

= Sunshine Days =

" Sunshine Days " is the eighteenth and penultimate episode of the ninth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files , and the series ' 200th episode overall . It originally aired on the Fox network on May 12 , 2002 . The entry was written and directed by executive producer Vince Gilligan . The episode is a " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week " episode , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the mythology , or overarching fictional history , of The X @-@ Files . " Sunshine Days " earned a Nielsen household rating of 6 @. @ 2 , was viewed by 6 @. @ 5 million households , and 10 @. @ 4 million viewers in its initial broadcast . It received mixed reviews from television critics .

The show centers on FBI special agents who work on cases linked to the paranormal , called X @-@ Files ; this season focuses on the investigations of John Doggett (Robert Patrick) , Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) , and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) . In this episode , Doggett , Reyes , Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) and Scully stumble on to a bizarre murder case where the main suspect is a man with an unusual obsession for The Brady Bunch . Despite their initial differences ? both in investigative style and love of The Brady Bunch ? the four of them soon learn that the man 's telekinetic ability is the ultimate , undeniable proof of an X @-@ File .

The episode marked Gilligan 's second directorial effort , after season seven 's " Je Souhaite " . The Brady Bunch house set featured in the episode was completely rebuilt . According to Anderson , people came " from all over Los Angeles " to get their pictures taken on the set . In addition , it contained several elaborate effects . " Sunshine Days " was the final " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week " entry in the series ; the series finale , " The Truth " would deal with the series ' overarching alien colonization mythology .

= = Plot = =

In Van Nuys , California , two men in their early twenties named Blake and Mike (Tyson Turrou and David Faustino) sneak into a house that Blake claims was where the comedy television series The Brady Bunch was filmed . Inside , they find a perfect recreation of the house from the series ; Mike , unsettled , gets worried and leaves , but Blake plods on . Blake is subsequently sent hurtling through the air and smashes into Mike 's car , killing Blake .

John Doggett (Robert Patrick) and Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) are called in to investigate . They interview Mike , who claims that Blake died after visiting " The Brady Bunch House " . The three speak to the owner , Oliver Martin (Michael Emerson) , but upon entering discover that the house looks nothing like the one featured in the teaser . Doggett , feeling something is not right , checks Martin 's trashcan and finds asphalt shingles ; earlier , on top of Mike 's car , Doggett had found a piece of a shingle . He deduces that Blake was thrown through Martin 's roof . Later that night , Mike looks into Martin 's house and sees the whole Brady family eating dinner . He storms into the house , only to find that the family has disappeared . Suddenly , he is confronted by Martin , who tells him to leave . Mike refuses , and is thrown through the roof , only to be embedded in the yard .

Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) looks through various X @-@ Files and discovers one about a young boy named Anthony Fogelman who possessed psychokinesis . She learns that Fogelman later changed his name to Oliver Martin . She meets with Dr. John Rietz (John Aylward) , a parapsychologist who worked with the young Fogelman . Rietz claims that , despite being extremely lonely , Martin was not dangerous and that his power faded as he grew up . Reyes makes the connection that Fogelman changed his name to Oliver based on Cousin Oliver from The Brady Bunch . Scully notes that , in the show , Oliver was portrayed as a " jinx " , and the three agents deduce that Fogelman must see himself as one , too .

Doggett and Reitz decide to talk to Fogelman . Initially , he is apprehensive and nearly sends Doggett hurtling through the roof . It is revealed that Fogelman 's powers are temperamental and sometimes he cannot control them , such as the case with Mike and Blake . Reyes and Scully show up and convince him that his powers could positively impact the world . The agents take him to

Washington , D.C. and demonstrate his powers to Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) by making him float in midair . Suddenly , however , Fogelman collapses . Scully later reports that his body is destroying itself because of his extreme power . Doggett realizes that Fogelman must stop using his powers ; he notes that his power had faded earlier when Dr. Rietz was studying him as a boy . Doggett tells Rietz that his power faded because , with Rietz around , Fogelman did not feel lonely . Rietz visits Fogelman in the hospital , and the two rekindle their friendship , saving Fogelman 's life . Scully laments the fact that there may not be any vindication for the X @-@ Files , but that cases like Fogelman 's might show that there is proof of " more important things . "

= = Production = =

" Sunshine Days " was written and directed by executive producer Vince Gilligan . The episode marked Gilligan 's second directorial effort , after season seven 's " Je Souhaite " . Gilligan called the episode his " goodbye to the audience , and goodbye to the characters " because he realized that " would be the last time I 'd ever be writing from them . " Furthermore , " Sunshine Days " was the final " monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week " entry in the series ; the show 's finale , " The Truth " would deal with the series ' overarching alien colonization mythology .

The elaborate The Brady Bunch house set featured in the episode was built completely by the production crew , according to series co @-@ star Gillian Anderson . She recounts the fact that , due to the original set having been long ago disassembled , people came " from all over Los Angeles " to get their pictures taken on the set . Anderson , who was a fan of popular sitcoms made by Sherwood Schwartz , like Gilligan 's Island and The Brady Bunch , called the experience " wild " . The scene wherein Fogelman 's house turns into an outside field was created via the technique of Chroma Keying . A shot of both The Brady Bunch house and an outside field were filmed . Then , the actors were filmed against a blue screen . A matte of the scenes were then cut and the scenes were composited against each other . Due to the fact that the shot was an extended scene , Paul Rabwin later noted that the effects were " a little tricky " to get right ; Rabwin noted that the shots ' mattes had to cover the " little strands of hair " on Anderson 's head , because missing the strands is what " gives [the effect] away " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Sunshine Days " originally aired on the Fox network on May 12 , 2002 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on March 16 , 2003 . The episode 's initial broadcast was viewed by approximately 6 @.@ 5 million households and by 10 @.@ 4 million viewers . " Sunshine Days " earned a Nielsen household rating of 6 @.@ 2 , meaning that roughly 6 @.@ 2 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , were tuned in to the episode . It was the forty @-@ sixth most watched episode of television that aired during the week ending May 12 . Fox promoted the episode with the promise that it was the " most bizarre " episode of The X @-@ Files to ever have been shown .

Critical reception to " Sunshine Days " was mixed . Aaron Kinney from Salon magazine was critical of the producers ' idea to air the entry as the penultimate episode leading up to the heavily @-@ promoted series finale . Kinney pointed out that the episode had little to do with the show 's overarching storyline , but it was nevertheless touted as part of The X @-@ Files " Endgame " promotion strategy . Jessica Morgan from Television Without Pity gave the episode a mixed review and awarded it a " C " grade . She sarcastically wrote , " nine years of mytharc to start to wrap up . And so the penultimate episode of The X @-@ Files , naturally , is devoted to The Brady Bunch . " 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 three @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five . The two noted that the episode " is not one of Gilligan 's very best stories " , citing issues with its tone and its characterization of Oliver Martin . The two , however , did praise Gilligan 's humanized style , writing , " he gives Scully the proof of the paranormal she 's been needing " but shows that the most important " things to care about in life " are " humans " . John Keegan from

Critical Myth gave the episode a moderately positive review and awarded it a 7 out of 10 . He wrote , " Overall , this was a pleasant yet bittersweet episode , one that leaves the characters in relative peace . It is the first time that we get a glimpse of what the writers are thinking as the series comes to a close . Now all that 's left is the mythology , which I can only hope will end on a similarly pleasant note . " M.A. Crang , in his book Denying the Truth : Revisiting The X @-@ Files after 9 / 11 , said that " the central story falls a bit flat " , but the episode worked well as a " paeon to medium of television itself " and he felt it was an appropriate vehicle for the series ' penultimate installment .