

= The Red and the Black (The X @-@ Files) =

" The Red and the Black " is the fourteenth episode of the fifth season of American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It was written by series creator Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz , directed by Carter and aired in the United States on March 8 , 1998 on the Fox network . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 12 @.@ 0 , being watched by 19 @.@ 98 million people in its initial broadcast . The episode received moderately positive reviews from 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 , Mulder has Scully put under hypnosis to learn the truth about her abduction after Cassandra Spender (Veronica Cartwright) goes missing and her son Jeffrey (Chris Owens) angrily attempts to push his way up in the FBI . The Syndicate , meanwhile , quicken their tests for the black oil vaccine , sacrificing their own to do so .

" The Red and the Black " continues from the previous episode , " Patient X " and features the return of Mulder 's belief in extraterrestrials , a belief he initially lost in the season opener " Redux " . Director Rob Bowman was originally slated to direct the episode , but filming issues resulted in Carter directing it . Carter later described the episode , along with " Patient X " , as being " the most challenging and logically complex projects of the season . "

= = Plot = =

In the mountain wilderness of Canada , someone in a cabin writes a letter , addressed to " Son " and expresses hopes that they may reconcile . The envelope is addressed to the FBI , and is given to a boy courier for mailing .

Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) arrives at the Ruskin Dam and finds a number of burned corpses , including those belonging to Quiet Willy and Dmitri . Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) is found with only minor burns , one of approximately fifty survivors who were found nearby in the woods . Jeffrey Spender arrives looking for his mother , Cassandra (Veronica Cartwright) , who is missing . Mulder meets with Scully about the incident , but she does not remember anything . Jeffrey sees Mulder and warns him not to get involved with his mother , who remains missing .

The Well @-@ Manicured Man (John Neville) and other Syndicate Elders watch as their black oil vaccine is administered to Marita Covarrubias (Laurie Holden) , which has yet to work . Later , The Well @-@ Manicured Man meets with Alex Krycek (Nicholas Lea) , who is being held captive aboard a Russian freighter . The Well @-@ Manicured Man believes that the Russians possess a functional vaccine to the black oil , or else Krycek would not have infected the boy . With a working vaccine , resistance to the alien Colonists is possible .

A spacecraft crashes at Wiekamp Air Force base in West Virginia , and the surviving Rebel passenger is captured by the military . Mulder shows Scully more photos of the victims and , having found more implants in them , believes the implant in Scully may be able to answer all of their questions . The Syndicate meets over the capture of the Rebel . The Well @-@ Manicured Man wants to align with the Rebels , but the other Syndicate members are reluctant and want to make sure the Russian vaccine from Krycek works .

Under hypnosis , Scully recalls the Rebels burning her fellow abductees , and recalls a Colonist spacecraft killing the Rebels and abducting Cassandra . During a meeting with Walter Skinner , Mulder continues to insist that the events have been orchestrated by the military and not by aliens . Meanwhile , the Russian vaccine seems to have no effect on Marita . The First Elder tells the Well @-@ Manicured Man that they have already decided to turn the Rebel over to the Colonists . Jeffrey shows Scully a video of him talking about aliens while under hypnosis while he was a child , claiming his mother had forced him to make those statements .

Krycek is released and attacks Mulder in his apartment . He claims that a war is raging between the aliens and that the Rebel immolations are meant to halt the impending colonization of Earth . He also claims that the captured Rebel is critical to their plans and must not die . Mulder and Scully

head to Wiekamp Air Force Base , where the Alien Bounty Hunter ? who is disguised as Quiet Willy ? has come to kill the Rebel . However , Mulder witnesses a second Rebel arriving to seemingly kill the Bounty Hunter and rescue the captured Rebel . The Well @-@ Manicured Man watches as the Russian vaccine is revealed to have been successful on Marita . Mulder is released by the military but is confused by what he saw . At FBI Headquarters , Spender receives the letter from Canada . In Canada we see the boy return the unopened letter to the cabin and the sender is revealed to be The Smoking Man (William B. Davis) .

