

= Die Hand Die Verletzt =

" Die Hand Die Verletzt " is the fourteenth episode of the second season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on January 27 , 1995 . It was written by Glen Morgan and James Wong , directed by Kim Manners , and featured guest appearances by Susan Blommaert , Dan Butler , and Heather McComb . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Die Hand Die Verletzt " earned a Nielsen household rating of 10 @.@ 7 , being watched by 10 @.@ 2 million households in its initial broadcast . The episode received positive reviews , with many critics praising its writing . The title translates from German as " the hand that wounds . "

The X @-@ Files series 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 to Milford Falls , New Hampshire to investigate the death of a teenager who seems to have died during an occult ritual of some sort . As a result of their arrival in town a few of the local high school 's faculty , who had self @-@ stylized as devil @-@ worshipers when they were teens but long ago stopped worshiping the devil , decide they should take steps to conceal their past activities . Matters are further complicated when the devil seems to have decided to personally interfere .

Die Hand Die Verletzt uses the lapsed devil @-@ worshipers as a way to parody insincere followers of mainstream religions . When confronted with proof of their religion 's claims the school faculty members are mostly worried about how their obligations could impact their secular lives , several being either scared or annoyed by the prospect of having to become devout . This was the last episode written by Morgan and Wong before they left to create Space : Above and Beyond . They decided to add several in @-@ jokes with The X @-@ Files creative team . The episode has several scenes involving animals , each filmed with living creatures . In one such scene frogs rain from the sky . Actor Dan Butler has been quoted as being terrified of an anaconda used during one scene .

= = Plot = =

In fictional Milford Haven , New Hampshire , a group of high school faculty members meet to discuss various social events . The adults initially appear to be socially conservative , debating whether students should perform the musical Grease or Jesus Christ Superstar . However , when the group ends the meeting in a prayer , they recite a Satanic chant .

Later , a group of students go out into the woods at night to play with black magic , an attempt to " score " on the part of the boys in the group . The experiment causes unexplainable things to happen , causing all but one of the teenagers to flee . The remaining teen 's mutilated body is discovered the next day , leading Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) to investigate . Locals ? including the faculty members ? claim that the children have unleashed a demonic force with their rituals ; a theory which is given validity by strange occurrences , such as frogs falling from the sky and water in the drinking fountain draining counter @-@ clockwise , contrary to the Coriolis effect . Unknown to the agents , substitute teacher Mrs. Paddock (Susan Blommaert) is behind the murder , keeping the eyes and heart of the victim in her desk . One of the faculty members , Jim Ausbury (Dan Butler) suspects one of his colleagues killed the boy , but the others believe it was an outside force . Ausbury 's stepdaughter , Shannon (Heather McComb) , suffers a breakdown during science class while dissecting a pig foetus .

Meeting with Mulder and Scully , Shannon tearfully tells them that Ausbury and the other Satanists repeatedly raped and impregnated her as part of their rituals , sacrificing her babies . When the agents confront Ausbury with the accusations , he is shocked , and denies them . Shannon stays after school to make up her assignment of dissecting the pig . Mrs. Paddock takes her bracelet and uses it as part of a spell that causes Shannon to slit her wrists . When Ausbury learns that the other faculty members plan to use Shannon as a scapegoat , he admits the sect 's existence to Mulder . He confirms that rituals did happen while Shannon was present , but said that exposure to

sensational media coverage led her to " remember " the sexual abuse . Meanwhile , Scully researches Mrs. Paddock and finds that no one knows anything about her or her background . During a sudden power outage , Mrs. Paddock steals Scully 's pen and uses it to impersonate her in a call to Mulder , pretending to be in trouble . Mulder handcuffs Ausbury in the basement to prevent his possible escape , then leaves to help Scully . Soon after , a giant snake appears and devours Ausbury .

Mulder arrives at the school , where Scully claims that she never called him . They find Mrs. Paddock seemingly attacked by the remaining faculty members , and go to search for them . The faculty members capture the two agents , convinced that they need to perform a sacrifice to regain favor with the Devil and make up for their diluted faith before it is too late . As they are about to kill Mulder and Scully , Mrs. Paddock causes them to instead kill themselves , confirming that their attempt was indeed too late . The agents escape their bonds and find Mrs. Paddock missing , with only a parting message on the chalkboard stating , " Goodbye . It 's been nice working with you . "

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

" Die Hand Die Verletzt " was written by Glen Morgan and James Wong , who were co @-@ executive producers for the series as well as writers . The episode originally stemmed from an idea of Glen Morgan 's to have a scene where a snake eats a man . Series creator Chris Carter described the episode as " a cautionary tale about playing with fire , playing with things bigger and badder than you might imagine " . In an interview , he also praised the purposefully clashing tones of the entry , noting that it begins almost comical , with the PTC saying Satanic prayers and toads raining from the skies . However , as it goes on , it becomes increasingly more and more dark . Morgan and co @-@ writer James Wong left the series after this episode to produce the series Space : Above and Beyond . The line written by Mrs. Paddock on a chalkboard at the end of the episode , " It 's been nice working with you , " also acted as a goodbye to the crew of the show . The two later returned to the show in the fourth season .

