

= Paper Clip =

" Paper Clip " is the second episode of the third season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on September 29 , 1995 . It was directed by Rob Bowman , and written by series creator Chris Carter . " Paper Clip " featured guest appearances by Sheila Larken , Melinda McGraw and Nicholas Lea . The episode is one of those that explored the overarching mythology , or fictional history of The X @-@ Files . " Paper Clip " earned a Nielsen household rating of 11 @.@ 1 , being watched by 17 @.@ 2 million people in its initial broadcast . " Paper Clip " has received highly positive reviews from critics ; it is generally considered by both critics and cast / crew as being among the best episodes of the series .

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 investigate information gleaned from secret government records , finding that a Nazi scientist working as part of Operation Paperclip may have been responsible for creating a race of human @-@ alien hybrids . " Paper Clip " concludes a three @-@ episode storyline , carrying on from the second season finale " Anasazi " and the third season premiere " The Blessing Way " .

The creators of the series likened themes of the episode to the Star Wars trilogy , referring to the revelations about Mulder 's father , and Sophie 's Choice , referring to how the Mulders were forced to choose Fox or Samantha to be taken .

= = Plot = =

Continuing from the previous episode , Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) and Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) hold each other at gunpoint . Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) , the person lingering outside his apartment , bursts in and forces Skinner to put his gun down . He also demands that Skinner surrender the digital tape . Skinner insists on keeping the tape , saying it is their only leverage in exposing the conspiracy .

The agents visit The Lone Gunmen , showing them an old photo featuring Bill Mulder , The Smoking Man , Deep Throat , and other members of the Syndicate . The Lone Gunmen also recognize Victor Klemper , a notorious Nazi scientist who was brought to the United States under Operation Paperclip . Melvin Frohike informs Scully of her sister Melissa 's condition . Mulder persuades Scully not to visit Melissa at the hospital , since she could be targeted there .

Furious that the wrong person was murdered , the Syndicate demands that the Smoking Man produce the tape . The Smoking Man promises to do so the following day . Meanwhile , Mulder and Scully visit Klemper , who says that the photo was taken at a former mining facility in West Virginia . After the agents leave , Klemper calls the Well @-@ Manicured Man and informs him that Mulder is alive . The news causes the Syndicate to further mistrust the Smoking Man . Meanwhile , at the hospital , Albert Hosteen visits Melissa while a suited man loiters nearby .

Mulder and Scully arrive at the mining facility and , using the code for Napier 's constant given to them by Klemper , unlock one of the reinforced doors inside . The agents discover a large complex of filing cabinets containing smallpox vaccination records and tissue samples . Mulder finds his sister 's file and finds that it was originally meant for him . Meanwhile , Skinner tells the Smoking Man that he may have found the digital tape . The Smoking Man is agitated at this , insisting that he will not make a deal with Skinner and tacitly threatening his life .

Hearing noise , Mulder heads outside and witnesses a UFO flying overhead ; inside , small beings run past Scully . Cars full of armed soldiers arrive , forcing the agents to flee . The agents meet with Skinner at a diner in rural Maryland . Skinner wants to turn over the tape in exchange for their reinstatement and safety . After initially objecting , Mulder agrees to let Skinner turn the tape over . Skinner heads to see Melissa in the hospital and is told by Albert of the mysterious blue @-@ suited man outside . Skinner chases the man to a stairwell where he is attacked by Alex Krycek and Luis Cardinal , who beat him unconscious and steal the tape .

Krycek narrowly escapes an attempt on his life when his car explodes . He subsequently phones the Smoking Man , telling him that he has the tape and will make its contents public should anyone

come after him . The Smoking Man lies to the rest of the Syndicate , telling them that Scully 's would be assassin was killed in the car bombing and that the tape has been destroyed with him . Mulder and Scully return to Klemper 's greenhouse , finding the Well Manicured Man there . He admits to knowing Mulder 's father and states that he helped gather genetic data for post apocalyptic identification , data Klemper used to work on alien human hybrids . Samantha was taken to ensure Bill Mulder 's silence after he learned of the experiments .

Mulder confronts his mother , who tells him that his father chose that Samantha be taken . At FBI headquarters , Skinner once again meets with the Smoking Man about the tape . The Smoking Man calls Skinner 's bluff , knowing he no longer has the tape , but Skinner reveals that Albert and twenty other Navajo have memorized the contents of the tape and are ready to reveal it if either Mulder or Scully are harmed . Mulder meets with Scully at the hospital , who reveals that her sister died a few hours before . Mulder tells Scully that he believes that the truth is still in the X Files . Scully tells him that she 's heard the truth , and now what she wants are the answers .

