

THE X-FILES

12x5

"Clown Car"

written by

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TEASER

FADE IN

SCENE 1

INT. THERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

We open on a FRUMPY, TIRED THERAPIST. He sits in a high-backed leather chair, scribbling notes as his patient off-screen laments about his troubles.

PATIENT (O.S.)

I don't know, Doc. It just really feels like everything is caving in on me, ya know?

The therapist, DR. SANDBERG, nods, both knowing and bored.

DR. SANDBERG

That is an extremely common feeling.

PATIENT

Yeah, but Doc...

(the camera cuts to reveal the patient is a clown in full garb)

It really did cave in on me this time.

The patient wears an over-sized name-tag that reads BRITCHES THE CLOWN, so-called because his pants are ridiculously large and puffy, even by clown standards. Britches is a traditional whiteface clown, with vivid colored clothes and hair and a red nose. He has, however, redone his makeup to emphasize that he is sad, looking more like a Tramp clown (more on this later).

BRITCHES

I mean, literally, we were taking up the stakes out of the ground to take the tent down and the whole damn thing collapsed. Poetic, really. Nobody seems to care for the circus anymore. Out of a job, no prospects. I tell ya, buddy, don't put any money into going to clown college, that degree gets you nowhere...

Dr. Sandberg checks his watch and cuts Britches off.

DR. SANDBERG

Unfortunately, that's our hour. So, it sounds like your Zoloft prescription could use a boost in dosage, so I'll send that along to your pharmacy...

BRITCHES

Uh, actually, doc, can you write me the paper version? I'm going to be, uh, relocating, let's call it. Not sure what pharmacy I'll end up using.

DR. SANDBERG

Moving, eh? So, not the same time next week then for you?

BRITCHES

No, I should have said something but this will be the last time for me. I got evicted, got no family here, so I'm going out on the road. I'm trying to find this place in Oregon. Supposed to be like Shangri-La for clowns and circus types.

DR. SANDBERG

Yes, I hear Portland is lovely. Good luck on your adventure!

Britches mumbles a thank you as Dr. Sandberg scribbles the prescription down and tears it from his notepad. The two shake hands and Britches leaves with his prescription, almost reaching the door before Dr. Sandberg remembers something.

DR. SANDBERG

You know, you never did tell me your real name. You always use your... stage name.

BRITCHES

That is my real name. Thanks for everything doc, I'll leave a check at the desk.

Britches quickly exits the office, passing a sign near the exit that clearly says the office does not accept personal checks as payment.

Dr. Sandberg watches from the window as Britches gets into his hysterically small red car and drives off, the exhaust pouring a wisp of smog across the parking lot.

SCENE 2

EXT. NORTHWESTERN INTERSTATE - NIGHT

Britches drives his car down a bumpy, downtrodden interstate. Most of his worldly belongings are either tied to the roof of his car or stuffed into the passenger seat. Rain drizzles slowly on the windshield and a heavy fog settles in, making it almost impossible to see.

BRITCHES

Looks like it's time for a smoke
break...

Through the haze we see the dim glimmer of a neon sign; a gas station emerging from the fog. Britches pulls over, parking outside the rundown station. The station store itself is already closed, leaving only the self-service gas pumps to collect any business.

Britches pulls a pack of cigarettes from his pocket, strolling away from the gas station toward the tree line of a wooded area behind the building. He takes a deep drag on his cigarette, exhaling with a sigh. He mumbles dejectedly to himself, trying his best to give himself a pep talk.

BRITCHES

Well, look, at least you tried,
right? You followed the dream,
you're still sober...

The camera CUTS back to the roof of the car. One of the many items strapped to the roof is a large, over-sized wooden prop mallet like you often see in circuses and sideshows. A gloved hand reaches in from out of frame, pulling the mallet loose.

The camera CUTS to a POV shot of Britches, stalking him from behind. He is still mumbling to himself and finishing his cigarette, oblivious to the danger behind him. He drops the finished cigarette butt to the ground, grinding it with his foot. Only then does he sense something is amiss...

He turns and barely gets out a little yelp before the silhouetted figure of his killer swings the massive mallet up and bashes him right in the chin. Britches falls to the ground. The camera CUTS back to the killer's POV, looking down at him. He spits out a few teeth and some blood, beginning to beg for mercy, but it's too late.

We CUT to a shot at ground level, Britches' massive red shoes in the foreground, sticking skyward. His killer stands just out of frame where we can't see them. We hear the killer grunt with effort as they lift the heavy mallet up and slam it back down on Britches' head. The impact elicits a comical squeak from the red clown nose Britches was wearing and makes his legs jolt.

They aren't done yet, though. The killer raises the mallet again and slams it back down, bashing his skull in with another comical squeak from his nose.

The killer swings and smashes his head in again and again and again, stopping on the fifth, exhausted swing. By the fifth swing the once-comical nose squeak has been brutalized into a pitiful, barely-audible noise.

From our angle, we don't see the gore, only a pool of blood forming in the background and Britches' lifeless, twitching feet in front of the camera. The camera slowly pulls back a few feet, with the killer's legs coming into frame. They drop the bloodied mallet on the ground near his feet. They also drop a large flower, one that looks similar to the prank kind clowns wear on their lapels that spray seltzer water in your face.

The killer walks out of frame and the camera ZOOMS IN slowly on the flower.

FADE OUT.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN.

SCENE 3

EXT. GAS STATION - MORNING

The camera is looking down at Britches the Clown's corpse, panning down from his chest to his feet and then pulling up to reveal a few beat cops monitoring the crime scene behind some caution tape and MULDER and SCULLY approaching. Scully kneels to examine the carnage. Mulder looks down at the body, then up at the sky for a moment, biting his lip gently; he isn't upset by the blood and gore, he's trying to hold something in, but he can't help himself.

MULDER

Well, Scully, I think I can firmly say that, for once, this guy wasn't clowning around.

Scully looks up at him with sheer contempt in her eyes.

SCULLY

Is that *all* this is going to be, Mulder? Clown jokes?

MULDER

Give me a break, Scully, I've been waiting my entire comedy career for a moment like that.

(He pauses, still chuckling to himself)

So, Scully, any theories on the cause of death?

She sighs even harder, standing up. In the distance, one of the beat cops can be seen arguing with a man and a woman in clownface. Their clothes are somewhat more professional than their makeup. They look like a somewhat distorted version of Mulder and Scully; a mixture of investigator and cartoon character.

