

= Release (The X @-@ Files) =

" Release " is the seventeenth episode of the ninth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . The episode originally aired on the Fox network on May 5 , 2002 . The teleplay for the episode was written by David Amann , from a story by John Shiban and Amann , and was directed by Kim Manners . The episode helps to explore one of the show 's story arc involving John Doggett finding the truth behind his son 's murder . The episode earned a Nielsen rating of 5 @. @ 1 , being watched by 5 @. @ 38 million households , and 7 @. @ 8 million viewers in its initial broadcast . The episode received largely positive reviews from critics .

The show centers on FBI special agents who work on cases linked to the paranormal , called X @-@ Files ; this season focuses on the investigations of John Doggett (Robert Patrick) , Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) , and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) . In this episode , Doggett stumbles upon a case that may hold a connection to the murder of his son . With the help of an FBI cadet named Rudolph Hayes (Jared Poe) , Doggett acquires information to help his current case as well as establish the link between the present , his Jane Does , and the past ? his son , Luke . The link is a man named Nicholas Regali , an organized crime participant who has an association with Bob Harvey , the only suspect in Luke 's case . Though the cadet , Hayes , is not who he says he is , his information proves invaluable in Doggett 's search for release from his son 's death .

The idea for " Release " was developed by Shiban , who handed the script over to Amann . The character of Rudolph Hayes was crafted to be an ambiguous character : either he was a genius who was adept at solving crime , comparable to Sherlock Holmes , or he was a criminal mastermind , like Professor Moriarty . The final scene , featuring Doggett scattering his son 's ashes , was difficult for Patrick to film , but thanks to Manners ' help , he was able to achieve the desired effect .

= = Plot = =

In Mendota , Minnesota , John Doggett (Robert Patrick) arrives at an abandoned apartment building after getting a tip , and sees a figure bolt out of one of the rooms during the night . He hears a scratching sound and claws away at the fresh plaster wall until blood begin streaming downward . Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) performs an autopsy on the body Doggett found and one of her FBI cadets , Rudolph Hayes , accurately guesses that the victim hooked up with a psychotic killer at a bar . Hayes 's suggestions lead Scully to connect this murder to another killing two weeks earlier . In the meantime , Doggett wonders why anyone tipped him of the murder , since it is not an X @-@ File .

Doggett and Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) try to get more help from Hayes . He tells them that the killer they are looking for is a criminal linked to organized crime . The two agents later meet up with Nicholas Regali , a former mobster who claims he is looking for a job in the area . They later find out that Hayes 's intuition about Regali was correct . Meanwhile , Hayes returns to his apartment complex where walls are covered with crime scene photos related to the death of Luke Doggett . Eventually , Doggett asks Hayes for help solving the case about his son 's death . Hayes tells Doggett that he believes that Robert Harvey was behind the kidnapping of Luke , but that Regali killed him .

Looking for help , Doggett approaches FBI Assistant Director Brad Follmer (Cary Elwes) for help on the case . Doggett 's ex @-@ wife , Barbara Doggett , meets up for a lineup at a police station . Barbara does not recognize Regali or anyone else on the lineup . Scully finds some similarities between Luke and the two dead bodies , but no forensic proof . Doggett comes to realize that Regali has had help from someone within the FBI all along . Follmer informs Reyes and Doggett that Cadet Hayes is really Stuart Mimms , a former mental patient . He also informs them that Mimms lived in New York City during the year of Luke 's murder , hinting that Mimms is the murderer and not Regali . Doggett and Reyes assemble a SWAT team to raid Mimms apartment . Mimms is taken into police custody and at a new lineup , Barbara recognizes Mimms .

At a meeting between Follmer and Regali , Follmer says he is finished consorting with him , but Regali reminds him he was being bribed , and threatens to blackmail him . In the meantime , Mimms

tells Scully that he first noticed the case of Luke Doggett when he read it in a newspaper . He further stated that he lied about his name so that he could help solve the case . At the end , he still pushes that Regali is the real murderer of Doggett 's son , and not him . Later on , Doggett approaches Regali . Regali tells him a " hypothetical " story about how a pedophile took a young boy to his home . A " businessman " then walked in on the incident , realized that the boy has seen his face , and feared that the boy might associate him with the crime . The businessman then found a solution to the boy seeing his face : he murdered him . Regali then walks away and Doggett , filled with rage , unholsters his gun and follows . But a gunshot rings out and when Doggett gets outside , he sees Regali has been killed by Follmer . Later , Doggett and Barbara scatter Luke 's ashes into the ocean , finally achieving the release he has sought .

