

THE X-FILES

12x10

"The Plains"

written by

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TEASER

DARKNESS. THE SCREEN IS BLACK. We slowly begin to hear the sounds of howling winter winds.

A TITLE CARD appears in the bottom right corner before slowly fading away: NUNAVUT TERRITORY, CANADA.

MULDER (V.O)
Drive him to the plains.

FADE IN

SCENE 1

EXT. CANADIAN WILDERNESS - DAY

We OPEN on MULDER, crouched down and staring solemnly off-screen. He is dressed head to toe in intensive snow gear. He sports a few weeks worth of beard on his face, snow clinging to his facial hair. The WIND is howling and SNOW falls all around him in massive flakes. Mulder is surrounded by a FOREST of barren trees. We hear Mulder in VOICE OVER, almost as if reading his thoughts.

MULDER (V.O)
Yes. Drive him to the plains, away
from the trees. Nowhere left to
hide.

The CAMERA PANS away from Mulder, toward where he is looking. In between two trees is a large BURIAL MOUND, made up of snow piled on top of an unknown body and outlined by large stones. A little makeshift cross made of tree branches adorns the top. Mulder walks away from the grave over to a CAMP SITE. A TENT barely stands, it's canvas exterior completely torn apart. Blood stains the snow around the tent.

MULDER (V.O)
I don't know what I expect to find
once we're face to face. I've seen
what it can do when threatened.
Then again, I know what I can do
when threatened.

Mulder picks up a RIFLE from the ground just outside the tent, pulling back the loading pin and inserting several new rounds into the chamber. He takes a hefty swig of water from a thermos, gulping it down.

Mulder picks up an old IPOD, turning the camera on and speaking into it.

MULDER

No more tent means no shelter. Ten miles between me and the nearest building of any kind and 40 miles from any building with proper heat or running water. Though I wouldn't be surprised if somehow there's a Starbucks nearby.

He chuckles ever so weakly at his joke. He is clearly desperate and clinging to hope.

MULDER (cont'd)

While I'm on the subject, I now have... three days worth of food left. I'm pretty sure Uber Eats doesn't deliver to unincorporated Canadian wilderness, so I will have to ration if I hope to make it back. It would be wisest of me just to turn back now, but since when have I ever exhibited anything remotely resembling wisdom?

Somewhere in the distance over the sound of the wind comes a long, terrifying howl. Mulder pauses a moment, sitting in the ominous silence.

MULDER

No... I keep going.

Mulder shuts the camera off and slides the iPod into an interior pocket. He slings the rifle over his shoulder and straps his supply pack to his back.

With his footsteps crunching in the heavy snow he walks away from the campsite toward a distant break in the treeline. The CAMERA stays behind as he vanishes into the blinding white of the snowy horizon.

Once he is out of sight the CAMERA PANS DOWN to reveal a MASSIVE FOOTPRINT in the snow, nearly a foot long, with five toes. Mulder is on the heels of a legend.

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN

SCENE 2

EXT. SNELGROVE LAKE - DAY

We OPEN on a beautiful and serene lake. We hear the buzz of cicadas as the sun slowly begins to creep toward the horizon, hinting at the end of a beautiful summer day.

A TITLE CARD appears:

SNELGROVE LAKE, NORTHERN ONTARIO, CANADA

THREE DAYS EARLIER

The title card vanishes just as the camera PANS UP to reveal MULDER AND SCULLY, sitting in a rowboat. Mulder is preparing to cast a fishing pole while Scully is lounging with a book in hand. Mulder is dressed like someone who bought their outfit out of a fishing catalog but had never actually fished before; flannel shirt covered up in a beige fisherman's vest and a red hat that says SHOW US YOUR BOBBERS. Scully eyeballs him as he fiddles with his tackle.

SCULLY

I had really hoped you'd lost that hat.

MULDER

What's wrong with the hat? It's a classic back from the bottom of the stack.

Mulder leans back and awkwardly casts his fishing line. Scully gives Mulder a judgmental look as she readjusts a pillow supporting her lower back before settling in place with her book.

SCULLY

You make it painfully obvious which of the two of us was raised by a Navy man.

Mulder shrugs off her mockery, looking over and inspecting the massive book in her hands.

MULDER

The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich?

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

That's not exactly the kind of summer beach read I would think to bring on vacation.

SCULLY

Well, considering the state of our country at the moment, I figured I should read ahead so I can check for spoilers.

MULDER

Talking smack about America while we vacation in Canada? Cold-blooded.

SCULLY

Like a true patriot. Besides, Mulder, you sold me on this vacation, promising me a respite from the world in a beautiful lakeside cabin but you failed to mention that the lake happens to be so remote that there is no internet or cellular service. Oh, and so remote you can only get here by seaplane!

MULDER

So, what's a girl in this situation to do but bone up on Hitler's atrocities? We could go for a hike, instead.

SCULLY

I offered that idea yesterday and you said we shouldn't because I'm five months pregnant!