The cop finally relents and the trio approach Mulder and Scully. The male clown speaks, aggressively. He flashes a badge, revealing himself to be some sort of investigator. Mulder is still feeling amused with himself.

MULDER

Apparently Kersh has finally found
our replacements, Scully.

The clown speaks, aggressively.

DETECTIVE #1

Funny guy. I can assure you there
is nothing funny about this.

The camera CUTS to a portrait shot of the two clowns; yes, there is something very funny about this. The man wears classic Tramp makeup, with the fake teardrops on his cheeks and a frown painted on. The woman doesn't speak, but somehow seems entirely more maniacal. She wears more plain white makeup with a stereotypical clown hat on her head with the bells hanging down. Her outfit has a more bedazzled harlequin look, down to the gemstone encrusted gloves she wears on her hands. On the surface she seems as friendly as a birthday party clown but something is clearly off with her.

MULDER

Sure...

The beat cop speaks up, introducing the two clowns.

BEAT COP

These two are private eyes. They've
been working in the area, helping
all the, uh, circus types with
their various needs.

DETECTIVE #1

We have been working cases like
this in this town for the last few
years, when the local PD will let
us do our jobs.

SCULLY

And you are?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

I'm private detective Stanley
Malloy, fully licensed. This here
is my partner, Razzles.

Razzles looks Scully over. Scully looks visibly
uncomfortable.

MULDER

You say "cases like this". There
have been other murders?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

With investigative skills like that, you must be with the feds. Since when did the FBI decide they give a damn about the clown community?

MULDER

Agent Scully and I were already in the area, investigating the reports of clowns in the surrounding neighborhoods harassing citizens.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

That's preposterous, there hasn't been *any* harassment! A lot of us live in this area; this state used to have 12 circuses in 15 counties. I mean, just because we're clowns doesn't mean we aren't people. These nut-jobs calling the cops when they see a clown walking down the street are no different than some old white lady calling the cops because a black guy had the audacity to go jogging in his local park.

SCULLY

You equate the adversity faced by circus performers with systemic racism?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

I'm not sure equate is the word I'd choose, but discrimination is discrimination nonetheless. Plus, it wasn't any clown going around bashing this guy's head in.

MULDER

Have your investigations yielded any results or arrests?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

No offense, G-Man, but I'm not exactly sure I want to share any of our information with you.

SCULLY

Well, we're perfectly comfortable doing our own investigation into this murder, Detective.

She says detective with just a hint of disdain.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Good luck with that. Our community is pretty guarded, for obvious reasons.

(he motions to the body on the ground)

So have fun trying to get anyone to talk to you.

MULDER

Well, maybe we should help each other.

Both Scully and Razzles share startled looks of confusion at the suggestion of the supposed partnership.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

And why should we be interested in this "you scratch my back" scenario?

MULDER

Well, we can pool our resources. You both have a unique insight into the community in question, probably have contacts and goodwill, and so on. We have access to crime labs, fingerprinting and DNA sourcing, federal databases, etc. Plus... we're the goddamn FBI.

Malloy ponders on this a moment.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Come to our office tomorrow morning. We'll discuss the terms of this... partnership.

He hands Mulder a card and the two walk away, Razzles seemingly angry with Malloy. Scully turns, seemingly angry with Mulder.

SCULLY

We come to investigate these clown sightings and their possible connection to cult activity, and you want to turn it into a buddy cop movie with the pair of them?

MULDER

Sure, I'm down to clown.

SCENE 4

INT. MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

Scully sits on top of the motel bed, cross-legged, going over crime scene photos. She is munching on what looks like a fast food style taco, with a handful of fast food wrappers littered about the top of the bed. Mulder is nowhere to be found, though we hear the sound of shuffling and running water coming from the bathroom door that is cracked open in the background.

SCULLY

You know, you hear all this buzz about how Oregon has some of the best food in the country, yet here we are barely 30 miles from Portland and the best we can find is a Taco Bell?

Despite her complaint she takes another massive, pregnant eating-for-two bite.

MULDER (O.S.)

I don't know about you, Scully, but I'd take a double-triple-quadruple-fried bacon southwest chalupa concoction from Taco Bell over some vegan grille run by a guy named Stone any day of the week.

Scully looks over at the bathroom door, quizzically.

SCULLY

Mulder, what are you doing in there, it's been 20 minutes?

She gets up off the bed and goes over to the bathroom door, pushing it open. Scully mutters and shakes her head at what she sees.

SCULLY

Mulder, I would have much preferred to come to find you wearing one of my dresses to this.

The camera CUTS to a shot of Mulder in the mirror, his face caked in poorly designed clown makeup.

MULDER

What? I was curious, I'm trying to find my "inner clown".

SCULLY

Being a government stooge isn't
enough for you?

She exits the bathroom and heads back to the bed. Mulder, admitting defeat, begins to wipe away the makeup with a towel, moving toward the bed as well.

MULDER

Seriously, that's one element of being a clown I find most fascinating. They don't all just fit one stereotype per se, the makeup they use and how they use it is an expression of their individuality and state of mind. After the arrest of John Wayne Gacy, many clowns publicly stated that the depths of his psychosis were self-evident in the face paint he wore. I don't understand all the subtle intricacies myself, exactly.

SCULLY

Well, I doubt you'll come to understand the depths of clown expressionism using some cheap makeup I'm *assuming* you bought from the CVS across the street while I was in the shower.

(Beat)

I know this case is as important as any other, people have died, but this one somehow just feels... trite.

She leans back against a giant stack of motel pillows, Mulder sitting down beside her.

MULDER

A sign of the times, maybe.

SCULLY

Maybe. For them, it used to be all Big Tops and freak shows, traveling the country and entertaining thousands of people. For us... when we started this, when I was much younger than I am now, I never seemed to mind the absurdity. Now I can't seem to even find it in me to humor wasting my old age on some farce.

MULDER

I don't know, Scully, isn't life really just a farce?

SCULLY

Oh, don't be such an absurdist, Mulder, there must be a thousand things you take seriously, and find meaningful?

MULDER

Just you.

Scully gives him a pained look at the sweet and yet sad statement he has just made. Before their conversation can continue, a loud knock comes from the front door.

Mulder goes and opens the door to find a small, ornate gift box sitting in front of the door, wrapped in a little bow, with a tiny red balloon attached to it. Scully comes up behind him as he picks up the package and begins to unravel the bow.

SCULLY

Well this is surely a good sign.

She wraps her jacket more tightly around her, uneasy. Mulder finally pops the box open, revealing a human finger inside.

