

= Sein und Zeit (The X @-@ Files) =

" Sein und Zeit " is the tenth episode of the seventh season of the science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on February 6 , 2000 , in the United States . The episode was written by Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz , and directed by Michael Watkins . The episode helped to explore the series ' overarching mythology . " Sein und Zeit " earned a Nielsen household rating of 8 @.@ 4 , being watched by 13 @.@ 95 million people in its initial broadcast . It received mixed to positive reviews from critics .

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 . Mulder is a believer in the paranormal , while the skeptical Scully has been assigned to debunk his work . In this episode , Mulder becomes obsessed with a number of children who have vanished while investigating the bizarre disappearance of a young girl from her home . In the meanwhile , Scully fears that he is emotionally involved due to his sister 's disappearance 27 years earlier . Her fears are heightened when Mulder 's mother dies , apparently of suicide .

" Sein und Zeit " was written as the first part of a two @-@ part arc that would eventually reveal what had happened to Samantha Mulder . Executive producer Frank Spotnitz later noted that the episode bore stylistic similarities to the fourth @-@ season episode " Paper Hearts " . Several production issues plagued the episode , including the arrest of one crew member who was accused of possible kidnap , and the lack of money needed for the faux newscast scene at the end of the episode . The episode 's title , Sein und Zeit , is a reference to Martin Heidegger 's best known work and means " Being and Time " in German .

= = Plot = =

Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) asks to be a part of the investigation looking for a little girl , Amber Lynn LaPierre , who disappeared from her home in Sacramento , California . Mulder 's superior , Walter Skinner (Mitch Pileggi) , initially denies his request , noting that the investigation is not an X @-@ file , but simply a missing persons case . Mulder , however , convinces Skinner to allow him to investigate . The parents of Amber , Billie and Bud , tell Mulder that they found a note in the girl 's bedroom , but the teaser for the episode revealed that the note was written by Billie herself . The note contains a mention of Santa Claus , which everyone finds out of place . Although the family is held for questioning , Mulder does not believe they did it . Looking through previous cases , Mulder finds a similar note , with a reference to Santa Claus , from a missing person case in Idaho from 1987 . In the case , the mother was convicted and sentenced to twelve years . The file notes that she had a vision of her son dead before he disappeared , as did Bud on the night his daughter disappeared .

Meanwhile , Mulder 's mother Teena is found dead in her home . It is found she overdosed on sleeping pills after she burned all her pictures of Samantha and placed tape around her baseboards and turned the gas in the oven on . Mulder believes she was murdered and has Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) do an autopsy . Later , Mulder visits the mother who was convicted twelve years prior . She tells him that Samantha is a walk @-@ in , a kind spirit who takes children so that they may be shielded from potential harm in their life . The mother tells Mulder that the children are safe , but she has no idea where they are . After hearing this , Mulder believes his mother probably also wrote a note after his sister 's disappearance . He begins to think that the alien abduction never happened , and that his mother figured this out , which is why she was murdered . However , after performing the autopsy , Scully tells Mulder that it was definitely suicide , because she was ill with Paget 's carcinoma .

During the happenings of the episode , a man playing Santa at a Christmas @-@ themed ranch is shown videotaping the children at his ranch . Billie later tells Mulder that she saw a vision of her daughter in her room and that she said the number 74 . Mulder decides he cannot finish the case and wants to take time off because he 's too close to make any sound judgment . On their way to the airport , Scully comes across the Santa park (situated off of California State Route 74) and

decides to stop because of the reference to Santa Claus in the notes . Here they find the videotape setup and tapes dating all the way back to the ' 60s , including one of Amber Lynn LaPierre . The man who runs the park is promptly arrested , and Mulder finds graves of children all over his ranch .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

Although both the season four episode " Paper Hearts " and the season five episode " Redux II " had dealt with possible explanations for Samantha Mulder 's fate , the issue had yet to be resolved when the series moved into its seventh season . Realizing that the season potentially could be the last , series creator Chris Carter decided to conclude the Samantha story @-@ arc . " The expectation was that if this were going to be the final season , that the finale would be about Mulder 's sister . We wanted to deal with that sooner rather than later . We wanted to wrap up Mulder 's emotion story with his sister and do it in such a way that would emphasize [David Duchovny 's] dramatic abilities . "

Executive producer Frank Spotnitz noted that the episode bore stylistic similarities to " Paper Hearts " . However , unlike the episode , " Sein und Zeit " , and its second part " Closure " , sets out to actually answer the question of Samantha 's disappearance . Spotnitz later explained , " it 's similar [?] in the sense that what you always thought happened to Samantha may not have actually happened . ' Paper Hearts ' never ultimately answers the question . We 've had people come up to us and say , ' Okay , so we know she 's really dead , so what happened ? ' So we decided in this one to answer the question . " The episode 's title , Sein und Zeit , is a reference to Martin Heidegger 's best known work and means " Being and Time " in German .