= = Production = =

= = = Casting and filming = = =

Series creator Chris Carter explained that the cast listing for the episode , along with " Patient X " was " longer than most cast lists you 'll ever see on a TV series " . In order to allow for the increased expenses of hiring additional actors , Carter and the producers of the series talked Fox into allowing the episodes to be slightly more expensive because they would lead into the soon @-@ to @-@ be @-@ released X @-@ Files movie . Carter explained , " we convinced them to spend the extra money to do this extra special work because it was all leading up to [...] when the X @-@ Files movie would be released . " In addition , the child he gave the message to was a young boy and the son of production manager J.P. Finn . Rob Bowman originally intended to direct the episode but , due to reshoots , he was unable to do it , resulting in Carter directing . Bowman later recounted , " I was supposed to direct ' The Red and the Black ' [?] but we were prepping for the reshoots [of The X @-@ Files movie] so I couldn 't do it . [?] Chris had to direct this episode . He was so mad at me . " When filming the scene where Mulder and Scully go to a medic station , Carter made homage to the medical drama ER , filming it entirely with a Steadicam .

The opening scene was filmed at Grouse Mountain , above the city of Vancouver , Canada . Most of the scenes at the Ruskin Dam were shot approximately 50 miles east of Vancouver , while the abduction sequence involved a full @-@ scale replica of the dam . The various scenes with the Syndicate testing the black oil vaccine on Marita Covarrubias were filmed at an abandoned hospital in Vancouver . Carter commented that they chose it because it had " an interesting observation space above it that we used " , which was difficult to shoot in .

= = = Effects = = =

" The Red and the Black " was a technically difficult episode , which Carter later described , along with " Patient X " , as " the most challenging and logically complex projects of the season . " The scene where Cassandra Spender was elevated into the colonist craft was shot by having a stuntwoman sit in Cassandra 's wheelchair and be lifted upward via a crane , which was removed from the shot during post @-@ production . The lights of the alien spacecraft were shot using a lighting rig combined with computer effects by Special Effects Supervisor Laurie Kalisen @-@ George . The crashed alien spacecraft was sixty feet in diameter , twice the length of any other spaceship seen before on the show , and dragged along the ground to create a skidmark . Twenty @-@ five explosions were set off to simulate the saucer crash ; the remains of the wreckage were then burned to create the rest of the footage . The scene took an entire night to film .

The opening scene featuring the alien rebels incinerating a group of Russian alien abductees was filmed without actual Russian cars . Picture car coordination Bigel Habgood noted , " I couldn 't get real Russian cars , so I decided to get creative and go seriously European . We burned a couple Saabs , and a BMW 2002 . I 'm sorry we couldn 't get any Yugos . " For the scene after the intro wherein Mulder discovers the charred remains of abductees , the prop and the production design departments had to create specialized fake bodies . Carter later noted that it 's " harder than it looks to create a charred , dead body . " The stage for the alien abduction scene was built from scratch : construction supervisor Rob Maier was tasked with creating a full @-@ scale replica of the Ruskin

Dam bridge in order to ease up the shots . The tagline for this episode is " Resist or Serve " . The tagline was later used for The X @-@ Files game , The X @-@ Files : Resist or Serve as well as the official book covering the fifth season of the show . The list of victims viewed by Scully in her hospital room was made up of X @-@ Files staffers .

= = Reception = =

" The Red and the Black " premiered on the Fox network in the United States on March 8 , 1998 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 12 @.@ 0 , with an 18 share , meaning that roughly 12 @.@ 0 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 18 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 19 @.@ 98 million viewers . 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 .

Critical reception to the episode was largely positive . The A.V. Club reviewer Zack Handlen gave " The Red and the Black " an A ? , and wrote positively of the " galactic war " between the colonists and the rebels that is referenced in the episode , noting that it marked the point where " shit is about to get real " . Despite this , Handlen criticized the series for not following through on its tale of alien war , noting that the premise " never really [took off] --at least [?] I 've never heard anyone refer to [the last seasons of the show] as ' the seasons when the The X @-@ Files mythology finally paid off . ' " Handlen , however noted that " The Red and the Black " worked because " the performances are great as always , and because the second part of this two parter rarely feels bogged down or draggy . " 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 stars out of five . The two called the episode a " typical mythology runaround " and noted that the plot was " complicated but the simpler scenes of confrontation are very well handled . " Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a positive review and awarded it three stars out of four . Vitaris praised the episode 's premise and wrote that it represented " a second half of a two @-@ parter that is as strong as the first half . "

A variety of critics praised the hypnotism scene . Robert Shearman called the scene " gorgeous " and praised Gillian Anderson 's acting abilities . Paula Vitaris was extremely impressed with the scene 's blocking , calling the rendition " virtually orgasmic in intensity " and concluded that " Anderson is marvelous " .