

= Without ( The X @-@ Files ) =

" Without " is the second episode of the eighth season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . The episode first aired in the United States and Canada on November 12 , 2000 on Fox and subsequently aired in the United Kingdom on February 18 , 2001 . It was written by executive producer Chris Carter and directed by Kim Manners . The episode helps to explore the series ' overarching mythology and continues from the seventh season finale , " Requiem " , and season eight premiere , " Within " , in which Fox Mulder was abducted by aliens who are planning to colonize Earth . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 9 @.@ 0 in the United States and was seen by 15 @.@ 1 million viewers . As with the previous episode , " Within , " it was generally well received by critics , although some detractors criticized various plot points .

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 , John Doggett ( Robert Patrick ) continues his search for Mulder , and attempts to uncover an alien bounty hunter within their ranks . After the task force is called off , Scully is surprised to learn that Doggett , the leader of the team , has been assigned to the X @-@ Files .

" Without " heavily featured elements of Mulder 's abduction by aliens , and as such , new sets were designed to create the alien ship Mulder was imprisoned in . The production crew of The X @-@ Files designed the set in a decidedly " low @-@ tech " and " interesting " manner . In addition , unusual filming techniques were used , such as special lenses and motion control , in order to achieve the desired footage .

= = Plot = =

= = = Background = = =

FBI special agent Fox Mulder ( David Duchovny ) is currently missing , having been abducted by aliens in the seventh season finale , " Requiem . " His partner Dana Scully ( Gillian Anderson ) has been working with Agent John Doggett ( Robert Patrick ) in order to locate him . After consulting with The Lone Gunmen , a trio of conspiracy theorists made up of John Byers ( Bruce Harwood ) , Melvin Frohike ( Tom Braidwood ) and Richard Langly ( Dean Haglund ) , Scully finds evidence that Mulder may be in Arizona . Doggett receives news that Gibson Praise ( Jeff Gulka ) , a boy with potentially extraterrestrial DNA , may be in hiding in Arizona as well . The two , along with Walter Skinner ( Mitch Pileggi ) and a task force of FBI agents arrive and , after searching , find Mulder and Praise on the corner of a mountain .

= = = Events = = =

As the episode begins , " Mulder " and Gibson Praise are cornered at the edge of a mountain by pursuing agent John Doggett . Suddenly , " Mulder " walks off the edge of the cliff and appears to fall to his death ; however , when the FBI agents are sent down to retrieve his body , they find that it has disappeared . Dana Scully realizes that what appeared to be her partner was actually an Alien Bounty Hunter sent to retrieve Praise . The Bounty Hunter , who has returned to the school , continues his search for Praise . Meanwhile , Scully follows a girl , Thea ( Christine Firkins ) , she had previously observed to be Praise 's friend throughout the desert until she is able to locate Praise . After Doggett explains the events on the clifftop to Alvin Kersh , Walter Skinner tells him that Kersh is setting him up to fail . Shortly afterwards , the Bounty Hunter ( now disguised as agent Scully ) attacks Agent Landau . Skinner and the real Scully eventually manage to drive the alien away .

After Skinner and Scully find and retrieve Praise , Skinner takes him to the nearest hospital , where his friend Thea visits him , closing the door behind her . In search for Mulder in the desert , Scully sees a bright light in the sky which she thinks is a spaceship , but is later revealed to be a helicopter . The helicopter lands and Doggett insists Scully travel with him to the hospital ; she reluctantly

accepts . At the hospital , two other FBI agents assure the two agents that nothing has happened to Praise ; however , they soon discover that he has vanished . Scully leaves to search for Praise , while Doggett stays in an attempt to catch the intruder . He checks the ceiling space , where he finds Skinner badly injured . Meanwhile , Scully finds Praise , along with Skinner , who claims to be protecting the boy . Skinner , who is actually the Alien Bounty Hunter , attempts to kill her but Scully grabs her gun and shoots him in the neck , killing the Bounty Hunter . After Doggett reports the case to Kersh , he is assigned to the X @-@ File division with Scully . The episode ends showing Mulder still held in captivity as six Alien Bounty Hunters look on .

= = Production = =

Fox Mulder 's abduction was devised by Chris Carter towards the end of seventh season as a way of allowing the actor to leave the series . Duchovny fulfilled his contractual obligations after the seventh season and felt that there was not much else to do with the character following the previous seven years .