Crowley High School refers to British ceremonialist and occultist Aleister Crowley . The character names Deborah Brown and Paul Vitaris were based on fans of the series who were active on the internet . In fact , the inspiration for Vitaris ? Paula Vitaris ? wrote episode reviews of the series for the magazine Cinefantastique , starting with the third season of the show . Mrs. Paddock 's name comes from Shakespeare 's MacBeth . Paddock is the toad demon that calls the witches away in the first scene of the play . The episode 's title means " The hand that wounds " in German . The title is taken from a part of the prayer that the PTA says near the beginning , which , in its entirety is " Sein ist die Hand die verletzt " , meaning " His is the hand that wounds " .

= = = Directing and filming = = =

" Die Hand Die Verletzt " was the first episode of the series to be directed by Kim Manners , who would go on to direct many of the series ' episodes . Originally , another director was supposed to helm this episode , but plans fell through and Manners was hired . The production staff was initially worried about Manners , because he subscribed to the Stephen J. Cannell school of thought regarding television directing ; Cannell felt that the writers and directors should both work together to cast characters , look at locations , and film the episode . This school of thought was perceived , at the time , " as a lesser kind " of directing , according to Morgan . However , Morgan was a proponent of Manners , and eventually secured his position for the episode .

While fake frogs were considered for the scene where they fall from the sky , the producers decided to make use of real frogs instead , dropped from a short distance . According to Carter , the " fake ones looked too bad and didn 't hop away after command " . The snake going down the stairs proved difficult to film as the animal kept on falling onto the floor after slithering down the steps .

Actor Dan Butler was terrified of the animal , being unable to talk while shooting the scene in the basement . The actor 's fright meant the make @-@ up team did not need to apply fake sweat to his face .

= = Themes = =

Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book *Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen* , proposed that the episode is a parody of organized religion , most specifically those who follow a religion , but only pay it lip service . The two argue that the principal joke in the episode is " to look at the way religious faith has been so watered down and paid nothing but lip service , its rituals and doctrines reinterpreted so that only what 's comfortable is adhered to . " This parody , however , is turned on its head : the followers paying lip service in " *Die Hand Die Verletzt* " are not stereotypical Christians , but rather , devil worshippers . Shearman and Pearson compare Mrs. Paddock ? which the episode insinuates to be the devil incarnate ? coming to Milford Haven , New Hampshire to judge his followers to St. Paul " coming back and taking a pop at all fair weather Christians who only affirm their faith at their own convenience . "

Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club noted the recurring motif of doors . He highlighted various examples ? such as the light emanating behind the door in the beginning of the episode , the door in which Mrs. Paddock hides when she kills people , and the door to Mr. Ausbury 's basement in which the Satanic rituals took place ? noting that " there 's the whole notion of opening a door to another world and letting an ancient evil into our own " .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" *Die Hand Die Verletzt* " premiered on the Fox network on January 27 , 1995 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 10 @.@ 7 , with an 18 share . Nielsen ratings are audience measurement systems that determine the audience size and composition of television programming in the U.S. This means that roughly 10 @.@ 7 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 18 percent of households watching television , were watching the episode . It was viewed by 10 @.@ 2 million households and over 17 @.@ 7 million viewers . The episode later debuted in the United Kingdom on May 23 , 1995 on Sky One .

= = = Reviews = = =

" *Die Hand Die Verletzt* " received early praise from critics . Entertainment Weekly gave " *Die Hand Die Verletzt* " an " A ? " , noting that , in the episode , " Mulder and Scully largely step aside in this wacky , wicked effort chock @-@ full of stunning imagery and wry comment . " The magazine praised Blommaert 's acting , calling her " juicily diabolical " . Paul Cornell , Martin Day , and Keith Topping , in their book *X @-@ Treme Possibilities* , gave the episode mostly positive reviews , although they criticized the ending . Day applauded the episode 's themes of " loss of faith ? ritual abuse [and] repressed memories " , along with the " great set pieces " , and the plot twists . However , he was slightly critical that the episode did not have a solid conclusion , and that the identity of Mrs. Paddock was never revealed . Cornell was even more critical about the lack of closure , calling it " a vast unanswered question " and " very troubling in a show that 's concerned with seeing the truth " . However , he too was also complimentary towards the set pieces , calling them " groovy " .

Later reviews were also complimentary . VanDerWerff gave the episode an " A " and called it " a good example of the show heading in a different direction but still largely feeling like the same show . " He praised the episode for being " fun [and] creepy " . VanDerWerff also praised the final scene , noting that " rare that Mulder and Scully completely get played , but they do here , and it makes the

episode an even better sick joke . " Ultimately , he praised the " sick sense of humor " , the " outright left turns into demented darkness " , and " the horrifying visuals " . Shearman and Pearson awarded the episode five stars out of five , citing the " very good " conceit about organized religion , the humor , and the " great set pieces " as positive factors .

Nick De Semlyen and James White of Empire named it the fourth " greatest " episode of the series , describing it as a " thoroughly dark and creepy episode " . Katie Anderson of Cinefantastique named the scene in which Shannon begins hallucinating that the pig fetus that she is dissecting is alive and screaming the fifth " Scariest Moment " in The X @-@ Files . Connie Ogle from PopMatters ranked the members of the Satanic PTA as some of the " greatest " monsters @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week , writing , " You don ' t want to cross the Satan @-@ worshipping teachers at this high school , but there are more vengeful evil forces to displease . "