MULDER

Womp womp.

FADE OUT.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

SCENE 5

INT. MALLOY'S OFFICE - MORNING

Mulder and Scully approach the private detectives' office, the door featuring the classic tinted-glass. Etched into the glass reads 'Razzle and Dazzle Performance Arts' in exaggerated circus font, and etched below it in a far more stern font reads 'Private Investigation Services'.

MULDER

A veritable one-stop-shop.

They ring the old door buzzer. The door creaks open slowly to reveal Razzles is doing a handstand, pushing the door open with her feet. Once the door is fully open she somersaults over to the main desk of the office where Malloy sits waiting.

MULDER

That is a hell of a way to say good morning.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Let's get started. There's coffee in the corner.

Mulder and Scully go and take a seat in two rickety old office chairs in front of the massive desk.

SCULLY

Well, to begin, we've been running the most recent victim's prints through every database we have access to, and...

DETECTIVE MALLOY

You won't find him. Your typical birthday party clown lives on the grid, uses their legal name, maybe even has a day job. But someone like Britches the Clown, well, he was a Big Top guy back in his prime, deep in clown alley kind of performer.

MULDER

Clowns don't also work day jobs,
(MORE)

have ID, apply for bank loans, and so on?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Do you see a Gypsy pay for their groceries with their American Express Gold Club card? No, they're transient, off the grid. Your real hardcore clowns and circus performers are much the same; tight knit communities, more like families. On the road over 300 days a year. Most don't even have homes, in the strictest sense. But, that's where we come in.

Malloy slaps a thin folder on the desk. Mulder takes it and begins perusing it.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Victim's... Christian name, let's call it, was Franklin Rhea. Born in Seattle in '83. I never knew the guy personally, but I knew his mother for a minute in my old days. I got her on the phone last night, broke the news. She'll be down this way tonight, with a memorial service tomorrow afternoon.

SCULLY

We should be there. If the killer is bold enough, they might make an appearance. You said there was another victim?

Razzles gives Scully a long stare, seemingly fascinated with Scully's red hair.

SCULLY (to Malloy)

Does she talk?

RAZZLES (bitterly)

Never.

Malloy pulls out another folder, this one slightly larger. As Mulder begins to go through it, we see newspaper clippings, typed reports, etc.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

This seems like a bit more of a stretch, on the surface. This murder took place a little over 5 years ago, about an hour and a half
(MORE)

south of here. Another clown, though this one was decidedly more famous. Of course, the circus circuit was still more lively back then. Real name was Stanton Smithfield, Oregon native. Career went back all the way to the mid-60s. The man was a legend back then, in the Woodstock era. By the time he died, less so.

MULDER

The cause of death?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

The killer slit his throat ear to ear.

SCULLY

And what makes you so sure that the cases are connected?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

This...

He drops a photograph on the table of a large white flower near the body of the first victim. Identical to the newest crime scene.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

The cops completely ignored the Smithfield murder. Did as little as they could, even though many of us offered to help. You see, the circus isn't any different than any other tight-knit community, be it a church or the military. Things happen; assaults, rapes, abuse. They all get swept under the rug and hidden away. That murder is when I started this agency, along with Razzles here.

SCULLY

And do you have any leads?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

I've got some ideas, sure, but nothing I can quite put my finger on.

MULDER

It's funny you say that, because some delightful delivery person
(MORE)

left a human finger in a box
outside our door last night.

Malloy seems to perk up at the mention of this.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

You don't say? Well that shortens
the list a little bit. Razzles, get
your coat. Agents, let's follow our
first lead.

SCENE 6

INT. MALLOY'S CAR - DAY

Malloy is in the driver's seat, with Mulder squeezed into the tiny car next to him. Razzles and Scully share the back seat. Razzles is licking off an absurdly large lollipop. She notices Scully eyeing her uneasily, so she offers Scully a lick of the lollipop, just to get under her skin a little more. Scully does her best to look polite as she shakes her head no.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

So we've had our eyes on this guy
for a while, fella named Fred
Coogan. You wanna talk about a
circus? The guy was stationed over
in Afghanistan, got his legs blown
off by an IED. When he came back
home, understandably, he was
dealing with a little trauma.

MULDER

So he took up clown work to express
himself?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

He did exactly that. And don't get
me wrong, as insulated a community
as we may be, when you see a guy in
need who just wants to express
himself, you let him do his thing.

SCULLY

Sounds like doing his thing didn't
go over so well.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Not at all. This guy's stuff wasn't
really clowning, not even in the
old-fashioned jester sort of way.
It was like performance art, except

(MORE)

people in Portland can actually tolerate performance art. Nah, his stuff never exactly sat right with anyone. His shows always used to have this sort of beat poetry about phantom limbs and the like. Nothing that surprising considering the guy is an amputee, but then one night he got in a bar fight with a rodeo clown and took the guy's finger off with a switchblade.

MULDER

So we got a guy with a fixation on missing limbs and a habit for taking people's fingers off with a knife. Seems like a good place to start.

The car begins to pull into the entrance of a trailer park where a group of 15-20 people have gathered, carrying picket signs.

MULDER

What is all this?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Well, the so-called "clown sightings" and harassment you two were brought out here to investigate has the whole town in an uproar. Plus, now a clown has been brutally murdered. People want us out.

SCULLY

Can you blame them? I wouldn't exactly feel safe to look out the window and see a random clown stalking me in my backyard.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

I don't know who exactly it is pulling these pranks, but in my opinion, it's all just letting off steam. Hundreds of guys around here out of work. Even with the killer, it isn't any different than any other psychopath who took advantage of the strain of poverty and xenophobia in a community to act out their worst desires.

MULDER

Like Jack the Ripper?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Precisely. And let me tell you,
that guy would have made a great
clown.

They pull up outside a particular rundown trailer, an American flag hung outside with a deranged smiley face painted over it.

MULDER

This must be the place.

SCENE 7

INT. FRED COOGAN'S TRAILER - DAY

They walk up a worn-down wheelchair ramp and knock on the trailer door, a grumbling voice sounding from inside.

FRED COOGAN (O.S)

It's open!

Malloy goes in first, followed by Mulder and Scully with Razzles taking up the rear, almost acting as if she is the group's security.

Fred is in a wheelchair, positioned in front of the TV. A cigarette hangs limply from his lips, and his hair sticks out the sides of his head. He looks like Krusty the Clown if Krusty was battling severe clinical depression. One thing to note, however, is Coogan is not wearing any face paint.

