

= Teliko =

" Teliko " is the third episode of the fourth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It was written by Howard Gordon and directed by James Charleston . The episode originally aired in the United States on October 18 , 1996 , on the Fox network . It is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Teliko " earned a Nielsen rating of 11 @.@ 3 , being watched by 18 @.@ 01 million people upon 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 and Scully are called in to investigate the unexplained deaths of several African and African @-@ American people whose skin color has turned white as the result of either a rare medical disorder or a bizarre curse .

The episode features the second appearance by Laurie Holden as Marita Covarrubias , following her debut in the fourth season premiere " Herrenvolk " . Carl Lumbly guest stars as a social worker . Inspired by the topics of racial discrimination , " Teliko " explores xenophobia and prejudice . The make @-@ up effects in the episode were difficult to apply and took several hours to be completed . The episode received mixed reviews from critics , who compared the episode to older episodes of the series . The racial topics of the episode drew mixed attention .

= = Plot = =

On an international airline flight , an African man enters the bathroom , where he is attacked by a man exhibiting albino traits . The attacker leaves the bathroom with his normal black skin tone . After the plane lands in the United States , a flight attendant discovers the victim in the bathroom , devoid of his skin pigmentation .

Three months later , Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) calls in Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and informs her that four African American men have been kidnapped in Philadelphia . One of them has been found dead exhibiting depigmentation . A specialist from the CDC believes that the men have died from a disease , and has requested Scully to investigate the case . Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) joins Scully and has some of the evidence samples from Sanders ' autopsy analyzed by Agent Pendrell , who finds a seed from a rare West African passionflower . Mulder takes the seed to his UN informant Marita Covarrubias and asks for her help ; she provides him with information on the incident on the plane .

Meanwhile , Samuel Aboah (Willie Amakye) , an African immigrant who is seeking citizenship , attacks a young black man while he is waiting for a bus , kidnapping him . Investigating Kittel 's disappearance , Mulder finds a seed at the bus stop . They have Marcus Duff (Carl Lumbly) , a social worker who is helping Aboah apply for citizenship , cross @-@ reference the names from the flight with those applying for permanent residency or a work visa . This leads them to Aboah , who runs when they try to question him and is discovered after squeezing himself into a drainage pipe . Aboah appears to have no symptoms of disease when he is analyzed at a local medical center , but Scully plans to examine him more .

Mulder sees Diabra , a diplomat from Burkina Faso . Diabra tells him an old folk tale of the Bambara people about the Teliko , which were nocturnal " spirits of the air " . Meanwhile , Scully examines a PET scan of Aboah , which shows that he has no pituitary gland . Aboah escapes the hospital and meets Duff in a car ; he paralyzes Duff in the same manner as his other victims and inserts a long metal object up his nose . A policeman finds Duff and requests an ambulance , and the police tell Mulder and Scully that they are sweeping the area for Aboah . Driving around , Mulder tells Scully that he thinks Aboah is the mythical Teliko . He stops at a demolition site , remembering that Pendrell found asbestos fibers on Sanders ' body . Mulder and Scully split up at the site ; Scully finds the missing men dead , and Mulder is pierced as Kittel was . Scully finds him , calls for medical help , and shoots Aboah . In her field journal , Scully writes that Aboah will stand trial if he lives long enough . She muses that Aboah 's condition and survival may be discovered by science , but

humans have a fear of an alien among them which causes them to " deceive , inveigle , and obfuscate " .

= = Production = =

Writer and executive producer Howard Gordon was originally working on an episode about someone who appeared to be immortal , but after discussions with consulting producer Ken Horton he added in the notion of xenophobia and " melanin @-@ sucking albino vampires " . Series creator Chris Carter approved the storyline , but the first draft of the script was met with disapproval by the writing staff , and the story was restructured and rewritten . As the episode entered pre @-@ production , Carter asked Gordon to refine the script to give it a purpose , and it was then that Gordon came up with the theme of " deceive , inveigle , and obfuscate " . The same phrase is also uttered by Scully in the episode during her closing sentiments .

This replaces the usual " The Truth is Out There " tagline during the title sequence of the episode . Carter also came up with Aboah 's weapons used to extract the pituitary gland that he kept hidden in his esophagus . " Teliko " is Greek for " end " , though it is the name of a " spirit of the air " in African mythology which is sometimes thought to be an albino . Fellow writer John Shiban suggested that the Teliko emerge from the country of Burkina Faso based on his former job of programming foreign air @-@ mail rates for a computer software company .