MULDER

Well, today I'm up for it. How about a hike after dinner?

SCULLY

...I don't feel like it. I mean, I *am* five months pregnant. Dinner, however, I am very much for. You better catch something out here because unlike you I cannot survive off of canned beans and turkey jerky.

MULDER

I don't know how a person goes through college other than being fueled by jerky and caffeine. What was your method, *Dr. Scully*?

SCULLY

rolls eyes

You can be such a *boy*.

Something tugs at the end of Mulder's line. Mulder looks entirely too pleased with himself.

MULDER

I am *man*, hear me roar.

SCENE 3

Mulder and Scully are walking up the pier away from their boat toward their cabin. Mulder has one of her hands in his, and despite their bickering, they do seem to be enjoying their vacation together. That is, until we hear a hollow KNOCKING sound coming from the forest behind the cabin.

Mulder immediately tenses up, cocking his head to the side, listening intently. Another knock comes, moments later.

MULDER

Wood knocking!

Scully looks puzzled.

SCULLY

And?

Mulder drops everything in his hands and rushes away, beckoning for Scully to follow behind him. He repeats himself, his tone as if he's annoyed Scully doesn't understand the significance of the moment.

MULDER

Wood knocking! Come on, Scully, we're going Squatchin'!

Mulder runs off in the direction of the sounds, Scully following closely but begrudgingly behind him. The two rush into the woods, eventually slowing and coming to a stop, listening for another sound.

Distantly ahead comes a KNOCK! They carefully ease forward through the trees, and after a moment comes another KNOCK!

And then another, closer now. They continue moving until the knocks seemingly become less and less frequent.

Mulder raises a silencing hand, Scully stopping behind him. The forest has gone eerily quiet, no animals making any sound whatsoever. Time continues to pass but the knocks do not return.

Suddenly we hear the sound of rustling leaves and foliage being crushed underfoot, the footsteps moving toward them. Mulder reaches and unhooks his pistol from his belt, raising the weapon up near eye level. The crackling sound of the foliage continues to move toward them until, suddenly, it stops. Mulder's breaths grow heavy with anticipation. Moments pass, until, suddenly a FIGURE leaps out from behind a tree ten feet ahead of them...

...and turns out to be a man. The man leaps into sight, holding a large hunting knife and shouting. Mulder shouts back out of reflex, the two of them realizing that they didn't discover the Sasquatch they thought they would.

Once the two of them calm down from the surprise, the man speaks with a southern drawl.

MAN

Jeepers, man, I think my life flashed before my eyes. *Anglais* or *français* there, partner?

MULDER

We're American.

MAN

I'll do you one better, friend, I'm Texan. If I might say so, thanks for not shooting me.

SCULLY (sarcastically)

Thanks for not stabbing us.

MULDER

We came because we wanted to find whatever was making the wood knocking.

MAN

Well then, it's your lucky day, 'cause that was me. Caleb Reilly, nice to meet you both.

CALEB walks up to Mulder and shakes his hand, though Scully's general sour demeanor inspires him to give her a more distant tip of the hat. Below the hat is mostly camouflage clothing and heavy black boots.

SCULLY

Can someone please explain the
significance of the wood knocking?

Caleb attacks the subject before Mulder even gets a word out.

CALEB

Hunting for Sasquatch, of course.
You know, Bigfoot, Yowie, Alma,
Grassman; take your pick of
nomenclature. Some primates are
known to take a big branch and
knock it against a tree, wood on
wood. Makes a loud hollow sound
that echoes for a good half mile or
more. They do it to communicate. I
started knocking hoping for a
response. That's why I pulled the
knife, I thought you two mighta
been a big ass ape coming to knock
my lights out.

MULDER

You're a Sasquatch hunter?

CALEB

Yessir, dues paying member of the
North American Sasquatch
Association, or the other NASA, as
we like to call it.

Mulder smiles at his hillbilly kindred spirit.

MULDER

Tell me, Caleb, do you like jerky?

SCENE 4

EXT. CABIN PORCH - DUSK

Caleb and Mulder and Scully sit around a small round table on
the small patio of the cabin. Scully is eating the fish
Mulder has caught, now nicely cooked and dressed, along with
some beans. Mulder and Caleb are chomping away on some jerky.

SCULLY

Caleb, I have to say, you really
know how to cook a fish.

CALEB

Well, I appreciate that.
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

You don't go through as much wilderness training as I have to not know how to dress a fish.

Mulder puts his head down in slight emasculated shame.

MULDER

Yeah, and, uh, thanks for teaching me how to do it.

CALEB

No problem there, boy scout. I make the fish, you make damn fine jerky.

He tears off a comically large piece into his mouth.

SCULLY

So, Caleb, what makes you think there would be a creature like that in this area?

CALEB

Hell, this place is crawling with them. Snelgrove lake is famous for it, most of the handful of folk who have property around here take precautions against them.

He motions to a a plywood board with dozens of nails sticking out of it that is set up against a wall nearby.