FRED COOGAN

Well, Christ, I wish someone would have warned me the old team of Razzle and Dazzle was coming by, I'd have put my face on. And you brought guests.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Yeah, Fred, I did. This is Agents Mulder and Scully, with the FBI. And of course, you remember the Razzles of Razzle and Dazzle.

He motions to his partner, who has moved near a birdcage in the kitchen. A bag of birdseed sits near the cage and she has grabbed a handful, nipping at it as if it were human food.

FRED COOGAN

Yeah. I see she's as charming as ever. So what, the mayor bring in the feds to wrangle up all the other clowns making a mess around town? I hear he's thinking on making some big public announcement about the "crisis" the town is facing with all the hysteria.

MULDER

While we did find that interesting, at the moment we're a little more intrigued by the clown who got his head bashed in by the interstate last night.

FRED COOGAN

Oh? I hadn't heard.

RAZZLES

Well, the press didn't feel the need to report it.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

A guy named Franklin Rhea.

FRED COOGAN

Yeah? Yeah, I knew Frank. Barely, but I knew him. Me and him and one other guy spoke at some middle school about acceptance and bullying and the like. Me, talking about the service and integrating back into "kindly" society. Frank, well he was gay, so he covered the whole being bullied for being different element. I'm pretty sure the other clown was black, so I'm sure he talked about discrimination and the like. To be honest, I drank a lot in those days. Franklin did, too, as I recall.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

And can you think of anyone in the community who didn't exactly take a shine to him?

FRED COOGAN

I mean, sure, he wasn't much of a clown; he never really fit in with any of the circuses or big top acts, though he damn sure tried to. Then again, neither did I. You

(MORE)

don't end up doing skits for middle-schoolers if you're the best at what you do, you know? So people judged him. Much the way I'm sure people judged me for the work I did.

Scully notices Razzles mutter underneath her breath.

RAZZLES

You can say that again.

MULDER

I heard your stage work wasn't well-liked by the traditional clown community.

FRED COOGAN

Well, you can say that again! That's because that's exactly what the mainstream clown community is: traditional. That's the thing these townsfolk don't understand with this "hysteria"; being a clown isn't a joke, in fact, it's a goddamn discipline. Especially with the old timers, like that Smithfield fellow who died years back.

MULDER

You knew Stanton Smithfield?

FRED COOGAN

Not really, no, I just went to hear the man speak once when I first got out of the army. The man prided himself on having gone to *the* Barnum and Bailey's clown college, as if he'd been top of his class at Harvard. All this talk about which type of clown you are, how to style and interpret face paint, hell, even the proper number of twists to do when you're making an air balloon shaped like a wiener dog. These clowns from the old days are all that way, same with their protégés.

Coogan eyes Malloy and Razzles with a hint of resentment.

SCULLY

And what exactly is it that you do that makes this traditional community so hostile toward your work?

Coogan shifts around in his chair a moment, grumbling. A pet cat leaps into his lap, which he pets, a look of melancholy on his face.

FRED COOGAN

You know that friend you had, who got divorced and all a sudden he was inviting you to come watch his one-man show? Or the girl you knew whose mom passed away and out of the blue she's showing you her YouTube channel all about interpretive dance? Well what happened with me was about the same, but instead I got my legs blown off in some godforsaken desert. Needless to say, I don't much care what a bunch of clowns have to say about my work. The theater of war, *that* was real theater.

SCENE 8

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Scully sits on the edge of the bed, running a brush through her hair. We see Mulder in the background, brushing his teeth in the bathroom mirror.

SCULLY

Well I think we can both agree that he's not the killer.

MULDER

Why's that?

SCULLY

I mean, Mulder, he's in a wheelchair, I can give you two good reasons.

MULDER

I don't know, Scully. In a wheelchair, yes, but still someone who's served in the military, and earned the rank of Sergeant First

(MORE)

Class, so he's certainly more than capable of handling himself, perhaps even with the disability. Plus, even if surface-level, he knew both victims. Not to mention, he lives in the trailer park that houses most of the clown population from here to Portland and all the way over to Seattle. I mean, we've investigated circus communities before, but this is basically clown Mecca.

SCULLY

I just don't see it, Mulder. The poor man just seemed to want to express his pain through art, and the rest of the community shunned him. You'd think we were investigating a liberal arts college.

MULDER

Well, that's sort of what I'm getting at, Scully. If not him specifically, I think it's someone like him. Someone who feels insecure, and threatened by this community, so he's lashing out like an animal backed into a corner.

A voice speaks from the doorway, startling Mulder and Scully.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Except they're not backed into a corner.

Malloy stands in the doorway of the room, dressed in more casual street clothes than what he wears when he's on the job, though he maintains the clownface. When he's off the clock Malloy comes off less intense, almost even as if he were a neurotic stand-up comedian who grew up listening to too much Woody Allen.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Didn't mean to give you guys a fright, you just... you left the door cracked. I mean, who does that, for starters? Also I gave it a little knock. You didn't seem to hear me... do you guys always get so into it when you're monologuing at each other?

SCULLY

Not all of us are so blessed as to have partners that rarely speak.

MULDER

What can we do for you, Stanley?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

What? You guys get the cool last-names only thing, but I just get to be Stanley?

MULDER

What can I do for you, Detective Malloy?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Well, uh, part one, a bit awkward, but I've been staking this place out for the last hour or so, in case our mutual friend came back with another finger. Again, I wouldn't leave the door cracked. But so far no missing limbs at the doorstep, so that's good.

SCULLY

And part two?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Well, me and Razzles are definitely going to the Rhea funeral tomorrow. Like you said, the killer might just be bold enough to show up. Wanted to ask if we should swing by and get you in the morning?

MULDER

Sure, but how about we take my car?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Alright, then, see you tomorrow. I gotta get home to the wife.

MULDER

Oh? I was under the impression you and, uh, Razzles were...

Malloy seems puzzled at first, but then finally gets it.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

What!? We're *partners*. Why would we cheapen that with something like

(MORE)

sex? Plus, she's half my age, I mean... Jesus

He gives Mulder and Scully a look as if *they* were the clowns, and then walks off, firmly closing the door behind him.

SCENE 9

EXT. FRED COOGAN'S TRAILER - NIGHT

The camera PANS IN on the outside window of Coogan's trailer, where he sits in his chair, bathed in the blue light of his television. He sits, half-asleep. Suddenly something heavy is thrown against the window behind him, cracking the glass. He curses loudly and wheels himself around, propping himself up higher to better look out the window.

