

= Agua Mala =

" Agua Mala " is the thirteenth episode of the sixth season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on February 21 , 1999 in the United States . The episode was written by David Amann , and directed by Rob Bowman . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Agua Mala " earned a Nielsen household rating of 10 @. @ 1 , being watched by 16 @. @ 9 million people in its initial broadcast . The episode received mostly mixed to negative reviews .

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 , Arthur Dales , now living in a Florida trailer park , calls Mulder and Scully for help when a neighboring family disappears ; and , with a hurricane approaching , Mulder and Scully find themselves trapped with a group of residents in a building where there is something in the water .

" Agua Mala " was Amann 's second story for The X @-@ Files . The original idea for the episode featured a monster loose in an abandoned gold mine . Darren McGavin makes a second appearance as Arthur Dales after being introduced in " Travelers . " After suffering a stroke , he would later be replaced by M. Emmet Walsh in " The Unnatural . " The episode was notable for its sheer amount of water and its lack of bright lighting , a stylistic approach that Gillian Anderson likened to filming in Vancouver .

= = Plot = =

In Goodland , Florida during a fierce hurricane , Sara Shipley and her son , Evan , desperately try to flip the washing machine but fail to do so as tentacles ensnare them . After receiving a call , FBI special agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) arrive at the home of retired FBI agent Arthur Dales (Darren McGavin) , the first to look into the X @-@ Files . He tells them about the Shipley family and how Sara Shipley called him in a panic after her husband was attacked by something in the bathroom with tentacles . Scully is dubious about this but believes that something has indeed happened to the Shipley family during this hurricane .

Mulder and Scully go to the Shipley house and find the bathroom door barricaded shut , no sign of any people . The two have a brief run @-@ in with Deputy Greer who believes they are burglars until Mulder disarms the man and Scully shows him her FBI ID . They attempt to go to the airport but are trapped by the hurricane . Elsewhere at the Breakers Condominiums , Deputy Greer encounters the creature after finding a dead man covered in a slimy substance on a toilet . Mulder and Scully later find the deputy 's vehicle parked outside the apartments . Searching the building , they discover Greer on the ground , his neck covered with red welts . Mulder goes around the complex to find the rest of the people and warn them that the thing is in the plumbing . He encounters Dougie , a looter , Walter Suarez whose girlfriend Angela Villareal is nine months pregnant , and George Vincent , an anti @-@ government Second Amendment activist . Mulder attempts to get Vincent to come out and join them for his own protection . Vincent refuses but , after being attacked by the creature in his apartment , relents . Mulder hypothesizes that the entity attacking them was driven from the bottom of the sea by the hurricane into the city 's water system .

Dougie steals the deputy 's wedding ring and knocks over a container of Epsom salts into the tub where the unconscious Greer is soaking after Scully removed several specimens from his neck wounds . While Angela Villareal relieves herself , she spots the creature in the tub with the deputy . Mulder and Scully enter the bathroom and find the clothes of the deputy but the man gone . Mulder theorizes that the entity does not just live in water but is a living form of water , becoming visible only when it attacks . He believes that the creature uses people as hosts to reproduce , with the body 's water content being used to feed the growth of new creatures . Mulder realizes that everyone needs to evacuate .

Charging outside , Mulder is attacked by the creature in the hall . When he returns with the welts all over his throat , George Vincent slams the door and takes them all hostage , leaving Mulder to die in

the hallway . Angela goes into labor and Scully finds herself forced to deliver a baby . However , water collects in the light fixture above them and the creature appears . It grabs George Vincent by the neck . Scully tells Walter Suarez to aim for the sprinklers , realizing that the freshwater kept the creature at bay , as with the deputy until Epsom salt was added to the water . Suarez shoots the sprinklers and saves Vincent 's life . Meanwhile , Mulder realizes that freshwater is the key also , and runs out into the rain to heal his wounds .

The next morning , the creature has vanished , the newborn baby has survived and is healthy , and Mulder starts recovering quite well . After telling the story to Dales , he is relieved and felt that he would have not retired from the FBI if he had a partner like Scully . He decides to celebrate with the agents now that the storm is over ; he asks them if they would like some water , to which they quickly reply " No ! "

= = Production = =

= = Writing = =

" Agua Mala " was written by David Amann and was his second story for The X @-@ Files after " Terms of Endearment . " " Agua Mala " went through several very different drafts . Amann was originally tasked with bringing back the character of Arthur Dales . His original story was of a monster loose in an abandoned gold mine . Frank Spotnitz , the show 's executive producer , did not particularly like the idea of a gold mine , but he enjoyed the concept of a monster loose in an enclosed space . Amann quickly decided to set the episode during a hurricane and feature a sea monster as the primary antagonist . Originally , the sea monster was blown onto dry land and crawled into the building , before Amann decided to re @-@ write it as living water .

