

= Detour (The X @-@ Files) =

" Detour " is the fourth episode of the fifth season of the American science fiction television series The X @-@ Files . It was written by executive producer Frank Spotnitz and directed by Brett Dowler . The episode aired in the United States on November 23 , 1997 , on the Fox network . The episode is a " Monster @-@ of @-@ the @-@ Week " story , a stand @-@ alone plot which is unconnected to the series ' wider mythology . " Detour " received a Nielsen rating of 13 @. @ 2 , being watched by 22 @. @ 8 million viewers , and received mixed reviews from television 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 and Scully , while traveling to a conference with two other FBI agents , stop at a roadblock and join a nearby investigation of attacks by an unidentified predator .

Executive producer Frank Spotnitz was inspired to write the episode after watching the 1972 American thriller film Deliverance . " Detour " took nineteen days to film , over eleven more than the norm for The X @-@ Files . Shooting was hampered by incessant rain . The episode 's villains were created through a mixture of elaborate " bark suits " and digital technology . In addition , the episode contained several cultural references .

= = Plot = =

Two men are surveying an area of the Apalachicola National Forest in Leon County , Florida when they are attacked and killed by unseen assailants with glowing red eyes . Later that day , Michael Asekoff and his son , Louis , are hunting for possums with their dog , Bo , in the same stretch of woods . Upon discovering a surveyor 's bloody jacket , the father orders his son to take the dog and run home . As the son and dog take off , two shots are heard .

Meanwhile , Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) are carpooling with FBI agents Michael Kinsley and Carla Stonecypher en route to a " team building " seminar . When they are stopped at a roadblock by local police , Mulder decides to investigate . As Mulder and Scully venture into the woods , they are informed by Officer Michele Fazekas that no conclusive evidence has been found to support Louis ' report of a shooting . Mulder sees this as a perfect opportunity to ditch the seminar . Later , Mulder explains to Scully that no species native to North America will attack a stronger member of its prey when there is a weaker target available .

At the Asekoff residence , Bo becomes upset and begins barking . Mrs. Asekoff lets him outside but when she attempts to retrieve him , the dog refuses to budge . She turns to go back inside but discovers that it has been bolted from the inside . Louis hears his mother 's screams and climbs out of bed , but a dark , shadowy figure with red eyes corners him . Louis barely escapes through the dog door where he runs into Mulder , informing him of the creature 's whereabouts in the house .

The next morning , Mulder shows Scully some tracks by the front door of the house that appear to be human . Based on the weight distribution , however , the assailant evidently travels on the balls of its feet rather than from heel to toe . Additionally , that the creature lured the mother out of the house in order to get to Louis suggests to Mulder that the creatures are paranormal in nature .

Jeff Glaser , a local technician armed with a FLIR device , joins Fazekas , Mulder , and Scully on a search for the creature . They soon spot two creatures on the FLIR which travel in separate directions , causing the four to split up . Fazekas is attacked and disappears . Mulder deduces from this that the creatures may be related to the Mothman of Point Pleasant , West Virginia . After a brief encounter with the creatures , Glaser takes off running and is swiftly killed by a creature . Mulder is grabbed by the other creature , though it releases him after Scully manages to wound it with her firearm .

The next morning , Scully falls through a hole into an underground chamber where the bodies of their missing companions are stored . Spotting a pair of red eyes , Scully realizes she does not have her firearm on her . Mulder drops his down to her as the bushes behind him begin to rustle . He jumps in the hole as Scully shoots the creature and kills it . As they examine the dead creature ,

they notice its almost human @-@ like features and wood @-@ like skin . Nearby , the words " Ad Noctum " , Latin for " into darkness " , are found carved into a tree trunk .

Mulder , Scully , Asekoff , and Fazekas are rescued , but there is no sign of Glaser or the other creature . Upon leaving the forest , Mulder states that the creature may , in fact , be an evolved version of the first Spanish conquistadors who had first settled in the forest 450 years before . Although Kinsley finds it ridiculous , Mulder believes that centuries of seclusion could be adequate for such drastic adaptations to happen . Afterwards , Mulder realizes that the creatures presume others ' presence in their territory as threatening and rushes to the hotel room where Scully is packing her things . After ascertaining that she is finished packing , he firmly urges her to vacate the room , which she does . The camera then pans under the bed where a pair of red eyes open .