The camera CUTS to a shot from Coogan's POV. Through the cracked panes of glass we can just barely make out the figure of someone all in black. Their face is hidden behind a haunting white porcelain mask. The mask is the classic theater mask that represents tragedy, with its clown-like, drooping frown and sad eyes.

FRED COOGAN

Try and screw with me, huh?

He reaches into the drawer of an end table, pulling out a pistol and looking back out the window. The figure has vanished.

Suddenly there comes a loud BANG on top of the roof, followed by a pattern of scurrying footsteps, as though someone were running along the roof.

Coogan aims his pistol and fires four quick shots in a pattern, trying to follow the source of the footsteps. We hear nothing for a moment. Then, we see something dropping from the roof to the ground; brief, silvery flashes of some unknown object being dropped to the ground. A moment later, we hear a series of deep POPS sound off, multi-colored smoke beginning to fill the trailer.

FRED COOGAN

Smoke bombs, really?

He hurriedly wheels himself to his front door through a haze of purple, red and green smoke. His pistol sits in his lap as he moves through the haze. Fred snatches his car keys off the hook and punches the door open, rolling himself out before suddenly--

He falls straight to the ground. In the madness, the killer has completely dismantled the wheelchair ramp leading up to his door. Fred lands with a loud yell and a hard thump. He lays a moment, in pain, but quickly begins moving again. His gun missing, Fred drags himself frantically toward his car which sits a few feet away, pulling the door open and dragging himself up and into the driver's seat. He slams the door shut and hits the manual lock, catching his breath for a moment.

Suddenly, we see a gloved hand come in from out of frame, gently rapping at the passenger side window. The killer's eerie mask comes into view, and they hold up a pair of keys in front of him, rattling them, mockingly. Fred's keys. He's trapped.

Fred curses again, and frantically looks around to see if he can find anything to help defend himself but after a moment we hear the dull thud of something catching on metal. Fred looks in his side mirror to see the killer has attached something vague and black to his gas tank. The killer struts away, Fred momentarily calm before he notices the gentle red blink of a light coming from the object...

We CUT to a WIDE SHOT of Coogan's car just as it is engulfed in flames...

The camera briefly CUTS to an OUTSIDE VIEW of a neighboring trailer's window. The owner inside looks out for a moment before pulling their curtains closed.

The camera PANS slowly over from the car toward Coogan's trailer, where the brim of Coogan's American clown flag has just caught fire and begins to burn.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

SCENE 9

INT. MOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Mulder and Scully busy themselves about the room, getting dressed and preparing for the day. The motel's TV is on in the background, the volume barely audible. Something about the TV catches Scully's eye.

SCULLY

Mulder... the mayor's giving his speech.

She picks up the remote and turns up the volume as Mulder comes over to watch, straightening his tie. The mayor, MAYOR GREGORY MOLEN, stands at the stereotypical podium in front of what looks like a group of citizens in a town hall debate.

MAYOR MOLEN

For years, this town has been the proud, accepting host to these people. Whereas most performers involved in circuses or other unorthodox performance work may live a more transient, unsettled life, our town has been a place of stability for them, and place of peace. But no longer. We have had countless reports, all over the nation, of clowns out on the streets, stalking our citizens in their very own backyards, to what end? It seems that in most of America this bizarre phenomenon has abated but in our very neighborhoods we are seeing behavior from this group that is as aberrant and dangerous as ever. Each day I waited to hear the horrendous news that finally, this... prank, would have gotten someone hurt, or even killed. And it is with a heavy heart I report to you that in less than 72 hours, two men have been murdered.

There is an outburst from someone in the crowd who screams, "Two of us have been murdered!" followed by a vague shuffle as security undoubtedly drags the dissenter away.

MAYOR MOLEN

Yes, both of the men had ties to clown or circus work. And that is precisely my point. My worst fear had been that these tensions might rise and perhaps one of our more blue collar citizens would pull a gun on some unsuspecting birthday clown. Instead, last night, Fred Coogan, a veteran, and a retired stage clown, was killed in his own home by a homemade explosive planted by what eyewitnesses say was an assailant wearing a clown mask. We have hosted these people in our town for so long but at what cost? If this community isn't even safe from those among their own ranks, then what's next?

A knock comes from the door, Scully opening it, Razzles and Malloy coming in, their eyes drawn to the screen.

MAYOR MOLEN

Where will be the next tragedy? Where will the next blood be shed? In a movie theater, the day the next big horror movie happens and someone loses their cool? Or maybe at the local grocery, or on the schoolyard? I want this tension, and more importantly the violence, to stop. I am submitting to the city council an ordinance that, if enacted, would make it illegal to publicly wear any clown makeup or regalia after 7 P.M. Infractions on this ordinance will come with a minimum \$200 fine. I hope the townspeople will support this measure, and I hope this is the start of our journey back to equanimity.

He exits the podium, the crowd mostly cheering with a spattering of boos thrown in.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

He's always been a charmer.

MULDER

The local PD need one of us down at the trailer park to go over the crime scene. Apparently the killer left us another care package.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Yeah, of course, let's get moving.

MULDER

I was actually talking to Scully...

There's a brief moment of awkward tension.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Oh, yeah... makes sense, you being partners and all.

MULDER

He actually raises a point, Scully. One of us has to go to the crime scene, but I also think one of us still needs to go to the Rhea funeral, in case something shakes loose.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Well that's no big deal! You and I can go check out the crime scene, and you can take Razzles and go stake out the funeral.

He nods enthusiastically to Scully, who looks over unenthused at Razzles. Razzles chuckles and blows a large balloon with her chewing gum, popping it with her finger.

RAZZLES

That's alright. I like her.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Well that's that, let's get moving.

The two clowns make it for the exit with Mulder and Scully following slowly behind. Scully leans in and whispers in Mulder's ear:

SCULLY

Grab my weapon before I use it on you, and then myself.

MULDER

Lighten up, Scully. You'll be the dazzle to her razzle.

SCENE 10

EXT. FRED COOGAN'S TRAILER - LATE MORNING

Mulder drives his car past a police brigade at the entrance to the trailer park. Where the day before stood 15 protesters, today parades a more massive group of angry picketers.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Christ, this is really getting out of hand.

The car pulls up as close it can to where the site of the explosion is cordoned off with police tape. The car is nothing but twisted metal and blackened paint. The trailer next to it isn't much better off, the fire has burnt through most of the exterior wall. The beat cop we saw earlier at the first murder waves Mulder over.