CALEB (cont'd)

What you reckon that's for?

SCULLY

I assumed the owners left those in front of the entrances during the off season to deter bears from breaking in looking for food?

CALEB

Not just bears, Ms. Scully.

MULDER

But of all potential research sites why pick this one above all others?

CALEB

Why not all of them, is my thinking. I'm on the Canadian leg of my Bigfoot world tour, brother.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I been here for about a week, done my piece, set up some trail cams I hope will get some good photographs of one. Tomorrow I'm shipping out to a spot up in the mainland part of Nunavut territory.

MULDER

Have there been sightings in that region?

CALEB

Hell, you're more likely to spot a Squatch than a human being in that part of the country. Less than 40,000 people live there, spread out over more than 800,000 square miles.

SCULLY

So why go there, if not because of sightings?

CALEB

Well... when I called myself a Sasquatch *hunter*, I mean what I say when I use the word.

MULDER (incredulous)

You mean you want to kill one of them?

CALEB

When you're an adventurous boy whose father was a Texas oil man who struck pay-dirt, family vacation isn't trips to the Bahamas so much as it is hunting giraffe in South Africa. My dad took me to Nunavut when I was 14. It was a great trip; I had my first kiss with this Eskimo girl in town. Sorry, Inuit, to be proper. My dad was no teenage flirt; he was there because wanted to nab a polar bear. We were out there one day, snowing like hell, and we come across a caribou laying dead up against this tree. It had blood on its antlers, like it had gored something. But that *something* fought back. Snapped that poor bastard's neck so hard you could see the vertebrae sticking out.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Left footprints all around the body, too, five toes and all. Them prints were about as long as my forearm was at the time.

SCULLY

But why kill one?

CALEB (solemn)

I know it isn't exactly kosher to be a game hunter these days. Truth be told I regret killing just about every animal I ever hunted. But the mystery of what I saw that day? I need to look that one in the eye. And if need be, I'll gladly pull the trigger one last time if it means I can finally give him to the world and the science can be settled once and for all.

MULDER

But killing an endangered animal?

CALEB

Brother, that entire territory is about to be endangered. The climate is a-changin, and a park ranger I know near there says it's driving the wildlife's food supplies to disastrous levels. Making them desperate and aggressive. The townsfolk in the handful of towns that do exist up there have been having to walk their kids to school with rifles in hand on the account of bears.

MULDER

Sounds dangerous to go alone.

CALEB

If that's your way of volunteering, I've got space in the plane for another.

Caleb smiles winningly on Mulder. Scully looks disappointed.

SCENE 5

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

Scully and Mulder enter, Scully going and standing by the window, watching Caleb wander off back to his cabin in the dark. He howls as he enters the trees, no doubt trying to imitate a Bigfoot call. Mulder can tell she is upset with him.

MULDER

You're angry that I want to go?

SCULLY

On the contrary, I want you to go, if this is what it takes.

MULDER

Takes for what?

SCULLY

If this is what it takes for you to finally be done with this and move on. For you to grow up so we can finally start to grow old.

Mulder seems unsure of what to say.

SCULLY (cont'd)

Mulder, I once told you that I was done chasing monsters in the dark. That was ten years ago, and somehow you always keep pulling me back in. Well, I can't do that anymore. I'm too old, too tired, and I'm going to have a daughter whose needs come first. We are going to have a daughter whose needs come first.

MULDER

I don't know if I can quit when there's so much work left to be done.

SCULLY

Mulder, the work will *never* be done. You're one man with one lifetime. Trying to solve all the mysteries of the world is like trying to pour the ocean into a bucket.

She goes up to him and puts her hand on his arm. She looks him in the eye.

SCULLY (cont'd)

When I go on maternity leave, I'm not going back, Mulder. To the bureau. To all of this. I can't tell you what to do with your life, Mulder, but I know that if I *have* to I can get up out of bed each day and live mine with or without you.

Mulder contemplates her harsh but fair ultimatum for a moment. He smiles at his partner.

MULDER

Guess my time's up. I'll make sure to enjoy one my last good, old-fashioned X-Files.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

SCENE 6

INT. CALEB'S FLOATPLANE - MORNING

We OPEN on an exterior shot of Caleb's tiny, rickety FLOATPLANE as it soars through the air, harsh wind buffeting the plane from the outside.

Mulder had been sleeping, his head up against the window. He rouses due to the shaking of the plane, looking a little unsettled by the turbulence. Caleb eyes him from the pilot's seat.

CALEB

You don't get motion sick, do you, buddy? I'm all outta barfbags.

MULDER

No, I'm just not a big fan of this turbulence.

CALEB

First time at the top of the world?

MULDER

Alaska?

CALEB

Yeah, which part?

MULDER

Icy Cape.

Caleb nods, approvingly. Mulder looks out the window at the surrounding landscape. Snow is falling steadily, the entire horizon a blinding white. A stark difference from the temperate summer vacation Mulder had just been enjoying.

