

= Squeeze ( The X @-@ Files ) =

" Squeeze " is the third episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on September 24 , 1993 . " Squeeze " was written by Glen Morgan and James Wong and directed by Harry Longstreet , with Michael Katleman directing additional footage . The episode featured the first of two guest appearances by Doug Hutchison as the mutant serial killer Eugene Victor Tooms , a role he would reprise in " Tooms " . " Squeeze " is the first " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week " episode of The X @-@ Files , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the series ' overarching mythology .

The show 's main characters are 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 , Mulder and Scully investigate a series of ritualistic killings by somebody seemingly capable of squeezing his body through impossibly narrow gaps . The agents deduce that their suspect may be a genetic mutant who has been killing in sprees for ninety years .

Production of " Squeeze " was problematic ; creative differences between Longstreet and the crew led to him being replaced as director , while some missing scenes needed to be shot after the initial filming . Because of this turbulence , the completion of the episode relied on post @-@ production techniques . However , " Squeeze " has received positive reviews from critics , mostly focusing on Hutchison 's performance and the resonance of his character . The episode has subsequently been described by The Star as " the episode that really sold The X @-@ Files idea to the masses " . Academics have examined " Squeeze " for its portrayal of the politics of law enforcement , highlighting the tension ? evident throughout the series ? between the agents ' desire to find the truth and their duty to secure criminal convictions .

= = Plot = =

In Baltimore , businessman George Usher arrives at his office building . He is watched from a storm drain by someone who then sneaks into the building by climbing through the elevator shaft into the ventilation system , and kills Usher by removing his liver . The investigation into Usher 's murder ? the latest of three such killings ? is assigned to careerist FBI agent Tom Colton ( Donal Logue ) , who turns to academy colleague Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) for help .

The case baffles Colton , as the only common elements in the murders are the lack of entry points and the apparent removal of the victims ' livers with bare hands . Fox Mulder ( David Duchovny ) looks over the case and notes their similarity to earlier murder sprees that occurred in 1933 and 1963 . At the crime scene , Mulder notices an elongated fingerprint on the air vent , which he also finds to be similar to some documented in the X @-@ Files . He concludes that because five murders occurred during the earlier sprees , the investigators should expect two more .

Because Scully believes that the killer will return to the scenes of his earlier crimes , she and Mulder wait in the parking garage of Usher 's office building . There , they catch a man named Eugene Victor Tooms ( Doug Hutchison ) climbing through the air vents . Tooms is given a polygraph test , which includes questions written by Mulder linking him to murders dating as far back as 1903 . After Tooms passes the test easily , Colton dismisses Mulder 's queries as being ridiculous and lets Tooms go . However , Mulder later digitally elongates and narrows Tooms ' fingerprints to show Scully that they match the prints at the crime scene . Mulder believes that Tooms is able to stretch and squeeze his body through narrow spaces . That night , Tooms demonstrates this by squeezing down a chimney to claim another victim .

Mulder and Scully find no documentation on Tooms ' life . They visit Frank Briggs ( Henry Beckman ) , a former detective , who recounts his experiences of the investigation into the 1933 murders . Briggs brings out old photographs of Tooms ? who has not aged in sixty years ? and gives them the address of Tooms ' former apartment building . There , Mulder and Scully find a " nest " constructed out of newspaper and bile in the building 's crawl space , as well as several trophy items taken from past victims . Mulder suspects that Tooms is a mutant who can hibernate for thirty years at a time

after consuming five human livers . As the two leave , Tooms , who is hiding in the rafters , stealthily takes the necklace Scully is wearing as a new trophy .

Mulder and Scully put the apartment under surveillance , but Colton has them taken off the job . Mulder finds Scully 's necklace in Tooms ' apartment and tries to call his partner , but her phone line has been cut . Tooms breaks into her apartment through a tiny air vent to kill her , but Mulder rushes there and apprehends him first . Tooms is put in an institution for the criminally insane where he begins to build another nest using newspaper . At the institution , Scully informs Mulder that medical tests on Tooms show an abnormal skeletal and muscle system , and a rapidly declining metabolism . When Tooms is given food through a slot in the door , he stares at the thin slot and grins .