BEAT COP

Over here, detectives. I think this is the stuff you'll really wanna see.

Mulder whispers to Malloy:

MULDER

He said *detectives*, you catch that?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Yeah, I feel like the detective in an Agatha Christie mystery; "*Murder Under the Big Top*".

Fred Coogan's wheelchair has been placed back upright near the back corner of the trailer, a cigar box sitting in the seat of the chair. Mulder snaps on a pair of examination gloves.

MULDER

Well, it doesn't take Detective Poirot to guess what's in the box.

He lifts the lid of the cigar box, he and Malloy leaning in to see inside. The camera PANS gently up to reveal the contents of the box: Coogan's Purple Heart medallion, a single large-petaled white flower, a disembodied finger and, for the first time, a note. Mulder takes the note and opens it to read: "We are a race of artists. What are we doing about it?"

DETECTIVE MALLOY
That's Du Bois. The Mrs, not the
Mr.

Mulder nods, impressed.

DETECTIVE MALLOY
What? I read a bunch of deep crap
in college too, hotshot.

Mulder speaks to the cop.

MULDER
What can you tell me about the
finger?

BEAT COP
Well, we're still waiting on them
to run the blood on the second
finger, so we don't know for sure,
but forensics is all but positive
they came from the same hand, or at
least the same person. First finger
looks to be an index finger, this
one today the middle finger.

DETECTIVE MALLOY
Why start at the fingers and not
the thumb?

MULDER
Well, either it's the ghost of
Roger Ebert coming to review movies
from the afterlife, or I think
these fingers belong to the killer
themselves.

DETECTIVE MALLOY
Why would the killer do that to
themselves?

MULDER
This... this is a declaration. This
invites challenge. The note
declares the killer as an artist,
the finger is their contribution to
their art. This crime scene is like
their canvas.

DETECTIVE MALLOY
"A race of artists"... They're one
of us. The killer, whoever they
are, they're one of us; a clown, a
(MORE)

carnie, a goddamn trapeze artist...
whoever they are, they know us.

Mulder notices someone off screen. The camera CUTS to a shot of the group of spectators at the line of police tape. A voluptuous, middle-aged and, most noticeably, bearded woman stands, motioning to Mulder to come to her. Mulder approaches, reluctant but enticed. Malloy follows a step behind.

BEARDED WOMAN

I have something for you, but I'm
not gonna talk.

MULDER

Well, this just got more
interesting.

BEARDED WOMAN

Yeah, well look funny guy, I was in
the circus for twenty years. Beard
or no beard, a lot of guys still
wanted the goods; I don't know, you
tell me why. When you're a 22-year-
old woman with a beard, living life
on the road with a different lover
every night ain't half bad.

MULDER

But...

BEARDED WOMAN

But... Some guys get a bit too
rough. Some guys might even leave a
scar or two. And some guys aren't
who they say they are.

She hands Mulder an envelope and walks away. Mulder opens up
the envelope and looks inside.

MULDER

I think we need to get to that
funeral.

SCENE 11

Scully and Razzles' car pulls up outside the funeral home
where the very first signs of dusk are starting to appear off
in the distant parts of the horizon. A dozen or so clowns,
all of various types (including a clown on stilts), stand
outside the funeral home, holding a candlelight vigil. The
two exit the car and go inside.

INT. FUNERAL HOME - LATE AFTERNOON

Scully and Razzles enter the main room of the funeral parlor. The casket sits, closed, at the front of the sparsely populated room. Rhea's mother sits near the front, sobbing into her hands. Scully and Razzles approach.

The coffin is littered with photos of Rhea as a boy, at his high school graduation, and even a few photos of him from his Britches the Clown days.

Once they reach the weeping mother, Scully reaches out, gently introducing herself.

SCULLY

Ms. Rhea, I'm Dana Scully. I'm with the FBI. I've been tasked with finding who did this to your son.

Ms. Rhea stands, still sobbing uncontrollably. Razzles pulls a handkerchief out of her side pocket, which of course is tied to another handkerchief, and then another and another. She quickly pulls the entire countless blanket of handkerchiefs out, handing the mother an end to dry her eyes. Ms. Rhea thanks her and blows her nose.

MS. RHEA

Thank you, Ms. Scully and Ms...

Surprisingly, Razzles reaches out warmly and takes the mother's hand in hers.

RAZZLES

My name is Julia.

MS. RHEA

Well, thanks to you both. And so much thanks to your, partner, Julia. If not for Stanley I don't know if I'd have ever found out what happened to Franklin.

SCULLY

You were estranged?

MS. RHEA

For years. Not really by fault of my own or Franklin's. His father... well he just never could figure out how to accept him. God wonder how many of our country's children wander down a path never being loved...

There is a bit of a fanfare from the entrance, the sound of clamor and shouts coming from outside. Mayor Molen walks in, dressed dashingly in a deep blue suit. He walks directly up to Ms. Rhea, bringing her into a painfully forced hug.

MAYOR MOLEN

Ms. Rhea, how sorry I am that we should meet this way. Your son seemed like such a lovely young man. But, these are very troubled times, indeed. As if I have to tell you, you're feeling it more than any of us. My dear, if you need anything, anything at all, while you're in town, you simply call this number and my assistants will move heaven and earth for you, ok?

She can barely respond before he hands her a business card, his assistants stepping up to take his place, artfully consoling her without meaning it. Molen turns his attention ever so briefly onto Razzles before his eye settles on Scully.

MAYOR MOLEN

You must be Agent Scully, all the way from our nation's capital.

He shakes her hand vigorously and Scully begins to answer before her eye is drawn to something we cannot see. She tries to recover:

SCULLY

Yes... Yes, I am.

The camera PANS behind Scully and onto Molen's upper body, where a white, large-petaled flower is pinned to his lapel. Scully tries to hide her nervousness.

MAYOR MOLEN

And your partner?

SCULLY

He's still going over the crime scene from last night. That's a lovely flower. Wife pick it out for you?

MAYOR MOLEN

One of my assistants, actually. Well, I hope you catch whoever's doing this. God knows my town could use a little late spring cleaning.

He gives her a brief touch on the shoulder and walks away, his pair of assistants trailing behind him. A moment later, Scully's phone buzzes. She answers, Mulder on the other line.

MULDER

Meet me at the motel, Scully. I think you and I are in for a good, old-fashioned stakeout.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

SCENE 12

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Night has set outside the window. Mulder, Scully, Malloy and Razzles sit huddled around the sole table in the motel room.

SCULLY

It was the exact same flower,
Mulder. I'm sure of it.