MULDER

I haven't seen anything green for probably 15 miles. This doesn't even seem like it should be possible, it's June!

CALEB

That's what climate change will do for ya. Not to mention, we are a stone's throw from the arctic. Like, the arctic arctic.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

You ever hear of "The Year Without a Summer"?

MULDER

Yeah... It was a climate event in the 1800's that caused the global temperature to drop precipitously. The evidence suggests it was primarily caused by volcanic eruptions in the Indies, I think?

CALEB

Spot on, very brainy. It caused food shortages all around the globe, wildlife starved in their own habitats. Climatologists and researchers up here are calling this the "winter without end".

MULDER

Sounds like something that would happen in Westeros, not Canada.

CALEB

Yep. The winters up here just seem to keep settling in later and later into the year and then dragging on longer and longer until all a sudden it's "summer" and the ground's still frozen.

MULDER

How do you plan on tracking it once we get there? The animal?

CALEB

Well, if you want to find an animal, you go where the food goes. It's my belief that Sasquatch is primarily herbivorous but will go omnivorous if they have to, which considering the length of the winter there is no real vegetation to support these animals. So I've been following tracking data my ranger friend has been sending me that shows the movements of similar animals over the past two months or so. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

The snow begins to clear, revealing the horizon more clear. A look of dread forms on Caleb's face.

CALEB

Well, goddamn it.

MULDER

What's wrong?

CALEB

Well, you see that lake about five miles off in the distance?

MULDER

No?

CALEB

Exactly. They must have had a freeze overnight, and snow on top of that. This is gonna get tricky.

MULDER

We can't make a safe landing if it's frozen?

CALEB (chuckling)

I can land anywhere once. Truth be told, the problem is landing if it *isn't* frozen solid. It makes the impact upon landing... interesting. You a praying man?

MULDER

Not even a little bit.

CALEB

In that case why don't we use our brains to prepare for the worst. Grab both our packs from the back, will you?

Mulder shuffles through the back, grabbing both backpacks.

CALEB

Alright, those are avalanche bags. If we break the surface of the ice and turn it into a slip n' slide, you pull the tabs at the top ASAP. It'll inflate the bags so they won't sink and we won't be completely SOL.

The plane comes upon the lake, an enormous expanse of flat snow with no trees or other topographical characteristics, several miles across and probably eight miles long.

CALEB

Alright there, boy scout, buckle in and brace yourself. I'm gonna bank around and try and land where the lake isn't so wide, that way if we get stranded out on ice we won't have far to make it to the shore. I'm not gonna have a lot of runway to brake so I'm gonna cut engines and hopefully glide down nice and smooth.

MULDER

Hey, you're the pilot.

Mulder grips his pack tightly to him, pushing his back against his seat. Caleb cuts the engines to the plane, the roar of engines giving way to deafening silence. Only the sound of the wind can be heard as the plane's nose slowly tips down further toward the lake.

The horizon comes up quickly to meet them. We CUT to an outside view of the plane's two pontoons as the lake's surface slowly but surely rises. The pontoons inch closer and closer to the surface...

CALEB

Hold on.

TOUCH DOWN. The plane drops down onto the surface of the lake, landing too hard and immediately we hear the sound of fracturing ice and rushing water. All the snow that had hidden the lake's surface is thrust into the air, making it impossible to see what is happening.

We CUT BACK to the pontoons, the impact and weight of the craft have driven them underneath the layer of ice with crystalline shards forcing up into the body of the plane. The ice separates the pontoon on the left side of the plane from the body, forcing the plane to fall onto its left wing and careen out control, slowly flipping the plane over onto its nose and flopping upside down onto its roof.

The plane comes to a slow, screeching halt, upside down and in several pieces. We CUT back to the interior, where Mulder is getting his bearings. He grabs his pack, as well as Caleb's. He heaves the passenger side door open, pulling the tab on each pack to inflate them and tossing them out onto the ice. Once the vital supplies are taken care of he turns his attention to Caleb, who is barely conscious. Mulder unhooks himself from his seat, easing himself down and turning right side up.

MULDER

Alright, we gotta get out of here.
Are you alright?

CALEB (weakly)

I told you I could land anything
once.

MULDER

Can you walk?

CALEB

I don't think so, but I don't have
any other plans, so let's see, eh?

Mulder unhooks Caleb from the pilot's seat, helping him get down. Caleb lets out several shouts of agony. Mulder reaches beneath his arms and starts to drag him out from the plane. As he is dragged from the dim light of the plane into the shine of the snow and sun we can see that Caleb's left leg is completely pulverized, his foot not facing the proper direction and blood everywhere.

Mulder drags him away from the massive gash the plane tore in the surface of the ice and onto a more solid section of the lake. The two men lay there a moment, breathing profusely, exhausted. After a moment of rest Mulder drags himself over to where he threw the packs of supplies, sliding them back over to where Caleb lays.

CALEB

I'm pretty sure I am going into
shock, friend.