= = = Production issues = = =

Several incidents hindered the production of the episode . The prop department for The X @-@ Files initially made a fake ransom note for the scene wherein Mrs. LaPierre automatically writes the kidnappers message . A crew member for the show later took the note , along with a folder of other documents to one of the filming locations . Before arriving at the location , he stopped to make a phone call from a pay phone . A person , however , was watching him from their house and , being suspicious , called the police . Unfortunately for the crew member , he left the folder and note , which included the line " Don 't do anything or we 'll kill your baby " at the booth . When the individual went back to retrieve the note , he was promptly arrested . Director Kim Manners later called the situation a " mess " .

The second major event that hindered production involved lack of money needed for the final scene . Near the end of the filming , producer Paul Rabwin discovered that there was no money left for a small but necessary sequence created to mimic an actual TV news anchor giving a report . Rather than request extra funds , Rabwin located an Australian TV correspondent , Robert Penfold , who was based out of Los Angeles and asked him to " donate " the needed news report for a chance to be on The X @-@ Files . The individual was more than happy to comply . According to Rabwin , " we went to his studio setup , inserted a visual of a busy newsroom behind the correspondent , added some pictures of the kidnapped children , and we had our scene . "

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Sein und Zeit " first aired in the United States on February 6 , 2000 . This episode earned a Nielsen rating of 8 @.@ 4 , with a 12 share , meaning that roughly 8 @.@ 4 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 12 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 13 @.@ 95 million viewers . The episode aired in the United Kingdom and Ireland on Sky1 on May 21 , 2000 and received 0 @.@ 83 million viewers , making it

the sixth most watched episode that week . Fox promoted the episode with the tagline " They go to bed . And they 're gone forever . " 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 .

Todd VanDerWerff of The A.V. Club awarded the episode an " A ? " and called it a " very , very good piece of television " . He was particularly pleased with the grimness of the story ; he noted that it was largely about the way in which Mulder 's " belief system [is] eradicated before his very eyes " after the suicide of his mom . VanDerWerff was also pleased with Duchovny 's performance , writing that he " brings the intense mania to Mulder that has always made the character work at his best . " Despite this , he was slightly critical of the concept of the " walk @-@ ins " , which he called " patently ridiculous " . Rich Rosell from DigitallyObsessed.com awarded the episode 4 @.@ 5 out of 5 stars and wrote that while " Chris Carter penned this episode , [and] his attempts at clarifying his own confounded mythology are often even more confusing than revelatory , ' Sein Und Zeit ' is a tense installment , and leads neatly to the supposed wrap @-@ up in the second half . " Tom Kessenich , in his book Examinations , gave the episode a largely positive review , writing " ' Sein Und Zeit ' not only served as a reminder of Fox Mulder 's ongoing pain it provided yet another clue that , although its journey is nearing its completion , The X @-@ Files still knows how to make the ride an enjoyable one . " 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 called the episode " a welcome return to an X @-@ Files we haven 't seen for awhile ? hard , passionate , and with an urgent story to tell . From where I 'm sitting , in the middle of a lacklustre season , it smells strongly of a masterpiece . "

Other reviews were less complimentary . Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a mixed review and awarded it two stars out of four . Vitaris wrote , " there are some powerful and touching moments in ' Sein und Zeit ' , but others that miss the mark so widely that it hurts to think what this episode might have been . " Kenneth Silber from Space.com , although complimentary towards the focus on Samantha Mulder , was critical of the slowness of the episode , writing , " While the series ' reversion to its central theme is much appreciated , this episode unfolds with an unfortunate slowness that does little to satisfy the seven @-@ year itch many X @-@ Files viewers have come to feel in response to monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ week episodes and phony @-@ baloney mythology cliffhangers . "