= = Production = =

Executive producer Frank Spotnitz was inspired to write the episode after watching the 1972 American thriller film *Deliverance* . Spotnitz recounted , " the idea of being stranded in a hostile environment is very interesting to me and so is the idea of something moving the brush that you can 't see . " Series writer Vince Gilligan contributed to the " team builder " exercise bit . The ending was left intentionally ambiguous . Spotnitz explained , " it 's scarier if you think [the monster] could still be out there . "

Initially , scenes were filmed at the Seymour Demonstration Forest in North Vancouver . Although the typical shooting time for an episode of *The X @-@ Files* is eight days , " Detour " took nineteen days to film . Second unit director Brett Dowler later recounted that it " rained every day " . This put a strain on the cast and crew because almost every main shot needed was intended to be outdoors in the daylight . Because of the massive delays , changes were made : the actors ' schedules were rearranged and Kim Manners was brought in to assist Dowler in finishing the second unit of the episode . Filming later moved to a soundstage to avoid the incessant rain . Spotnitz later noted that " I thought I 'd come up with a very simple concept . Literally , one that was easy for the props people and all the other departments . "

Initially , it was decided that the antagonists of the episode would be dressed in elaborate " bark suits " so that they would blend into their surroundings . Special effects supervisors Toby Lindala created several elaborate suits made from faux bark . In the end , however , difficulties were so great that the show switched to digital effects . Visual effects supervisor Laurie Kallsen @-@ George was tasked with creating the glowing red eyes . Kallsen @-@ George digitized and blended various " eyeball images " ? including shots of her family 's dog .

= = Cultural references = =

The plot and nature of the episode bears a striking resemblance to the film *Predator* (1987) , in which a creature that is able to perfectly camouflage itself , almost to the point of complete invisibility , stalks several humans in a dense jungle . While camping in the woods overnight , Scully sings " Joy to the World " by Three Dog Night while Mulder rests so that he can know she is awake and on guard . Originally , Scully was supposed to sing " I 'm So Lonesome I Could Cry " , a 1949 country song by Hank Williams . However , series creator Chris Carter requested something more " off the wall " . Spotnitz , instead , chose " Joy to the World " and later said , " in retrospect , the song was perfect " . When talking , Mulder admits that the only time he has ever thought about " seriously dying " was at the Ice Capades .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Detour " premiered on the Fox network on November 23 , 1997 . This episode earned a Nielsen

rating of 13 @. @ 2 , with a 19 share , meaning that roughly 13 @. @ 2 percent of all television @-@ equipped households , and 19 percent of households watching television , were tuned in to the episode . It was viewed by 22 @. @ 8 million viewers .

= = = Reviews = = =

" Detour " received mixed to positive reviews from critics . Francis Dass of New Straits Times was positive toward the episode , calling it " imaginative " . IGN named it the seventh best standalone X @-@ Files episode of the entire series . The site called the sequence wherein " Scully holds a wounded Mulder and sings ' Jeremiah was a Bullfrog ' [sic] " the " best scene " of the episode and praised the depth of the characters ' relationship . Zack Handlen from The A.V. Club gave the episode an A and called it a " solid " entry in the series . Handlen complimented the episode 's cold opening , structure , monster , and the relationship between Mulder and Scully ; writing that the " core relationship " between Mulder and Scully " was remarkably strong " . He also noted that their conversation in the woods was reminiscent of the third season episode " Quagmire " and was " sweet " . Jonathan Dunn , writing for What Culture , highlighted " Detour " for its cinematic appeal and included it in the " 5 Episodes [of The X @-@ Files] That Could Be Made Into Movies " list .

Other reviews were more mixed . John Keegan from Critical Myth gave the episode a 7 out of 10 , and wrote " Overall , this episode is a somewhat light @-@ hearted departure from the mythology installments and out @-@ of @-@ continuity flights of fancy that would dominate the early fifth season . While the character @-@ driven moments are a highlight , the actual ' case ' is far from special , often digressing from its purpose as a trigger for the character work . In the end , it ? s fairly average . " Paula Vitaris from Cinefantastique gave the episode a mixed review and awarded it two stars out of four . She called the scene featuring Scully singing to Mulder " a failed attempt to create ' a special X @-@ Files moment ' " and noted that the sequence was " a poor substitute for meaningful dialogue " . Vitaris , however , did applaud the guest cast and called the creature 's effects " very creepy " . 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 two stars out of five . The two noted that it replicated " Quagmire " too much for its own good and was " satisfied with the intention alone " . They reasoned that because " it 's so busy telling us how cute the interplay " between Mulder and Scully is , the episode " forgets to make it any good " . Shearman and Pearson also called the Spanish conquistador revelation " so utterly left field it feels self @-@ parodic . "