= = Themes = =

Jan Delasara , in the book " PopLit , PopCult and The X Files " argues that episodes like " Paper Clip " , or the later episodes like " Nisei " and " 731 " , show the public 's trust in science eroding , Delasara proposes that " arrogant " scientists who are " rework [ing] the fabric of life " are causing the public 's faith in science to fade drastically , " a concern " , she notes , " that is directly addressed by X Files episodes " .

Moreover , she notes that almost all of the scientists portrayed in The X Files are depicted with a " connection to ancient evil " , with the lone exception being Agent Scully . In " Paper Clip " one of the main scientists is an ex Nazi . As the episode proceeds , his scientific pursuits soon begin to paint him as the archetypical scientist who " goes too far " , a serious factor Delasara argues " ' alienates ' [the public] further from science and its practitioners " .

= = Production = =

The aliens in this episode who run past Scully in the mining facility were portrayed by children aged eight and nine . The spacecraft spotted by Mulder was achieved by using a crane to lift lights over the building Mulder was outside . Napier 's constant is used as a code to access the mining facility in the episode , though the code used is in error . Scully and Mulder use the code " 27828 " to unlock the door when in fact the first five digits of Napier 's Constant are 27182 . The mining facility is named for Dr. Hubertus Strughold , a real life German scientist who was employed by the United States after World War II . The fictional Victor Klemper is based on Strughold , who was accused of conducting similar experiments on humans . Interestingly , the name is almost identical to a Victor Klemperer who was a German Jew that escaped persecution during World War II by fleeing to American controlled territory . The Strughold Mining Facility was filmed at the B.C. Museum of Mining , in Britannia Beach , British Columbia , Canada . This episode was dedicated in memoriam to Mario Mark Kennedy , an internet fan of the show who had died in a car accident in 1995 .

Story editor Frank Spotnitz said of the episode , " I love ' Paper Clip ' . I was thrilled with the plot . I know it moved very fast for some people , but I actually think that for some of these shows you don 't need to understand everything . I think it is more exciting to go at rocket speed . Everybody was on the mark in that one ; David and Gillian 's performances , Rob Bowman 's direction , Chris Carter 's writing - everything was just terrific in that show " . Bowman said " When I finished ' Paper Clip ' , I thought , ' I don 't know what else I am going to do this year to top this ' " In 1996 Mitch Pileggi called the episode one of the show 's finest , particularly enjoying the line where he tells The Smoking Man to " pucker up and kiss my ass " . Pileggi claims that is one of his favorite lines . The scene was used frequently to introduce him at X Files conventions .

The creators likened themes of the episode to the Star Wars trilogy , referring to the revelations about Fox Mulder 's father , and Sophie 's Choice , referring to how the Mulders were forced to

choose Fox or Samantha to be taken . Carter included the motif of the white buffalo after reading a news story about the birth of a white buffalo calf , feeling that the image was so potent he did not mind that it did not entirely fit with the Navajo beliefs used elsewhere in the episode .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Paper Clip " premiered on the Fox network on September 29 , 1995 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on September 19 , 1996 . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 11 @. @ 1 with a 20 share , meaning that roughly 11 @. @ 1 percent of all television @- @ equipped households , and 20 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . A total of 17 @. @ 2 million viewers watched this episode during its original airing .

" Paper Clip " has received highly positive reviews from critics , who generally consider it among the best of the series . In an overview of the third season in Entertainment Weekly , " Paper Clip " was rated as A- . It was called an " outstanding episode " , although Scully 's unwillingness to accept the paranormal after making contact was seen as " exacerbat [ing] a maddening trend " . Writing for The A.V. Club , Todd VanDerWerff rated the episode an A + . He felt that its strengths came from its parallels with real world history , such as its handling of Operation Paperclip and the actions of the West during the Cold War , noting that " the compromises the United States and other Western nations made to survive the onslaught of communism in the Cold War were ones that should have made more of those nations ' citizens take pause , stop to think about the cost of living free , but they almost never did " . The episode , along with both other parts of the story arc , were listed concurrently as the second @- @ best episode of the series by Den of Geek 's Nina Sordi . Sordi noted that the plotline " laid the groundwork for the mythology arc for the rest of the series " , adding that it " brought much more significance to what is to come " .