

= The End (The X @-@ Files) =

" The End " is the 20th and final episode of the fifth season , and 117th overall of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . The episode first aired in the United States and Canada on May 17 , 1998 . " The End " subsequently aired in the United Kingdom on March 17 , 1999 on BBC One . The episode was written by executive producer Chris Carter , and directed by R. W. Goodwin . " The End " earned a Nielsen household rating of 11 @. @ 9 , being watched by 18 @. @ 76 million people in its initial broadcast . The episode received mixed to positive reviews from television critics .

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 , the assassination of a chess grandmaster leads Mulder and Scully into an investigation that they soon discover strikes at the heart of the X @-@ Files ; they learn that the real target was a telepathic boy named Gibson Praise .

The episode was originally supposed to be the series finale for the show , allowing the series to evolve into a film franchise following the release of the 1998 movie . However , the series proved too profitable for Fox and a sixth season was ordered . The episode would be the last to be filmed in Vancouver : production for the subsequent seasons moved to Los Angeles , California . " The End " features what would become the recurring character of Diana Fowley , portrayed by Mimi Rogers . As a season finale , it created loose ends for both the feature film and the subsequent season opener , " The Beginning " .

= = Plot = =

In Vancouver , an international chess tournament is held at an arena between Anatole Klebanow , a Russian grandmaster , and Gibson Praise (Jeff Gulka) , a young American prodigy . In the rafters , the Shooter , an MIB assassin , prepares to fire at Gibson . However , Gibson senses the Shooter 's presence and manages to discreetly dodge the shot , which kills Klebanow instead .

Elsewhere in Canada , the Smoking Man (William B. Davis) is found by Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) . At FBI Headquarters Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) reveals to Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) that Jeffrey Spender (Chris Owens) is leading the case investigating the shooting . Despite Spender 's request that Mulder not be involved , he bursts into the meeting and offers the explanation that the assassin was firing at Gibson , not the Russian . In the meeting is Diana Fowley (Mimi Rogers) , an acquaintance from Mulder 's past . The Smoking Man is reunited with the Syndicate members , including the First Elder and the Well @-@ Manicured Man , who want him to help them with the situation concerning Gibson . Fowley accompanies Mulder and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) as they go visit Gibson in Gaithersburg , Maryland . Mulder believes that Gibson can read minds , hence why he is so good at chess . Scully learns that Mulder and Diana know each other from long ago .

Mulder goes to see the Shooter , despite Spender 's objections . Mulder wants to give the Shooter immunity in exchange for testimony , which the Shooter refuses . Gibson proves his abilities to a group of clinicians while Scully and Fowley watch . The guard at the prison hands the Shooter a flattened Morley cigarette box that says he 's a dead man . Scully visits the Lone Gunmen , wanting them to analyze the data from Gibson . She asks them who Diana is , and they tell her she worked closely with Mulder when he discovered the X @-@ Files . The Smoking Man meets with Jeffrey in the FBI parking lot , but disappears when Mulder spots them talking . Scully and Mulder present to Skinner on Gibson , who shows extraordinary brain activities . Mulder believes that Gibson is the key to everything in the X @-@ Files and wants to make a deal with the Shooter . Diana and Skinner think this may result in adverse attention from the attorney general and the X @-@ Files could be closed down if things go wrong , but Mulder dismisses that risk .

Mulder meets with the Shooter again , who tells him that Gibson is a missing link . Mulder believes that Gibson has genes that are dormant in most humans . The Smoking Man dismisses the Well @-@ Manicured Man 's concerns about Mulder 's actions . At the prison the guard kills the Shooter .

Diana Fowley , protecting Gibson in a hotel room , is shot shortly afterwards and Gibson is captured by the Smoking Man 's minions . Skinner tells Mulder of the Shooter 's death and that a flattened Morley cigarette box was found in his cell . Mulder confronts Spender , accusing him of working with the Smoking Man . The Smoking Man turns Gibson over to the Well @-@ Manicured Man . Scully is informed by Skinner that the Justice Department is seeking to have the X @-@ Files shut down . Mulder realizes that this was all part of a plan . The Smoking Man takes Samantha 's X @-@ File from Mulder 's office and lights the room on fire . As he leaves he meets Jeffrey , and tells him that he 's his father . By the time Mulder and Scully arrive the X @-@ Files are completely destroyed .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

Originally , the fifth season of The X @-@ Files was supposed to be the show 's last . In this manner , the finale of season five would have segued the series into a movie franchise . David Duchovny explained , " we were saying , ' Okay , we 're going to do five . We 'll get out of here at five . ' And then five came around , and no one was going anywhere . " The series proved to be so lucrative for Fox that two additional seasons were ordered . Thus , " The End " was created to segue into The X @-@ Files movie , as well as the sixth season premiere , " The Beginning " .

