

= Irresistible ( The X @-@ Files ) =

" Irresistible " is the thirteenth episode of the second season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on January 13 , 1995 . The episode was written by series creator Chris Carter , directed by David Nutter , and featured the first of two guest appearances by Nick Chinlund as the death fetishist killer Donnie Pfaster . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . The episode was viewed by 8 @.@ 8 million people upon its first broadcast , and received positive reviews , with much praise to Chinlund 's performance as the antagonist .

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 the episode , Mulder and Scully investigate a death fetishist who begins kidnapping and killing women to satisfy his obsession . Scully , still recovering from her earlier abduction , is soon overcome with posttraumatic stress disorder .

" Irresistible " is one of the few in the series that has no paranormal elements to it . Initially , the script called for Donnie Pfaster to be a necrophiliac , but the idea was soon rejected by the Fox Broadcasting Company for being " unacceptable for broadcast standards " . Pfaster was eventually brought back in the season seven episode " Orison " .

= = Plot = =

In Minneapolis , a funeral is held for a young girl ( Megan Hilty ) . The ceremony is observed by Donnie Pfaster , the eerie assistant director for the funeral home . Later that night , as the girl 's body is being stored for burial the following day , Pfaster 's boss finds him cutting off the corpse 's hair . Pfaster is promptly fired .

Some time later , Fox Mulder and Dana Scully are summoned to Minneapolis by Moe Bocks , an FBI field agent who is investigating the exhumation and desecration of a body in a local cemetery . Mulder discounts Bocks ' theory that this act is a variation of extraterrestrial cattle mutilation , and suggests they search for a human culprit . Scully is disturbed at the sight of the disheveled corpse . Two more bodies are found exhumed , with their hair cut and fingernails removed . Mulder develops a psychological profile of the criminal , believing him to be an escalating " death fetishist " who may resort to murder to satisfy his desires . Scully keeps her discomfort with the case to herself , and writes up a field report on necrophilia .

Pfaster , who was behind the exhumations , proves Mulder 's prediction correct when he brings a prostitute to his apartment . When the prostitute discovers a collection of funerary wreaths in Pfaster 's bedroom , he kills her and removes her fingers . Later , Pfaster ? having been hired as a frozen food delivery man through charming the female interviewer ? delivers to a low @-@ security house of a woman with teenage daughters . He requests the bathroom to wash his hands , and whilst there steals some discarded hair from a brush he found in the trashcan . Pfaster attends a night class at a community college , where a female classmate defends herself after he makes threatening advances . He is arrested and is placed in a jail cell across from a suspect being interrogated for Pfaster 's crimes by Mulder , Scully , and Bocks . Pfaster shows interest in Scully , and learns her name from the interrogated suspect . Pfaster is later released as his charges were dropped .

Scully is deeply troubled by Pfaster 's crimes , and has unsettling dreams and hallucinations about the case . In Washington , she has a counseling session with a social worker , during which she shares her anxiety about the investigation . After the session , Scully learns that someone from Minnesota had called for her . When she contacts Mulder , she learns that neither he nor Bocks made the call . Tracing a fingerprint to Pfaster from his arrest , Bocks and Mulder raid his apartment , finding one of the prostitute 's fingers in his refrigerator . Meanwhile , after Scully arrives in Minneapolis , Pfaster forces her car off the road . He kidnaps Scully and takes her to his late mother 's abandoned house . He ties and gags Scully , and keeps her in a dark closet .

Mulder and Bocks discover that Pfaster 's mother had owned a car which matches paint found on

Scully 's abandoned car , tracking down her former residence . Meanwhile , Scully escapes from Pfaster as he prepares a cold bath for her , resulting in a pursuit through the house . Scully and Pfaster have a struggle that sends them falling down a staircase onto the foyer , where a task force led by Mulder and Bocks breaks in moments later and apprehends Pfaster . Scully initially insists that she is okay , but then breaks down and cries in Mulder 's arms . In a voice @-@ over narration , Mulder traces Pfaster 's pathology to his childhood , when he was raised in a family of four older sisters . Mulder also reflects on Pfaster 's nature and the nature of evil in general .