Production designer Cory Kaplan explains how she was attracted to the idea of using primitive materials when she states , " We all see super @-@ tech now , but the idea of low @-@ tech was much more interesting to me , much more visual . So , you take elements of rock and steel and chisel them into interesting shapes . " She also describes the creation of the set by stating , " I found the backdrop from Alien , and Bill Roe lit it very dimly and put it behind . And it was just this rotating platform with this humongous dental piece that could rotate around as well and pull his face apart . " According to Makeup Supervisor Cheri Montasanto @-@ Medcalf , Matthew Mungle helped in the creation of the alien torture machine by making the cheeks and putting the hooks in . The makeup supervisor adds that the hooks would actually stretch out and that David Duchovny " sat pretty good through all that . "

Unusual filming techniques were also used . Visual Effects Supervisor John Wash recalls , " We devised a laser effect where a device is going into his mouth and some other weird lens effects that were going over the scene to give it an alien , other @-@ world @-@ like quality . " On the subject of using not only a challengingly minuscule method of filming but also additional sound effects , supervising producer Paul Rabwin recounts , " I had to set up a very , very highly magnified lens to try to get this little device coming right at us . It was very , very scary . We ended up putting some really cool sound effects in there , little servos and motors . "

The sequence in which multiple Alien Bounty Hunters appear involved the use of motion control , a method in which a motion @-@ control camera on a computerized module is repeatedly run through the same motion while elements are continually added . The shot , according to John Wash , was one of the few times in the series in which the production crew was able to use motion control and therefore presented a slight challenge . In the filming of the sequence , both a blank plate , for just the set , and lighting elements , that were in the set , were shot before the production crew filmed five different passes , each one with the Alien Bounty Hunter in a different position . The production crew were finally able to clone the Bounty Hunter by blending all the passes together .

= = Reception = =

" Without " premiered on American television on November 12 , 2000 on Fox . The episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 9 @. @ 0 , meaning that it was seen by 9 @. @ 0 % of the nation 's estimated households , and was viewed by 9 @. @ 07 million households , and 15 @. @ 1 million viewers . Fox promoted the episode with the tagline " Once in a great while a story takes a turn that you never expect ... Tonight this is one of them . " 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 .

The episode was met with relatively positive reviews from critics . 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 five stars out of five . The two praised the episode 's plot , citing

the abduction and search for Mulder as components to the arcs " brilliance " . Shearman and Pearson noted that the final scene , featuring Mulder surrounded by the alien bounty hunter was created with " beauty , emotion , and horror which in collision make The X @-@ Files one of the best shows on TV . "

Zack Handlen of The A.V. Club wrote that both " Without " and " Within " form " a great way to pick up after the cliffhanger ending of the previous season " and that " the pair of episodes [ ... ] work well as an introduction to the new narrative status quo . " He awarded both entries a " B + " but noted , however , that " Without " nearly came across as " strained or stalling " , but " manages to get by with the general freakiness of the alien bounty hunter " . Jessica Morgan from Television Without Pity gave the episode a rare " A + " . The previous episode , " Within " , also received an " A + " grade , making them the only two episodes of The X @-@ Files to receive this rating from the site .

Ken Tucker from Entertainment Weekly was positive towards both this episode and the season premiere , " Within , " awarding the episodes an " A- " . George Avalos and Michael Liedtke from the Contra Costa Times praised the episode and noted that the Scully / Dogget dynamic and the hunt for Fox Mulder worked towards the show 's strengths . Tom Janulewicz from Space.com positively commented on Scully 's conversion from skeptic to believer , writing , " Regardless of whether it 's aliens , flukemen , or pizza delivering vampires , The X @-@ Files is all about phenomena that don 't stand in the face of ' rational ' explanations . It took her a long time , but like Mulder before her , Scully eventually came to accept that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in her philosophy . "

Not all reviews were positive . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a more mixed review and awarded it two stars out of four . Vitaris criticized both Scully becoming the believer as well as the " sky turning out to be a helicopter gimmick " , which she notes " has gotten way too old . " Tom Kessenich , in his book Examinations wrote a relatively negative review of the episode . He noted , " All [ ' Without ' ] did was remind me why the show is a hollow shell of what it once was as long as Fox Mulder is strapped to an alien table and why The Doggett and Pony Show holds absolutely no appeal to me whatsoever . "