Near the beginning of the episode , Praise plays a Russian grandmaster at chess . The Complete X @-@ Files notes that the " chess motif " was carried on throughout the episode , most notably in the fact that The Smoking Man " plays Mulder to a checkmate , using Jeffrey as a pawn . " Because of this , and his past actions , many perceived The Smoking Man as the true villain of the story . William B. Davis , who played The Smoking Man , however , felt that the character was the hero of the story . He noted , " I used to go to conventions and try to convince everyone that I was the hero of the series and Mulder was the bad guy . [?] I got a lot of laughs , but it 's certainly true of how one plays the character . Nobody thinks they 're evil . "

= = = Casting and filming = = =

The episode introduced two new characters in Gibson Praise , played by Jeff Gulka , and Diana Fowley , portrayed by Mimi Rogers . Kim Manners later said of Gulka , " There was something about that kid 's personality that really came off on screen . He really exuded an intelligence that was pretty special . Chris saw what Bob Goodwin did with him and he knew that this kid was a special storytelling tool for the chronicle of the X @-@ Files " . Chris Carter said that Fowley " was a character you were destined to hate because she was a competitor for Mulder 's affection with Scully . Gillian Anderson said , " She didn 't make it easy on Scully . I think she was aware of her effect on Mulder and on the situation . "

This episode was the last episode of the series to be filmed in Vancouver , Canada prior to production moving to Los Angeles , California . The move was influenced in part by David Duchovny , who after five years of filming wanted to be closer to his wife . The audience at the chess match was made up of local fans as a " thank you " to the city for hosting the production during its first five years . The chess match was filmed at Rogers Arena ? then known as GM Place ? the home of the Vancouver Canucks as well as the Vancouver Grizzlies at the time . While the producers expected five thousand people to show up , twelve thousand appeared . Instructions were given to the crowd by director R. W. Goodwin using giant video screens attached to the scoreboard . During breaks between shooting concession stands , music and videos were made available to the attendees . Actors Duchovny and Anderson also answered questions for the audience and over \$ 20 @, @ 000 worth of equipment was raffled off . Chris Carter directed the second unit filming for the episode in order to be with the show 's Canadian crew members .

= = Reception = =

== Ratings ==

" The End " premiered on the Fox network on May 17 , 1998 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC One on March 17 , 1999 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 11 @. @ 9 with an 18 share , meaning that roughly 11 @. @ 9 percent of all television @- @ equipped households , and 18 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . A total of 18 @. @ 76 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing . The episode was later included on The X @- @ Files Mythology , Volume 3 ? Colonization , a DVD collection that contains episodes involved with the alien Colonist 's plans to take over the earth .

== Reviews ==

" The End " received mixed to positive reviews from critics . Lon Grahmke of Chicago Sun @- @ Times reacted positively towards the episode , describing it as " pivotal " . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a positive review and awarded it three stars out of four . She wrote that the episode " is an effective , sometimes even moving , conclusion to a scattershot season . " Vitaris wrote that the entry was " far superior " to the season four season finale " Gethsemane " and praised the various character introductions , most notably that of Gibson Praise and Diana Fowley . She did , however , criticize the reappearance of Krycek and the fact that The Smoking Man was again working for the Syndicate . Critical Myth reviewer John Keegan gave the episode a 9 out 10 rating and wrote that , " Overall , this episode was a very good season finale , making sense of the season ? s character arcs while setting the stage for the feature film . While the effect was somewhat mitigated by the fact that the episode also had to set up situations for the sixth season , it highlights Cancer Man ? s strategic strengths in a way that previous episodes didn ? t fully exploit . " In a 2000 review of season five for the New Straits Times , Francis Dass called " The End " a " gem " and praised the acting of Jeff Gulka , noting that he was a " great child actor " .

Other reviews were more mixed . Zack Handlen of The A.V. Club gave the episode a mixed review and grade it a C + . Handlen criticized the episode 's lack of resolution , noting that " The show can feed our social paranoia [?] but when it comes time to deliver on all this , to finally pull back the curtain and move on to the next stage , it fumbles things . " Furthermore , he called the Mulder / Scully / Fowley love triangle " immediately off @- @ putting " and criticized Mimi Rogers 's characterization . However , Handlen did call The Smoking Man 's return " thrilling " and wrote that the burning of Mulder 's office was " arguably one of the most iconic visuals in the run of the series " . 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 criticized the closing down of the X @- @ Files division , due largely to the fact that " we 've seen [it] before " , a reference to the divisions 's closing at the conclusion of the show 's first season . However , Shearman and Pearson wrote that " ' The End ' works in spite of itself " , citing the arrival of Diana Fowley and the confrontation between The Smoking Man and Jeffrey Spender as positive points in the episode .