= = Production = =

= = = Pre @-@ production = = =

Coming after two episodes focused on the series ' " mythology " , or fictional history , " Squeeze " helped establish that the show could cover other paranormal subjects , and was the first " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week " episode of The X @-@ Files . Series creator Chris Carter thought that the show could not sustain its momentum unless it branched out from the previously UFO @-@ centered plots . Co @-@ writers Glen Morgan and James Wong were inspired to write the episode when they looked at a ventilation shaft outside of their office and thought about whether someone could crawl inside it . Although the episode has parallels with the second Kolchak film , The Night Strangler ( 1973 ) , which featured a man who commits murders every 21 years , Morgan and Wong have stated they were inspired by the serial killers Jack the Ripper and Richard Ramirez . After eating foie gras during a trip to France , Carter proposed the idea that the villain should consume human livers . Morgan noted that the writers settled on the liver because it was " funnier " than any other organ . The idea to have Tooms use a nest for hibernation came from Morgan and Wong ; they liked that if the agents were unable to catch Tooms , he could return after weeks of dormancy .

Actor Doug Hutchison was 33 when he auditioned for the part of Tooms , but the producers initially considered him too young for the role ; Glen Morgan thought that Hutchinson " looks twelve years old " . However Hutchison impressed the writers with his ability to suddenly transition into attacking behavior , which convinced them to hire him . He related that his portrayal of Tooms was inspired by the " stillness " of Anthony Hopkins ' acting in The Silence of the Lambs .

= = = Filming = = =

The episode 's establishing exterior shots , and those of Tooms ' house , were filmed around Hastings Street in Vancouver . When filming the first shot of Tooms ' eyes glowing from a storm drain , the production crew arrived too late to secure the street for filming , and a nearby construction crew were temporarily drafted to guard the area . The ventilation system through which the first victim is attacked at night was meant to be of a multistory car park . However , to avoid a costly tenting operation to simulate night @-@ time , a replica of the necessary parts of the ventilation system was built in a lower level of the car park . Exterior shots of Scully 's apartment were also filmed in Vancouver , at the same location used in the pilot episode . However , this location 's use was later discontinued owing to the limited range of shots it afforded ; most reverse angles would show a large car park across the street .

Wong was disappointed with director Harry Longstreet , claiming he did not have respect for the script . Longstreet had failed to film one of the script 's scenes , and had not obtained additional camera coverage for the scenes which had been filmed . As a result , Wong and another director , Michael Katleman , re @-@ shot several scenes for additional coverage to complete the episode , and filmed the omitted scene and some inserts . Hutchison also had difficulty with Longstreet 's directing ; he found the acting instructions he was given " ridiculous " . Morgan said that the episode 's production was problematic , feeling that " Squeeze " " was truly saved in postproduction " .

Duchovny also found issue with Longstreet 's direction , and disagreed with the director 's take on how Fox Mulder should be portrayed . Describing their different opinions , Duchovny noted " the director wanted me to be mad about this horrible serial killer . I was like , ' No , this is an amazing discovery ! He 's not morally culpable , because he 's genetically driven . ' I judge no one " .

= = = Post @-@ production = = =

For the shot in which Tooms slides through a chimney , the producers hired a contortionist who could squeeze through small spaces . They filmed the shot with the camera standing below the contortionist . The chimney , which was " more like a belt than a pipe " , was made to look much narrower than it actually was . Using computer @-@ generated imagery , they were able to produce and elongate shots of the contortionist 's fingers . Producer R. W. Goodwin believed that the contortionist ? known only as " Pepper " ? would only have limited success in fitting down the chimney set and would work mostly as a photo double . However , he was able to fit entirely inside the chimney ; the production crew only needed to add some sound effects " of bones snapping and cracking " .

The scene in which Tooms enters Scully 's home was initially filmed in Hutchison 's absence . The crew shot his entrance later , using a larger blue screen set . These shots were digitally merged so that Tooms would appear to emerge from a much smaller hatch than was filmed . The effect was kept to a minimum ; Hutchison 's footage was not " squeezed " too much , as both Carter and visual effects supervisor Mat Beck have stated their belief that " less is more : just a hint of the supernatural is all that is required " .

= = Themes = =

Although it did not directly impact the ongoing storyline of The X @-@ Files , " Squeeze " introduced key thematic elements to the series . " Squeeze " has been described as " the episode where Dana Scully must publicly pick a side " . She had previously confronted military officials in " Deep Throat " , and has " carefully worded " her reports to protect her partner Mulder from ridicule , but an encounter with former colleague Tom Colton forces her to openly choose between Mulder and the politics of careerism . These developments with Colton " [ tether ] another thread between her career and the rest of the FBI " , highlighting a sense of " exasperation and derision " from her colleagues , whose mindsets represent " institutionally acceptable " models of reality .

