

= Conduit (The X @-@ Files) =

" Conduit " is the fourth episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on October 1 , 1993 . It was written by Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon , directed by Daniel Sackheim , and featured a guest appearance by Carrie Snodgrass as the mother of an abducted teenager .

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 , when investigating the possible alien abduction of a teenage girl , find that the missing girl 's younger brother may be capable of receiving satellite transmissions , and that her mother may also have been party to a UFO encounter over twenty years earlier . Mulder finds himself becoming emotionally attached to the case due to its similarities to his own childhood experiences , when his younger sister Samantha was abducted from their home .

The episode , although not directly tied to the series ' ongoing story arcs , provides more information on how Fox Mulder 's younger sister , Samantha Mulder , had been abducted as a child ; a plot thread which would go on to become one of the more prominent of the series . The episode was filmed in British Columbia , with Buntzen Lake being used as Lake Okobogee .

= = Plot = =

At a campground at Lake Okobogee [sic] National Park in Sioux City , Iowa , Darlene Morris witnesses a flash of light outside of her RV . When she ventures outside to find her young son , Kevin , he claims that his teenaged sister , Ruby , has vanished .

In Washington , FBI Division Chief Scott Blevins informs Dana Scully that , unbeknownst to her , Fox Mulder has requested travel expenses to Sioux City based on a tabloid article about Ruby 's disappearance . Blevins also shows Scully an X @-@ File on the disappearance of Mulder 's sister Samantha . When Scully asks Mulder about the travel expenses , he explains that Lake Okobogee was the scene of a series of UFO sightings in 1967 ; Darlene Morris , then a member of a Girl Scout troop , was one of the witnesses .

When Mulder and Scully travel to Iowa and meet the Morrises , Mulder observes Kevin writing down binary code on a piece of paper ; Kevin claims they are coming from static on a television screen . After submitting Kevin 's code for analysis , the agents meet with the local sheriff , who tells them that Ruby was a juvenile delinquent who likely ran away . They also meet a young woman , Tessa , who says that Ruby had gotten pregnant and was planning to run away with her boyfriend , Greg Randall . The agents are unable to find Greg at the bar where he works ; however , his boss tells them about UFO activity at Lake Okobogee .

Kevin 's code is revealed to be part of a Defense Department satellite transmission . NSA agents ransack the Morris household , looking for any other documentation that might supposedly compromise national security . After the Morrises are taken into custody , Mulder examines the charred roof of their RV , prompting him to head to Lake Okobogee . There , the agents discover sand turned to glass and a burned tree line , indicating the presence of a massive heat source . Upon encountering some white wolves , Mulder and Scully find Greg Randall 's body in a shallow grave .

On his person , they find a note in his wallet that eventually leads Scully and Mulder to conclude that it was Tessa , not Ruby , who was pregnant . Under interrogation , Tessa confesses to killing Greg but denies Ruby was at Lake Okobogee that night . Mulder and Scully return to the Morris ' house , and , finding it deserted , discover the binary @-@ covered pieces of paper laid out across the living room floor , forming an image of Ruby 's face . The agents return to Lake Okobogee , where they find Darlene and Kevin in the nearby woods . A motorcycle gang appears , and as Mulder hurries to rescue Kevin from their wake , Scully discovers Ruby nearby .

Ruby is then seen in a hospital bed , with Kevin by her side . When questioned about her experience , she says she was told by an unnamed group not to say anything . Darlene also refuses to cooperate any further , given the ridicule that she faced after her experiences . Back in

Washington , Scully listens to a tape of hypnotic sessions in which Mulder recalls the night his sister vanished . Mulder , meanwhile , sits in a church , crying as he looks at a picture of his sister .

= = Production = =

The episode was filmed in British Columbia , with Buntzen Lake being used as Lake Okobogee . Several crew members became lost in the surrounding area after the van responsible for installing signage got lost itself . The mural of Ruby made up of binary code was designed by assistant art director Greg Loewen and Vivien Nishi , who hand @-@ wrote all the numbers on the mural .

Co @-@ writer Howard Gordon said of the episode , " Alex [Gansa] and I made an effort to play to our own strength , which is character . We thought this was an interesting place to reiterate Mulder 's quest for his sister . We set out to tell a simple abduction story , which was played out behind the shadows . We wanted to create an air of tension . With everything that happened , we wanted to explain what it could be . At every point , everything can be explained . Was she taken or killed by her boyfriend , who she was seeing against her mother 's wishes ? Is it Twin Peaks or an alien abduction ? That was the theme of the show . " Gordon and Gansa were afraid that series creator Chris Carter would not like the script , but Carter liked the script and approved the episode they wrote .

Gordon praised the episode 's ending , saying " I think we 're most proud of the ending : Mulder 's quest is re @-@ established (and Daniel Sackheim directed it beautifully) with Mulder sitting alone in a church with only his faith . The story , again , was fueled by Mulder 's belief and emotional connection with this case . Another girl taken from her family . And , in a way , the little boy who is the conduit , who is also perhaps touched by the aliens , is essentially Mulder . These little touches the fans seem to respond to . It was difficult for us , but in the end satisfying . It came out of frustration on our parts , and creative uncertainty " .

Producer Glen Morgan felt that the episode 's writers , Alex Gansa and Howard Gordon , " have a better character @-@ dramatic sense " , adding that he believed the episode " really helped define Mulder " . Chris Carter felt the episode 's highlights were the ending and the realization by Scully that Mulder may not be a crackpot , feeling it was very important to the show in establishing its point of view . He also felt that the episode proved effective at highlighting that the series was told from Scully 's point of view , citing instances of the character " pulling Mulder back " from his fringe theories and emotional attachment .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Conduit " premiered on the Fox network on October 1 , 1993 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on October 10 , 1994 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 6 @.@ 3 with an 11 share ? meaning that in the US , 6 @.@ 3 percent of television @-@ equipped households , and 11 percent of all households actively watching television , were watching the program . It was viewed by 5 @.@ 9 million households .

In a retrospective of the first season in Entertainment Weekly , " Conduit " was rated a B , with the episode being described as " excellent for background " for the series , though it was noted that Duchovny gave " a performance that makes wood look lively " . Keith Phipps , writing for The A.V. Club , reviewed the episode positively , rating it a B + , feeling that the episode worked well to expand on the motivations of the two lead characters , noting that " the work done here will pay off well later " . The episode has been seen as laying the foundation for the recurrence of Fox Mulder 's obsession with finding his missing sister , which would come to be one of the main plot threads of the series .

Duchovny 's portrayal of Fox Mulder in this episode has been cited as an example of the character 's reversal of traditional gender roles ? his openness and vulnerability when dealing with the similarities between the Morris case and that of his sister casts him " in a pattern typically engendered as female " . He represents a break from past archetypes , with his " emotional and empathic balance " providing a contrast to previous male detectives in fiction .

