out .

= = Production = =

Conception of the episode was based around a visual image series creator Chris Carter had wanted to include in a script " since the beginning of the show " . The image was of a black @-@ and @-@ white flashback taking place in a submarine .

The episode 's title is a reference to Biblical apocrypha , which series creator Chris Carter felt was appropriate to the episode 's thematic concerns ? hidden documents and truths not brought to light . Director Kim Manners had directed a number of stand alone " monster of the week " episodes , but this was his first mythology @-@ centered episode . Manners explained that " there is some individual creative contribution from the directors " in stand @-@ alone episodes , but that with mythology episodes " what you need to as a director is to be sure that the performances are there ... and that the yarn is presented in its cleanest and most interesting fashion " .

Nicholas Lea was fitted with a mask with tubes for the scene where the alien black oil leaves his body . Lea said filming the scene was horrible , and the scene ended up having to be filmed again a few days later . The similar scene from the start of the episode with the submarine captain was accomplished with a dummy head . The depiction of the oil in this scene was originally filmed using a magnetic fluid pulled along with magnets , although the end result of this was deemed not be " menacing " enough , and looked " a little bit comic " . To fix this , the sound stage used to represent the submarine 's interior was rebuilt so it could be rocked back and forth , with the movement being used to guide the flow of a different liquid . This effect was then enhanced digitally in post @-@ production . The black oil effect over people 's eyes was accomplished by inserting the footage digitally in post production .

The missile silo used for the episode 's climactic scene was incomplete when the scene was filmed , as the crew did not have enough time or money left to complete the set . The crew built the incomplete silo on a sound stage around a completed spacecraft prop , and were able to digitally extend the set with computer generated interiors to give the impression of a much larger silo . Exterior shots of the silo building were also enhanced digitally , with various buildings and machinery created with computer generated imagery and composited into the exterior shots .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Apocrypha " premiered on the Fox network on February 16 , 1996 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on December 4 , 1996 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 10 @. @ 8 with an 18 share , meaning that roughly 10 @. @ 8 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 18 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . A total of 16 @. @ 71 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing , making it the most viewed episode of the third season .

In an overview of the third season in Entertainment Weekly , " Apocrypha " was rated an A. The review noted that the episode offered " some interesting progressions in the grand theme " of the series , although it was also " worth it just for the awesome missile site finale " alone . Writing for The A.V. Club , Zack Handlen also rated the episode an A. Handlen felt the episode was impressive in its general impression , but that the details were not necessarily important ; he also added that the cyclical nature of the plot of most mythology episodes was not something he felt negatively about , noting that although the series ' protagonists are often defeated , they " can 't be corrupted or dissuaded or undone " . Co @-@ writer Frank Spotnitz said of the episode " I actually think you didn 't learn a lot more about the conspiracy in these two episodes , but emotionally , I think they were really good episodes ... It is really easy to go through a lot of these action things with people dying and never addressing them . So I thought it was very interesting to do so " .