MULDER

You'll be ok, I'll get you to the
shore and set your leg and we'll
think through our options.

CALEB

No, we won't. My leg is crushed. It
needs amputated, Mulder, not put in
a cast! I'm pretty sure I have a
popped lung, too.

MULDER

We'll make it, just stay calm.

Caleb gets indignant at Mulder's lack of understanding of the seriousness of the situation.

CALEB

Mulder, goddamn you, while I still got some sense in me you listen to what I'm saying! We aren't going anywhere, but you can make it, if you quit acting like a dummy and start thinking about surviving. You got two packs, what's in them?

MULDER

I have a one-man tent, some rope, a flare gun. I have a firestarter plus some matches, about two gallons of water and about three days worth of food.

CALEB

Six days, Mulder. There's three days worth of rations for two people. Six days for one. Alright, next, think safety. What do you have to defend yourself?

MULDER

Two pistols, 36 rounds total. One rifle, 32 rounds total. And a hunting knife.

CALEB

There's a map in my bag. This lake is marked on it, so is a cabin some rangers use for shelter during the off season. That cabin is the only human-built shelter I know of for at least seventy miles. You won't make the cabin by nightfall, so you need to go, now, and set camp. Take the extra fuel from the plane. Might be useful, since our return flight is cancelled.

Caleb is starting to look grey and hyperventilate now, his quick breaths making plumes of vapor in the air. Mulder looks solemnly at this dying man.

MULDER

Is there anything you want to say before I go?

CALEB

Last words? I hope you find him. The big guy. And Mulder, when you walk away... don't look back.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Death can't catch you if you just
don't look back.

Mulder nods, giving Caleb a last touch on the shoulder. He forces himself to his feet, grabbing both backpacks and gingerly walking across the ice toward the shore maybe forty feet away. Mulder hears Caleb start to shuffle around on the ice behind him but true to his word he doesn't look back. Caleb frees himself from his parka, dragging himself over to the water's edge, trailing a bit of blood. He reaches the water and pulls himself in, slowly submerging beneath the surface with his arms outstretched as though he's ready to embrace the end. He sinks slowly but surely, like a pale ghost in the dark water.

SCENE 7

EXT. CANADIAN WILDERNESS - DUSK

Mulder enters the tree line, hiking away from the lake and into the forest. He looks panicked, but trying to keep composure.

MULDER (V.O)

Already getting dark. Can't get
distracted by panic. Need to build
a fire. Need to make camp. Need to
stay alive.

He comes into a small but sizable enough clearing to make camp. He sets his packs down and gets to work.

MULDER (V.O)

Alright, let's flashback to what we
learned earning those merit badges.
Fire needs a source of ignition:
check. A fire can't be built on top
of plain snow, it either has to be
dug or built on top of a different
surface atop the snow. So let's dig
a fireplace.

Mulder picks up one of the avalanche packs, pulling a small collapsible spade from a side compartment. He starts digging near one of the largest trees in the clearing. He pauses, looking up to see that a hefty amount of snow is piling up on its branches.

MULDER (V.O)

Not here, idiot. You read "To Build
a Fire".

He moves more central to the clearing and digs his way down to the soil, making a fireplace a few feet in diameter.

MULDER

Now to select firewood... Most of these trees are all conifers. Thin branches, pine needles. Great for maple syrup, bad for firewood. Then again... only I can prevent forest fires.

We CUT to Mulder dragging a hefty, half rotten stump over and plops it down in the fireplace he has dug out. We CUT to him as he keeps coming back with more and more kindling for his fire until, after a montage of building, Mulder has built a hefty stack of firewood that comes up to his waist. He has built it to taper upwards so the fire will collapse in on itself, just like they teach you in the Boy Scouts.

MULDER (V.O)

It'd be in my best interest for this to burn high enough to act like a smoke signal, so how about a little extra fuel.

Mulder goes over to his supplies and grabs one of the extra fuel containers he salvaged from the plane and douses the wood with a drizzling of airplane fuel. He takes out a small pack of waterproof matches and strikes one, tossing it on the fire only for the fire to IGNITE in a giant WHOOSH of heat and sound, sending sparks into the sky.

Mulder yelps and falls onto his back, underestimating the size of the fireball. He sighs and speaks out loud:

MULDER

Not your typical summer bonfire.

We CUT to an indeterminate amount of time later, where the sun has gone down. Mulder has successfully set up camp, with a gigantic burning fire and tiny one man tent set up a few feet from it. He has bagged up all his food, tied it with a rope and slung it over a high tree branch so bears and other interested animals can't reach.

Mulder takes a swig of water from the water reservoir in his avalanche pack and then drags the remaining fuel can over toward the fire and sits on it like a stool. Dinner time. He pulls out a bag of his homemade jerky and digs in.

MULDER (V.O)

No matter how much you think you understand nature some parts of it never seem natural. No matter how much death you face it never stops kicking you in the teeth, reminding you that life isn't really sacred.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

We all have an expiration date.
Hell, I'm probably a few weeks past
my 'best-by' date but here I am,
still sitting for sale on the
shelf. For all its beauty, this can
be such a careless universe.