Casting for the episode was difficult , as the production team wanted real Africans . They auditioned every one they could find , including an African theater troupe that was passing by . The role of Marcus Duff eventually went to Carl Lumbly , who was known for his role on CBS 's Cagney & Lacey . The role of Aboah went to Willie Amakye , a Ghanaian Olympic runner who had just returned to his home in Southern California from the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta , Georgia . To appear albino , Amakye 's skin underwent several layers of cover @-@ up cream , layers of white powder , and a little pink powder for color . He also wore contacts for the transparent pink eyes . Amakye 's hair was dyed orange for post @-@ production special effects to change it back and forth from black and white . As revealed on his resident alien card , Aboah 's birthday is September 25 , a reference to the birthday of Gillian Anderson 's daughter .

" Teliko " ' s opening sequence makes use of an airplane cabin set built for the later season episodes " Tempus Fugit " and " Max " , though the set 's hydraulic shaking rig had not been completed yet . Composer Mark Snow used African drums , flutes , and chants in his score for the episode . He also used samples from " The Bulgarian Women 's Chorus " , a recording known in Southern California in promotion for a local radio station . Compositions by Snow often utilized elements of African tribal drums , but " Teliko " features rather prominent usage .

= = Themes = =

" Teliko " explores the concept of the other , with the " other " representing characters of a different race . In the episode , the US and its culture are treated as the norm , wherein the African culture in the episode is depicted in an intimidating way . African folk tales , which are not often considered strange in their own nation , are shown in the episode as ominous and bizarre . The episode prominently features tribal music , and according to Allan F. Moore in his book *Analyzing Popular Music* , the usage of the episode reinforces a " dangerous but culturally dangerous slippage between the others . " The writer claimed that linking the supernatural ethnic character to the tribal music adds a more " exotic " feeling to the character .

By making the character seem more unnatural , it adds an " extraterrestrial " quality to him , making him seem even more unusual in nature . Charles D. Martin mused in *The White African American Body* that " blackness is clearly attached to racial identity " in the episode , commenting that the episode equates the cultural understanding of race to mere skin color . Martin cites Mulder 's joke about Michael Jackson as a self @-@ aware comment on " another contemporary white negro " which reinforces a stereotype .

Zoe Detsi @-@ Diamanti , in her book *The Flesh Made Text Made Flesh* , commented on the

episode 's depiction of race . She argues that the episode makes the point that a " perfectly normal " black man looks a certain way , pointing out that the episode states that a black man is defined by a " certain skin pigment " . Any exception to this norm is depicted in a negative manner , with science being the only answer to unnatural phenomena . Dean Kowalski agreed with the analysis in *The Philosophy of The X @-@ Files* , commenting that one of the main themes of the episodes revolved around science 's attempt to explain folk theories and paranormal phenomena . The episode 's antagonist Aboah , escapes the FBI by fitting into a dinner cart , a feat that was compared to slaves escaping in unconformable slave ships .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Teliko " originally aired on the Fox network on October 18 , 1996 . The episode marked the final time that an episode of the series aired on a Friday . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 11 @. @ 3 , with a 20 share , meaning that roughly 11 @. @ 3 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 20 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . " Teliko " was seen by 18 @. @ 01 million viewers on first broadcast .

The episode received generally mixed reviews from critics . *Entertainment Weekly* gave " Teliko " a grade of " C ? " , finding it similar to the first season episode " Squeeze " . Zack Handlen of *The A.V. Club* gave it a " B ? " , also noting its similarity to " Squeeze " and finding that it had uncomfortable racial overtones . However , he did feel that the climax was " wonderfully tense " and " one of the better climaxes the show 's done " . Sarah Stegall awarded the episode two stars out of five , also noting the similarities to " Squeeze " . She criticized the depiction of Mulder and Scully , commenting that the two lacked quality scenes together . She did compliment the scene where Agent Pendrell is disappointed at not seeing Scully , describing it as the highlight of the episode . In his book *The Nitpicker 's Guide for X @-@ Philes* , author Phil Farrand pointed out an inconsistency in the episode ; before the timeline of the episode , Aboah only kills four men in three months , but during the duration of the episode he kills two men in a matter of days .