= = Production = =

The story for " Release " was developed by John Shiban and David Amman ; the teleplay was written by Amann . Kim Manners helmed the directing of the episode . " Release " was originally going to be written by Shiban alone , but he later turned the script over to Amann because he was needed elsewhere at the time . Shiban had been desiring to write a story like " Release " for a while . The character of Hayes was crafted as an ambitious character , inspired by the works of Arthur Conan Doyle : he was written to be either a " brilliant guy who 's solving crimes with his amazing intuition " , comparable to Sherlock Holmes , or " a guy who 's actually doing those crimes and playing a game " , like Professor Moriarty . Shiban and Amman came up with a story wherein Scully encounters a " genius " from her classes at the FBI Academy at Quantico . Later on , they extrapolated on the story , allowing the " genius " crime solver to help John Doggett find out what happened to his son , Luke Doggett .

The final scene wherein Doggett and his ex @-@ wife scatter Luke 's remains was called " difficult " by Robert Patrick . He later noted that Manners " was there to guide us along ; I can think of no worst [sic] nightmare for a parent than to lose their child . " The episode was written to create closure to Doggett 's story . Patrick later said that , if the series had continued for a tenth season , he would have liked to see his character develop a relationship with Reyes , because " I think Doggett was very attracted to Reyes [?] I would have liked to see the relationship with Reyes explored more . " Gish agreed , noting that the show 's ending never allowed the idea to be fleshed out , but that Reyes " would have definitely gone further with their relationship . "

= = Reception = =

" Release " first aired in the United States on May 5 , 2002 , and was first broadcast in the United Kingdom on BBC Two on March 9 , 2003 . The episode 's initial broadcast was viewed by approximately 5 @.@ 38 million households , and 7 @.@ 8 million viewers . It ranked as the fifty @-@ fifth most watched episode of television that aired during the week ending May 5 . " Release " earned a Nielsen household rating of 5 @.@ 1 , meaning that it was seen by 5 @.@ 1 % of the nation 's estimated households .

Jessica Morgan from Television Without Pity gave the episode an A ? grade . In a season review , Michelle Kung from Entertainment Weekly called the episode " worthy " , but noted that it was overshadowed by the show 's " ludicrous conspiracy plots " . Jeffrey Robinson from DVD Talk concluded that " Release " was a " good episode " because it " presented conclusions to [one of the] long running stories in the series [in that it] featured the conclusion to John Doggett 's personal trial , his quest for closure with his son 's murder . " Robert Shearman and Lars Pearson , in their book *Wanting to Believe : A Critical Guide to The X @-@ Files , Millennium & The Lone Gunmen* , gave the episode a glowing review and rated it five stars out of five . The two argued that , because of the " minimal emphasis " Doggett 's son 's murder was given in the show , the episode " packs [a] punch " . Shearman and Pearson saw similarities between Doggett 's trials and those of Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) . They noted that while " Mulder was always identified by his quest for his sister [Samantha] " , Doggett " carried the loss of his son as a private grief . " They concluded

that this structuring made the entry " emotionally powerful " and " moving " . M.A. Crang , in his book Denying the Truth : Revisiting The X @-@ Files after 9 / 11 , complimented the " lyrical style " of the episode , calling it " gorgeously shot " and " well acted " . Other reviews were not as glowing . John Keegan from Critical Myth gave the episode a negative review and awarded it a 4 out of 10 . He wrote , " Overall , this episode made about as much sense as ' Underneath ' or ' Jump the Shark ' . It was entirely inappropriate for John Doggett ' s struggle to end with someone else ' s actions . If this is the way the series is going to end , then I have to say , my hopes for a rousing finale are dwindling . "