Some rustling off-screen; we CUT to a creeping POV behind
Mulder, slowly walking toward him. We CUT back to Mulder as
he begins to realize there's a presence behind him. He
cautiously lowers his hand and reaches for his pistol just as
a low growl emanates from behind him.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

SCENE 8

EXT. MULDER'S CAMP - NIGHT

Mulder turns slowly, remaining crouched so as to not threaten the source of the growling behind him.

He makes the full turn to reveal a WOLF behind him, growling its fiercest growl. At first Mulder remains frightened, slowly pulling his pistol around to aim toward the wolf. Then, he notices something: the wolf is extremely thin, nearly starved, its ribs visible underneath its fur. The animal is so small Mulder can't seem to decide if it is young or just that severely malnourished.

Mulder stands to his full height, attempting to appear strong and intimidating. The wolf growls a little louder though it takes a full step back from Mulder. Mulder takes his gun and places it slowly back in its holster. He takes a step backward and tosses a chunk of the jerky over to the wolf.

The wolf snatches the sliver of food up near instantly, rushing a few feet away toward the edge of the clearing to devour it. Mulder grabs another few hunks of jerky out from the bag, going back and sitting on his makeshift stool by the fire. Once the wolf has finished, it walks back to Mulder, timidly this time.

Mulder, either bravely or idiotically, hold the piece of meat out in his hand for the little wolf. As the wolf slowly approaches we can see that it is shivering. The wolf cautiously grabs the meat from Mulder, this time practically collapsing by the fire as it consumes its first solid food in who knows how long.

Mulder pours some water from the avalanche pack's reservoir into the lid of a thermos, sitting it down in front of the wolf. The wolf laps at the water for a moment before turning its attention back to the food. Mulder plops down near the wolf, not quite sitting with the animal, but definitely making contact.

MULDER

Lone wolf, huh?

He scoots in a bit closer, examining the poor condition the wolf is in a little more thoroughly.

MULDER

Are you just a kid fighting for scraps? Or did the rest of your pack just not like you?

The wolf looks up at Mulder a bit quizzically but, obviously, says nothing. It lays all the way down, resting its head in its large paws, soaking up the fire's warmth.

MULDER

That's alright. The rest of my wolf pack never like me much either. What do I call you, anyhow? Tim? Bernard?

chuckles

Wolfgang?

The wolf lets out an exasperated sigh that Mulder perceives to be judgement.

MULDER

Alright, Bernard it is.

SCENE 9

EXT. MULDER'S CAMP - MORNING

The next morning the massive fire is all but extinguished. Mulder sits next to his tent, looking over the map. The map is a bare-bones, mostly topographical map, featuring only major bodies of water, miles and elevation. Any of the items on the map were mostly hand-drawn by Caleb. The camera FOCUSES IN on a hand-drawn square marking the Ranger's cabin. There's a little note written beside it in Caleb's messy handwriting: *Radio message received, sighting confirmed, says absolutely must...*

The rest of the message is blurred out, the ink mostly washed away by a water stain.

MULDER (V.O)

So the ranger cabin has a radio. More than I've got. I only have a flare gun with three flares. Have to conserve them, so try the radio.

Mulder stands, the camera following him through a series of quick CUTS as he pack up his tent and supplies, ending on a shot of Mulder tucking his sheathed knife into the side of his boot. He slings his backpack over his shoulders, tucking the map into a pocket in his parka. He pulls out a compass, checking his direction, and begins to march.

He hears shuffling through the snow behind him. Mulder turns to see the wolf, Bernard, trailing a few steps behind him. The wolf looks up expectantly at him.

MULDER

Stay here. Or... go hunt. Be a wolf!

He walks off further, the padding footsteps following him still. Mulder turns around, flabbergasted by the desperate animal's loyalty.

MULDER

Alright, Bernard, you can come along too. Just so long as you promise you're not just trying to eat me.

Mulder turns and walks off, Bernard trotting along a few steps behind him.

SCENE 10

EXT. CANADIAN WILDERNESS - DAY

The CAMERA is peering through the SCOPE of Mulder's rifle in a POV shot, aiming at a caribou drinking from the edge of a creek.

We CUT back to Mulder, who is on his chest on top of a small ridge, aiming at his target intently. Bernard has crawled up beside him, hungry eyes looking at the distant prey.

MULDER

Alright, Bernard. Save some for the bait traps.

to the caribou

Sorry about this.

We CUT back to the POV shot just as he pulls the trigger, a rifle round piercing right through the caribou's neck, putting it down in an instant. Bernard goes running off. Mulder averts his eyes a minute, looking more than a touch guilty about the act.

Mulder stands and slides himself down the curve of the little ridge down to the snowy forest floor. He heads off toward the body, where Bernard is feasting for the first time in ages...