= = Production = =

The episode 's initial script where Pfaster was a necrophiliac was rejected by the Fox Broadcasting Company for being " unacceptable for broadcast standards " . As series creator Chris Carter described it , " When I handed the script in , it was really for a necrophiliac episode , and that just didn 't fly . You cannot do the combination of sex and death on network television . " Carter was forced to tone down the script by changing Pfaster from a necrophiliac to a death fetishist and diminishing Pfaster 's sexual obsession . He considered that the sexual content was " implied and understood by audiences " , and that Pfaster still resulted in a creepy character , particularly his " creepy arrogance " in using shampoo on the hair of his victims . The episode 's original title was " Fascination " .

The episode is one of the few in the series that has no paranormal elements to it . Carter said of the episode 's conception , " My first chance to work with David Nutter in a long time , and I wanted to give him something he could sink his teeth into . It 's a little bit different for us . It doesn 't really have a paranormal aspect , except for Scully 's perceptions of her deepest fears . I felt that I had to figure out what she is most afraid of , and she is most afraid of those things that most of us are afraid of . The idea of dying at the hands of someone ? creature or not ? and she is helpless to do anything about it . I thought it was a very good way to explore Scully 's character . " The scene where Dana Scully imagines Pfaster appearing as a devil was influenced by real @-@ life accounts , as described by Carter : " There are reports of people who had been under the spell of Jeffrey Dahmer , who actually claimed that he shape @-@ shifted during those hours when they were held hostage ; that his image actually changed . " Nutter said " In many ways , Chris wanted to sell the idea that , as established in Mulder 's closing dialogue in the show , not all terror comes from the paranormal . It could come from the person next door . "

Carter said of the casting of Nick Chinlund as Pfaster , " I thought it was a wonderfully creepy villain . The casting of that show was very difficult . We saw many actors , but there was a quality I was looking for and I couldn 't put a name on that quality . I finally figured out what it was when Nick came in and he had a kind of androgynous quality that worked . I thought he looked like Joe College , but he could scare the hell out of you . " Producer Glen Morgan said Chinlund 's performance was outstanding . Nutter stated " Nick Chinlund was wonderful to work with . The guy was like putty in my hands . He was great . If you 're looking for someone to underline the weirdness and strangeness of the character , he did that . "

Nutter said of the episode " I really worked hard to make it a special show , because I thought it was special . It was Gillian 's post @-@ traumatic stress episode , because she had not really had the opportunity to vent her feelings about the whole Duane Barry situation . This was an opportunity to sit back and let all that happen . " Carter particularly liked the scene where a clearly disturbed Scully hugs Mulder , claiming it was a " tender moment " between two characters that had not shown that much affection for each other .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Irresistible " premiered on the Fox network on January 13 , 1995 . This episode earned a Nielsen

rating of 9 @. @ 2 , with a 15 share , meaning that roughly 9 @. @ 2 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 15 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 8 @. @ 8 million households .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Irresistible " received largely positive reviews from critics . Entertainment Weekly rated " Irresistible " a B + , saying it was based on " an unsettling concept to begin with " that was reinforced by " Chinlund 's skin @-@ crawling one @-@ man show " . Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club rated the episode A , praising the acting , particularly of Chinlund as Pfaster , and describing it as " legitimately scary , a sign of a show that was pushing itself in new and interesting directions " . The only criticism was for the scenes where Scully hallucinates Pfaster shapeshifting as " pretty silly , almost feeling like an attempt to make sure something vaguely paranormal is in the episode so the fans don 't get bored with what is ultimately a very good episode " . Jessica Morgan of Television Without Pity gave the episode a B + grade . Writing for Den of Geek , Nina Sordi ranked " Irresistible " the sixth best X @-@ Files episode , saying that " excluding CSM and his cronies , Pfaster has got to be the most disturbing villain that our favorite agents have encountered " . Den of Geek writer Juliette Harrison named it the " finest " stand @-@ alone episode of the second season , describing it as " a genuinely creepy 45 @-@ minute horror movie " . Connie Ogle of Popmatters listed Pfaster among the best monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week characters of the series , and IGN 's Christine Seghers ranked Chinlund the seventh best guest star in the history of the show , considering that " what makes him all the more frightening is how downright passive and polite he is up until the moment he 's going to kill ; the perfect camouflage for a modern @-@ day monster . " TV Guide listed Pfaster among the scariest X @-@ Files monsters describing him as " evil incarnate " .

Chris Carter said " Irresistible " was effective for " being really scary " , and that not only it was one of his favorites but inspired him to create the television series Millennium later .