

= Born Again (The X @-@ Files) =

" Born Again " is the twenty @-@ second episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It premiered on the Fox network on April 22 , 1994 . " Born Again " was written by Howard Gordon and Alex Gansa , and directed by Jerrold Freedman . The episode featured guest appearances by Brian Markinson and Maggie Wheeler . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Born Again " earned a Nielsen household rating of 8 @.@ 2 , being watched by 7 @.@ 7 million households in its initial broadcast , and received mixed 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 . When Mulder and Scully are called to New York to investigate the death of a police officer , they come to believe that a young girl present at the incident may be the reincarnation of another officer murdered years earlier .

Several crew members disliked the episode , most notably writer Howard Gordon and David Duchovny . Gordon felt that the episode was too similar to the other episodes that had been aired , whereas Duchovny bluntly stated that he " detested " the episode .

= = Plot = =

In Buffalo , New York , police detective Sharon Lazard finds a little girl , Michelle Bishop , alone in an alley . Lazard takes the seemingly lost girl into her precinct , and leaves her alone to be interviewed by another detective , Rudolph Barbala . However , moments later , Barbala is jettisoned through a window , falling to his death .

Lazard turns to Fox Mulder and Dana Scully for help . She tells them of Michelle 's claims that a man had attacked Barbala , even though she was the only person in the room when the detective was killed . The agents have Michelle describe the alleged attacker for a computerized facial composite ; the computer seemingly glitches , displaying a face that Michelle identifies as the killer . The composite matches that of a Detective Charlie Morris ? who died nine years previously in an apparent gangland hit . The agents speak to Michelle 's psychiatrist , Dr. Braun , who tells them that she habitually mutilated dolls in a uniform manner during their sessions together , removing the same eye and arm each time ; Mulder realizes that these mutilations match the circumstances of Morris ' death .

The agents interview Barbala 's partner , Tony Fiore , who attributes Morris ' death to a triad gang they had been investigating together . Later that day , Fiore meets with a Leon Felder , and the two discuss claiming a large sum of money from a safety deposit box , but agree that they haven 't waited the ten years they had intended to , ominously discussing that they are the last two claimants left . That night , Felder gets off a bus , but his tie catches in the door as it drives off . The driver tries to brake , but the bus inexplicably continues to accelerate , strangling Felder as Michelle watches from inside the bus .

Investigating further , Mulder and Scully learn that Fiore , Barbala , Felder and Morris had all worked closely together in the past . They also find that Fiore 's wife Anita keeps a collection of origami animals made by her first husband ? Charlie Morris . Anita tells the agents that Fiore hasn 't returned home from the previous night ; meanwhile , the agents find that pages are missing from the file on Morris ' murder , and Fiore was the last one to have checked the file out .

Michelle undergoes a session of regression hypnosis , where she claims to be twenty @-@ four years old . She suddenly starts screaming in panic about someone trying to kill her , and the session is ended . Mulder reviews the video of the session , and is convinced that the girl is the reincarnation of Morris , having been conceived right around the time the detective was murdered . The tape contains a brief section of static noise just before Michelle begins screaming , which Mulder has an expert clean up . The noise is found to contain a grainy image of what appears to be a fish tank ornament of a man in an atmospheric diving suit . Meanwhile , Scully has tracked down Morris '

autopsy findings , which show the presence of salt water in his respiratory tract , indicating he died of drowning . The agents realise from these findings that Morris was drowned in the exotic fish tank in Fiore 's house .

Rushing to Fiore 's house , Mulder and Scully find Michelle using telekinetic powers to try to kill Fiore . They prevent her from doing so , and Fiore confesses that he , Felder and Barbala had stolen a large sum of money , intending to keep it safe for ten years before claiming it . Morris learned of their plan and threatened to report on them , and was consequently killed to silence him . However , Fiore maintains that he never wanted to see Morris dead and only wanted to take care of Anita after his death . Michelle uses her powers to destroy the fish @-@ tank , but spares Fiore after hearing pleas from Anita not to hurt him . Later , Fiore pleads guilty to charges of murder and grand larceny , whilst Michelle seemingly recovers and goes on to become a normal little girl .

= = Production = =

Writer Howard Gordon was disappointed with the episode , finding it too similar to other series being aired around the same time . He also believed that the episode seemed " a little too cop show @-@ y " overall , stating that he did not think it " was very well executed on any front " . David Duchovny also reportedly " detested " the episode , despite a guest appearance by his then @-@ girlfriend Maggie Wheeler .

Executive producer R. W. Goodwin recalls being on location for the episode 's opening scene , in which Detective Barbala is thrown from a window . The room used for the scene had two windows side @-@ by @-@ side , and one had been replaced with sugar glass for the stunt . When the false window was blown out to simulate someone being thrown through it , the crew found that the glass window beside the false one had also accidentally been blown out . The episode 's key grip , Al Campbell , suggested that the next shot show Barbala 's dog lying beside his body to explain the second window breaking .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Born Again " premiered on the Fox network on April 22 , 1994 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on February 23 , 1995 . This episode earned a Nielsen household rating of 8 @.@ 2 , with a 14 share , meaning that in the US , roughly 8 @.@ 2 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 14 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 7 @.@ 7 million households .

Writer Howard Gordon has expressed his disappointment with the episode , feeling that it was too similar to his earlier work on the episode " Shadows " , and finding that it was " not done particularly interestingly " . Series creator Chris Carter also felt that " Born Again " was " just not one of [his] favorites " , adding that he " thought the direction was a little sloppy , but it 's one of those episodes that plays a little closer to reality and I like that about it " .

In a retrospective of the first season in Entertainment Weekly , " Born Again " was rated a B ? , with the episode being described as " engaging but ultimately just serviceable " , although Andrea Libman 's casting as Michelle was called " inspired " . Zack Handlen , writing for The A.V. Club , felt negatively towards the episode , feeling that its plot was too reminiscent of earlier episodes , such as " Eve " or " Shadows " . However , he found the scene in which an image is found in the static of a video recording to have been a highlight , calling it " a cool combination of hard science and the inexplicable " . Matt Haigh , writing for Den of Geek , was favorable towards the episode , again praising the performance of Libman as Michelle . He also drew comparisons to " Shadows " , but felt that " Born Again " was the better episode of the two .