We JUMP CUT to Mulder preparing some bait. He is tying a chunk of bloodied meat in a cloth, tying it off with a long piece of fishing line he packed with his supplies. He aims at a branch high up, swinging the meat up and over the branch.

Mulder ties the line off down low and cuts off the extra so the meat just hangs there, the scent sure to draw interest from the wildlife.

MULDER

Alright, big guy... If you're out here, come and find me. Make this trip worth something.

Bernard comes up, full from his meal, some blood staining the fur around his jowls. The wolf seems jovial, Mulder seems a touch disturbed.

MULDER

You're not so cuddly looking with a lot of blood on you, Bernie. Come on, let's wash off and find some water.

SCENE 11

EXT. CANADIAN WILDERNESS - DAY

Mulder and the wolf are walking, down deeper into a valley toward where the creek the caribou had been drinking from grows a touch wider, flowing more freely and deeply. Bernard is well ahead of him, stopping and drinking from the creek, blood washing from his fur. Mulder begins to ease himself down a steep embankment that leads to the water when suddenly:

WHAM, something is thrown from off-screen, hitting Mulder in the head. This impact causes Mulder to lose his footing and slide the rest of the way down the embankment, rolling over himself in the snow, landing just shy of the shallow water.

Mulder lays there a moment, disoriented, in pain. The CAMERA is poised right in front of Mulder, at ground level. We hear Bernard growl outside of view. The camera slowly PULLS BACK as Mulder begins to push himself up to reveal a large, human-like footprint in the snow by the creek.

Mulder forgets his discomfort in an instant and snaps up, alert. The camera PANS around the surrounding trees, the attacker could be anywhere.

The camera then PANS around Mulder as he surveys his surroundings, looking as though he is just now understanding the gravity of the situation; searching for an unknown beast.

MULDER (V.O)

We're all hunters. Who among hunters is the prey?

SCENE 12

INT. RANGER'S CABIN - DAY

The camera is poised inside the tiny shack Caleb had noted as a cabin, looking out through the one tiny frosted window at Mulder approaching, Bernard by his side.

MULDER (V.O)

Over twenty miles from the lake to here. It's been two days since I left Caleb to die. Three days since I last saw Scully.

The camera PANS over from the window to the door, which has been ripped open from a locked state, bits of shattered wood and bent hinges abound along the frame.

MULDER (V.O)

So much I never accounted for. Always contemplating humanity's place in the universe, our significance to all creation. Even though I mocked Scully for that cross around her neck I never realize just how small we can be.

Mulder steps cautiously into the cabin, a small, one-room building. Whatever sense of organization it had been built with is lost now:

The one table in the room still stands, though in disarray. The one bed has been flipped up against the corner of the room. A bookshelf that once stood has been thrown to the floor, its contents all around. Mulder steps forward, reaching down and randomly picking up a copy of *The Old Man and the Sea*.

MULDER (V.O)

This place is in ruins. A coffin freezer sat outside, no power, just the natural cold keeping its provisions frozen. The lock was torn off and its contents removed. The door looks forced off its hinges. No heater, just a fireplace. There are solar panels on the roof to provide what little power this place needs, but even if those are undamaged they are covered in days worth of snow.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Just a gas generator outside for emergency power. But what about the radio?

He rushes over toward the table, searching beneath it. In the detritus he finds the receiver first, destroyed.

MULDER (V.O)

Receiver completely broken. So I won't be able to hear any messages back. Promising.

Mulder finds the shortwave radio itself, setting it on the table, along with a big leather logbook. Mulder flips through the logbook, looking at the different codes. Mulder hustles through setting the radio up before rushing outside to start up the power generator, but trips over something on his way to do it. Mulder stands back up, running his hands through the snow to find what he tripped over. He brushes away snow until the dust clears to reveal the CORPSE OF THE RANGER, battered and missing his jaw. Mulder shouts and scoots back, again looking around his surroundings, horrified.

SCENE 13

INT. RANGER'S CABIN - EVENING

Outside the one small window we see that the sun is starting to wane, a few brief hours before it will set. Bernard lays near the door, closed as well as it can be with just a single hinge barely attached. Mulder sits at the table by the window with the IPOD from the teaser, hooking the device up to an adaptable charger that runs on old-fashioned AA batteries (perfect for overcast days where your solar panels wouldn't power much). We hear the ranger speak:

RANGER (off screen)

The other rangers are making me use this as a video log. Don't see the point of a video log, don't much understand the point of charging something that don't use batteries with something that do use batteries, but at least it plays music...

Mulder skips this video, looking over all the video files on the phone, each one titled only with the date it was made. Mulder spots one made recently, plays it, the camera CUTS to show the video:

RANGER

Been going on four months now. Wildlife is getting restless, with the snow so unrelenting. Even some critters I... well I never thought I'd see. I started hearing things at night, shuffling around the freezer outside, came out one morning and it was in pieces. Figured they just wanted food like all the bear and wolf and coyote that been sniffing around my door. From what I can see there's three of 'em. One little, then a momma and a poppa. Two nights ago I woke up to them hollerin' and throwing stones all over the outside of the cabin. Last night one of 'em damn near took the door in before I blew a hole through 'em.