RAZZLES

She's right.

Scully and Razzles share a glare of reluctant appreciation.

MULDER

Oh, you don't have to sell me on
your hunch, Scully. A very nice
bearded lady gave me these earlier
today, and they are very
incriminating of our suspect. If
not a murderer, he's definitely a
monster.

He sets the envelope on table and pushes it over toward Scully and Razzles. Malloy gently puts his hand down on top of the envelope before they can take it. The camera CUTS to a CLOSE-UP PORTRAIT shot of Malloy. He has a bit of mist in his eyes behind his glasses. He takes a deep breath.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

I just want to say, to you Scully,
and... especially to you, Julia...

Razzles looks up, concerned that he called her by her real name. He struggles his way through the rest of his words.

DETECTIVE MALLOY (Cont'd)

I was around, in the old days. The
Big Top days. A lot of things
happened that never should of
happened. And the story has stayed
the same; most of the girls never
spoke up and... none of the guys
ever spoke out. We never talked
about the things that happened
backstage. And, I'm not proud of
it. I hope there's a guy somewhere
haunted by what's in that envelope.
And I wish I could tell you,

(MORE)

Razzles, that things are better now... but... you tell me.

He drops his chin in his hand, his eyes holding back a few painful tears. Scully slowly opens the envelope, pulling out an old Polaroid photograph of a clown with his arm around a young bearded lady.

SCULLY

That's...

MULDER

Mayor Molen, that's right.
Confirmed clown, amongst other things...

Scully pulls another Polaroid out from the envelope, another photo of the bearded woman but this time the bearded woman is posed with a bed sheet tied above her chest, a bare leg sticking out from under the sheet. It's the kind of racy photo a woman might gift her lover.

Scully pulls out another Polaroid, one we don't see. She breathes more shallowly and Razzles barely makes eye contact, her jaw taut.

Another Polaroid, and then another, never seen, but we can tell that what they're seeing is only getting worse. Scully eventually lays the empty envelope down on the table, partially covering a Polaroid showing the back of a woman's bare shoulders, bruised and covered in deep fingernail marks.

SCULLY

We need to get eyes on his house as soon as we can, before he can hurt anyone else.

MULDER

Alright, let's get moving. You two stay here or at the office, we might need you. And, it could get dangerous.

Mulder and Scully move toward the door as Malloy snaps out of his regretful stupor.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Oh, hell with that! No! *This* is a partnership. We got here together. And no offense, you two, but this isn't your fight. We go, we stake him out, and we keep doing this until we catch the son of a bitch! Dangerous? I don't care if bullets

(MORE)

fly, because I am *Detective Stanley goddamn Malloy*, and this is *my case* to finish. We'll do it in shifts, and I'm up first, capiche?

(Beat)

Razzles, on me.

He throws his jacket on and exits, Razzles following behind him with a sense of duty.

MULDER

I guess we're the sideshow this time, Scully.

SCENE 13

EXT. MAYOR MOLEN'S HOME - NIGHT

Mayor Molen's home is extravagant, if not quite a mansion. It sits up on a small hill overlooking the town proper, a beautiful stone gate blocking off its front yard and a small amount of wooded area at its sides. Malloy's car sits off on a side street perpendicular to the home so that Malloy is facing the mansion directly. He sighs, his dreary-eyed gaze falling down onto the car's clock: 3:13 A.M.

Malloy looks over at Razzles, asleep in the passenger seat. He mutters to himself.

DETECTIVE MALLOY (to himself)

You really walked out of that room with a lot of juice and now look what you got to show for it.

His cellphone buzzes and he answers the incoming call. Scully speaks on the other end of the line. We hear her but don't see her.

SCULLY (O.S.)

You see anything? Any cars come or go?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Nah, nothing. We definitely saw his personal car go through the gate and into the garage about 9:15. Saw him in the window even, probably checking to see if we're watching his ass.

SCULLY (O.S.)

What about Julia, did she see anything?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Nope. She's out like a light,
drooling in my side seat. I think I
might take her home, and maybe I'll
head into the office. I feel like
something's not right. Maybe if I
chug a couple black coffees
something will come to me.

SCULLY (O.S.)

Sounds good, you do that. Mulder
and I will drive over and take up
the front post. But one thing,
Malloy?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Yeah?

SCULLY (O.S.)

The minute you get into your office
you scan every single picture in
that envelope and drop the copies
in the mail to every paper in town.
Even if it tears the town further
apart, people should know what he
did.

Malloy looks shaken a second. Sending those photos only
further reveals the kind of past sins he tried to bury. He
spends a moment, digging deep to find some courage in
himself.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Sure thing, Scully.

He turns the car over and puts in drive, pulling away.

SCENE 14

EXT. MAYOR MOLEN'S HOME- DAWN

The camera CUTS to a close-up of Mulder and Scully's car
radio clock: 5:47 A.M. Mulder rouses from his slumber.

MULDER

Anything?

SCULLY

No. It's too late now. Lights have
been popping on throughout the
house. I've seen the maid through
windows, going about her cleaning.
Sun's almost up. It's only a matter

(MORE)

of time before he'll be waking up
and going about his day.

MULDER

And I'll bet he slept like a...

A blood-curdling scream comes from the house, cutting Mulder off.

MULDER

...a baby.

The two immediately exit the car, weapons drawn and pointed down, rushing across the street and toward the house. Mulder boosts Scully over the brick wall before jumping up and pulling himself over.

They rush up the lane toward the front door, the two of them flanking different sides. Mulder is about to go to kick the front door in but the maid bursts out of the door and onto the grass of the front yard, sobbing, blood on her hands. She falls into Mulder's arms, who tries to calm her down before continuing his pursuit, a few beats behind Scully.

Scully rushes up the stairs, gun still drawn, peeking through each open door as she makes her way down the second floor hallway. A large door at the end is left open, likely the master bedroom. Scully pushes the door in, her gun pointed left and then right, ensuring the room is clear.

She rushes over to the bed where we see Mayor Molen's head resting on its pillow, the covers pulled all the way up to the neck. Scully gently tugs the covers up and off his chest only to reveal his head has been completely severed at the neck, blood completely drenching the bed's white sheets.

SCULLY

Jesus Christ.

Scully turns away in disgust just as Mulder reaches the room. He briefly inspects the damage, noticing a little gift-wrapped package sitting on the bedside table, again wrapped in a bow. Mulder opens it to reveal a third finger. The camera ZOOMS in on the finger. The severed finger has a blue ring tattooed around its circumference near the bottom, almost like a wedding band, and this time the blood is fresh.