Director Rob Bowman was worried that the episode 's monster would not appear " scary " and that the story would not be " compelling " . By utilizing unique camera angles and quick action Bowman was able to make the episode feel " a hell of a lot better than [he] was afraid it might " . The monster was created by special effects makeup supervisor John Vulich , a task he considered " the single most difficult thing [he] did all season " . The tentacles were created out of a combination of silicone and urethane to make them translucent , but give them a flexible feel . The " octopus bite marks " numbered in the hundreds and required 90 minutes to apply . The episode 's title , " Agua Mala " , means bad water in Spanish . Aguamala is also the slang name for the Portuguese Man o ' War , a venomous jellyfish similar in form to the episode 's primary antagonist .

= = Casting = =

Darren McGavin makes an appearance as Arthur Dales in the episode , his second after being introduced in " Travelers " . McGavin , noted for his role in Kolchak : The Night Stalker which was instrumental in the tone of The X @-@ Files , was originally the casting directors ' first choice for the role of Senator Matheson in the second season episode " Little Green Men " . McGavin was later sought out to play the role of Mulder 's dad . In the end , McGavin finally agreed to appear on the show playing Arthur Dales , the agent who originally founded the X @-@ Files . McGavin was originally supposed to also appear in the Duchovny @-@ penned episode " The Unnatural " , but two days after filming began , he suffered a stroke , forcing the producers to remove his scenes from the episode and replace them with another " Arthur Dales " , played by M. Emmet Walsh .

= = Filming = =

The episode was notable for its sheer amount of water and its lack of bright lighting . Director Rob Bowman noted that he did not film " anything for that episode during daylight , or with anything brighter than a flashlight or an emergency lamp in the hallway " . Bowman explained that " Agua Mala " was extremely difficult to film because every time a crew or cast member got wet , they " had

to stop everything to dry them off " . Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny , in particular , were " water @-@ logged " for a majority of the episode 's filming . Anderson later joked , " I mean , we got drenched . It was like we were back in Vancouver ! " The show had previously filmed in Vancouver from season one to five before moving to Los Angeles , California at the beginning of the sixth season .

The apartment featured in the episode was built from scratch on a soundstage . Production designer Corey Kaplan received the script for " Agua Mala " around Christmas and , realizing the amount of work , immediately began drawing up plans for the set . By the time the episode was finished , the entire set was trashed and water @-@ logged and had to be thrown away . Costume designer Christine Peters was required to bring six dry replicas of each character 's wardrobe to prevent pneumonia .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Agua Mala " first aired in the United States on February 21 , 1999 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 10 @. @ 1 , meaning that roughly 10 @. @ 1 percent of all television @-@ equipped households were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 16 @. @ 90 million viewers . The episode aired in the United Kingdom and Ireland on Sky1 on June 6 , 1999 and received 0 @. @ 95 million viewers , making it the third most watched episode that week . Fox promoted the episode with the tagline " Tonight , a creature living in our water has just gotten thirsty , for us . "

= = = Reviews = = =

The episode received mixed to negative reviews from critics . Michael Liedtke and George Avalos , in a review of the sixth season in The Charlotte Observer , called the episode " just plain bad " . Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club roundly criticized the episode and awarded it a " D ? " , calling it " a famously bad episode of The X @-@ Files . " He noted that " the worst thing about ' Agua Mala ' is that it comes so very , very close to working that it ? s frustrating to see just how little it actually does " due to its bizarre structure and convoluted antagonist . VanDerWerff criticized Darren McGavin 's appearance in the episode , calling it a " glorified cameo " , and noted that his character function as the " kind of old man who stands on his porch and yells about the good old days to the neighborhood kids . " He did however , call the shot of the " writhing tentacle in the overhead lamp " the " one good thing " in the episode . 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 one @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half stars out of five , writing that the episode 's " laughs aren 't clever , and the scares are silly " .

Not all reviews were completely negative ; others were more mixed . Tom Kessenich , in his book Examination : An Unauthorized Look at Seasons 6 ? 9 of the X @-@ Files gave the episode a mixed review , writing " as far as [Monsters of the Weeks] go , ' Agua Mala ' was pretty standard fare . " However , he criticized the episodes resolution , noting that Scully should have had no way to know pure water would kill the creature . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a mixed review and awarded it two stars out of four . Vitaris wrote that , " ' Agua Mala ' won 't end up on anybody 's ' best of ' list , but it 's so silly that it 's sort of fun . " Timothy Sexton from Yahoo ! News named " The Hurricane Monster " as one of " The Best X @-@ Files Monsters of the Week " , writing , " I 'll tell you one thing about this X @-@ Files episode and this X @-@ Files monster : you 'll never go to the bathroom during a rainstorm again without thinking twice . "

= = = Awards = = =

" Agua Mala " earned an ASC Award by the American Society of Cinematographers for Outstanding