This hostility suggests that the series ' problems are " not epistemological ; they are political " ? the agents , Scully in particular , have to balance a search for " the truth " with the need to secure criminal convictions in their cases . This balancing act " between investigating to discover the truth and gathering evidence to support a court case " has been compared to the perceived stance of the FBI during the series ' tenure . The bureau had at this time seen itself as a law enforcement agency responsible for amassing evidence to prosecute criminal cases . There is a disparity between this approach and public perception of the FBI 's role as an organization investigating an objective and apolitical truth ; this led to public frustration " because [ people ] incorrectly believe that a courtroom is designed to discover the truth " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Squeeze " premiered on the Fox network on September 24 , 1993 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on October 3 , 1994 . The episode 's initial broadcast was viewed by approximately 6 @.@ 8 million households and 11 @.@ 1 million viewers . " Squeeze " earned a Nielsen rating of 7 @.@ 2 , with a 13 share , meaning that roughly 7 @.@ 2 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 13 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode .

Glen Morgan was very pleased with Hutchison 's performance , describing him as an " ace in the hole " and calling his work " outstanding " . Morgan went on to write " Tooms " , another first season

episode in which the character returns . The Vince Gilligan @-@ penned second season episode " Soft Light " would also make reference to the character . Hutchison wrote a prequel to " Squeeze " titled " Dark He Was and Golden @-@ Eyed " and sent it to Carter , but the script was returned unread for legal reasons . " Squeeze " has been described as the first episode of The X @-@ Files to branch out into horror , which came to be one of the defining genres of The X @-@ Files . The plot of " Squeeze " was adapted as a novel for young adults in 1996 by Ellen Steiber . The episode also inspired " Folding Man " , a first season episode of the television series Sanctuary .

In a retrospective of the first season in Entertainment Weekly , " Squeeze " was rated B + ; it was called " an important episode " , and Hutchison 's portrayal of Tooms was described as " profoundly creepy " . However , Thomas Sutcliffe of The Independent was more critical , deriding the premise as " entirely ludicrous " , and sarcastically described Mulder 's deduction of Tooms ' abilities as " clearly another triumph for the deductive method " . An article in the Vancouver Sun listed " Squeeze " as one of the best stand @-@ alone episodes of the show , saying , " The X @-@ Files became known for its creepy , monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week episodes , and Squeeze was the one that started it all " , and that , together with " Tooms " , it " remains one of the scariest things ever seen on television " . Connie Ogle from PopMatters listed Tooms amongst the greatest monsters of the series .

Keith Phipps , writing for The A.V. Club , praised the episode , rated it an A ? , and described Hutchison 's role as " the part that would launch [ him ] as a go @-@ to character actor for creep parts " . Phipps felt the climactic scene in which Tooms infiltrates Scully 's home is " the scene that makes the episode " , noting that there was " a real sense of peril " despite it being clear that Scully , a lead character , was not going to come to harm . Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen , note that the episode 's premise is the first in the series " not to rely upon accepted urban legends " . It conveys its " absurd " plot through suggestion , leaving any special @-@ effects sequences of Tooms ' abilities until the audience is " already suitably adjusted to the absurdity " . However , Shearman and Pearson found the monologue likening the crimes committed by Tooms to the Holocaust , given by the retired detective Briggs , to be " not only unnecessary but tasteless to boot " . They rated the episode four stars out of five . Mumtaj Begum , writing for Malaysia 's The Star , described " Squeeze " as " the episode that really sold The X @-@ Files idea to the masses " , and called it " simply brilliant " .

The character of Eugene Tooms has also attracted positive criticism . In a guest column for Entertainment Weekly 's 1000th issue , author Neil Gaiman listed Tooms as one of his favorite monsters , while UGO Networks listed the character in a countdown of the " Best TV Serial Killers " , and described Hutchison 's acting as " uber @-@ creepy " . IGN 's Christine Seghers listed Hutchison as the fourth @-@ best guest star of the series in a top @-@ ten countdown , complimented his " brilliantly perverse " performance , and wrote : " Even when he doesn 't appear to be doing anything , Hutchinson [ sic ] can still make your skin crawl with his dead , shark @-@ like stare " .