SCENE 15

INT. MALLOY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Malloy stands a copy machine, running the photos through to be copied, the brief flashes of light crossing his face as the machine does its job. He drinks a steaming cup of coffee from a massive mug. His phone buzzes and he answers. We hear a faint voice on his end of the phone but we don't make out the words. All we can hear is the copier's gentle whirring and Malloy talking, presumably to Mulder.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Mulder, I'm glad you called. So here's what's bugging me, right? The mayor, he's horrendous, clearly, but all the abuse we have evidence of is against women. It doesn't seem to fit, I mean I'm no behavioral profiler like you mentioned you were, but all his victims are men...

The voice on the other end of the line grows louder, more emphatic. In the background we see the office door creep open, the hooded figure in all black stepping quietly in and up toward Malloy.

DETECTIVE MALLOY (Cont'd)

Jesus. Did they leave another finger? Wait wait, say that again about the tattoo? You're sure, a blue ring?

The figure has reached him, sticking a blade in his side. Malloy shouts in pain, turning to face his assailant.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Jesus, if you're gonna stab a guy, at least be a man and take off the mask.

The figure pulls off the theater mask, revealing Razzles underneath. Malloy lets out a sad, exhausted laugh shrouded in sadness.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

So, what is it, kid? I mean, look, I always knew you were projecting daddy issues on to me, but when did that go from needs therapy to trying to kill me?

RAZZLES

You let me down the minute you quit the act, old man. The minute you
(MORE)

started your little detective agency. I'd already had to suffer highway trash like Franklin Rhea flooding into my town, year after year. And sad sack blowhards like Coogan boohooing about war wearing our masks, our warpaint.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Kid, I know you had it hard. I know the act made you so, so happy, and then no one really cared about the act anymore. But look, this agency was a way out, a new gig, a new way of life! You gotta face the music, we may still wear the paint but we are just Stan and Julia now.

Razzles takes off her gloves, three fingers missing from her left hand. She gently pushes a stray strand of hair from Malloy's forehead behind his ear.

RAZZLES

You quit caring about the act. You haven't talked to Julia since she was a child, when she actually looked up to you.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

I wish I believed you, but I know when I'm looking into Julia's eyes, and I looked her in the eye just last night.

She stabs him again, more forcefully between the ribs.

RAZZLES

You were never any better than those acts I tore to pieces these past few nights. You really took the art and made it a circus. You might have wanted to be a detective, and a good husband and all that, but face it old man, you're just a goddamn clown.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

And I want you to know, your clown was the most exquisite piece of work I ever saw.

Malloy suddenly whips his right arm up and against her chest, a small novelty pistol popping out from his sleeve and into his hand. He pulls the trigger point blank three times, sending Razzles falling backward against the massive office desk. A moment passes. Her eyes seem to deaden and wane.

The camera PULLS BACK to a mid-shot of the carnage, Malloy sitting up against the copier, bloodied and breathless. He mutters to himself, as he is want to do.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

What a show.

SCENE 16

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Mulder and Scully enter a hospital room where an exhausted looking Malloy sits up in bed. The hospital staff have wiped the clown makeup from his face, leaving just a scruffy man with a goatee behind. A beautiful but entirely mundane looking woman stands next to him beside the bed.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Hey, the wonder twins. Don't worry guys, I solved the case for us. Took a little more out of me than expected, but, problem solved.

The woman beside the bed excuses herself, tears forming in her eyes. Malloy watches her go, solemn.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

That's my wife, Laura. She's having a hard time, you know, accepting all this. Not just the me getting stabbed twice and nearly losing a lung, she uh... she knew Julia since she was a girl. Laura came to all our shows. She didn't make it, did she?

He clearly means Razzles, his former partner, friend. Mulder shakes his head.

MULDER

No.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

Well, at least she's peaceful. Isn't that what they all say?

Malloy seems to be holding back tears. Scully leans over and asks Mulder to give her and Stanley a moment. He nods, clearly not understanding why, but accepting that she needs this moment. He exits. Scully moves closer and takes Malloy's hand.

SCULLY

Someone hurt her. And you thought helping her would redeem you for whatever horrible thing you abided in the past.

Malloy nods.

DETECTIVE MALLOY

It was a boyfriend. She and him got engaged right out of high school. Got her engagement ring tattooed right on her finger. They moved in together and that very day he just...

Malloy stops, unable to continue in detail.

DETECTIVE MALLOY (cont'd)

Needless to say she wore a glove on her ring hand every day after that. All the way up until the moment she cut it off of her.

SCULLY

Are you still going to send the photos? To the papers?

DETECTIVE MALLOY

I... don't know. The people *should* know. But, you can't help the dead, and you can't hurt them either. This town is already in enough trouble as it is, I'm not sure what good it'll do.

SCULLY

It'll cause scandal... and pain. But you should still send them. It might just do some good for the next girl like Julia.

Scully stands and kisses Malloy gently on the forehead before she turns and exits the room.

SCENE 17 - Continuous Montage

We move through a brief montage as the story slowly comes to a close, the Josh Ritter song "When Will I Be Changed" following along with us. We see Malloy in the hospital, his wife, Laura, laying beside him.

We see Mulder and Scully, sitting beside each other on a plane, Scully perfectly asleep, her head laying on Mulder's shoulder. Mulder is watching something on a tablet, smiling slightly at the whimsy of it. The camera cuts to reveal he's watching Charlie Chaplin, the Little Tramp himself, performing his skate routine from *Modern Times*.

Some time passes throughout the montage as we see Stanley, now healed enough to walk on his own two feet, walk up to a post office box. He walks with a cane, for now, and is dressed neither like a clown or detective, but looking like a man who you probably know. He has a stack of envelopes under his arm. He opens the post office box up and drops them inside, slamming it shut and hobbling off, not looking back.

Last and but not least, we cut to Scully laying on her back, receiving an ultrasound. She holds Mulder's hand in hers, squeezing it as the latest images of their future child reveal themselves on the screen.

The technician excuses herself, leaving Mulder and Scully to look over the printed photos. The ultrasound photos make a stark and joyous foil to the horrid Polaroid photos from the investigation. The two smile wordlessly.

Mulder's gaze catches Scully's and they look at each other for just a moment. He rests his forehead against hers and holds on to her hand even tighter.

Words aren't needed between them in this moment. Life isn't just a farce, as they feared, but much more.

The song comes to an end just as we...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END