Mulder looks up to see that there is indeed a massive rifle shot in the door frame.

RANGER

I'm set to move on to the next outpost tomorrow. I'll radio them once I arrive, make sure these damn things don't try and follow me. Last radio contact I had was with a fella I knew used to work in the service with me, asking me all sorts of questions. Said he wanted to hunt up this way. I played along until this started. Last time he got me on the radio I told him what I'd seen and told him he must not come here. Truth be told, my hands are shaking some. Anyway, just gotta survive the night.

The video ends just as something MASSIVE suddenly interrupts the sunlight streaming harshly through the window. Mulder jumps and stands immediately, grabbing his pistol and looking out the window. Bernard stands near the door, hair on edge, growling. Nothing can be seen out among the trees in the direction of the setting sun but something is stalking them.

MULDER (V.O)

Can't stay here. Like waiting in a trap with nowhere to run. Have to leave. Radio first.

Mulder rushes to the cabin door, putting his eye against one of the holes left by the Ranger's rifle. He sees nothing. He kicks out through the door aggressive, pointing his pistol in the air, firing a round so that the sound echoes for miles. Mulder then calmly walks around to the generator, pulling the cord and starting it up. The one dim light bulb left in the cabin turns on, illuminating briefly through the window.

MULDER (V.O)

Irresponsible waste of a bullet. A
bullet could mean life or death
right now. Oh well.

Mulder fires twice more into the air before going back inside, searching for the correct radio frequencies in the big leather logbook. He spots a half-empty bottle of vodka up on a shelf, miraculously unharmed. Mulder grabs it and takes a drink before he sets his frequencies and speaks emphatically into the microphone as the camera CUTS to a HIGH-ANGLE view of the area. The shot PANS UP more and more to reveal the plains beyond a long curving section of forest.

SCENE 14

EXT. CAMP - NIGHT

We CUT to several ESTABLISHING SHOTS of the camp we saw at the start of the story. A fire burns away from a grouping of trees, with the tent more centered among the clearing. One of the avalanche packs sits near the tent, a rifle up against it. Bernard lays near the fire, seeming to sleep but with eyes wide open. The tent is zipped shut.

Suddenly, we hear WOOD KNOCKING, first from one direction, and then again from another direction. The knocks continue, a few after the other, before silencing close to the camp. A moment passes, no signs of life. Bernard grows more on edge, standing and slowly bearing his teeth.

We see the briefest glimpse of one of them at the edge of the camp, the wolf rushing off after it, howling. Immediately once the coast is clear another, MASSIVE SASQUATCH rushes from a different angle, tearing apart the tent only to reveal nothing inside.

We hear a brief WOOSH from offscreen as a Molotov cocktail Mulder has made from the empty vodka bottle and some of the remaining fuel smashes against the Sasquatch's shoulder, burning up much of its left side, wailing in fury and dropping and rolling in the snow before hobbling away toward the tree line.

Mulder drops down from a spot where he was perched up in one of the trees, lying in wait for an attack. He rushes over toward the rifle before he hears Bernard howl in pain. Mulder abandons the rifle and sprints as fast as can into the trees after his companion. He keeps running toward the sound of pain, the reflection of the moonlight off the snow the only source of light. Mulder keeps running blindly toward the sound before THWAP-

The second Sasquatch throws their arm out, striking Mulder in the chest and sending him careening into a tree. Mulder screams in pain but the Sasquatch turns its attention back on Bernard, picking what's left of the whimpering wolf up and slamming him against the ground before pummeling him with its fists.

Mulder hobbles over several feet to where his pistol has fallen, grabbing and shooting several rounds into the Sasquatch's back. This seems to do nothing but anger it, the Sasquatch turning around and charging Mulder in only a few massive bounds of its enormous legs, picking Mulder up by his neck and slamming him back into the tree.

Before the animal can hurt him more, Mulder reaches into his boot and pulls out his hunting knife, stabbing the lengthy blade directly into the animal's chest, causing it to squeal and drop Mulder.

Mulder falls to the forest floor, bloodied and battered. As he begins to lose consciousness, the camera CUTS to his POV. His eyes lose focus, watching the massive Sasquatch stumble away into the darkness.

He closes his eyes.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

SCENE 15

EXT. CANADIAN WILDERNESS - DAWN

Mulder starts awake, his weary eyes darting this way and that. He spots no danger around. He moves to sit up, shouting in pain. He tries to stand again, but falls back down. He takes a few deep breaths, as if willing himself to stand. He finally does, shakily. He unzips his parka and pulls it off, feeling his left side, where he was slammed against the tree. Mulder lifts his sweater up to reveal deep bruises already forming along his abdomen and down toward his thigh.

Finally lucid enough to ignore his own pain, Mulder spots the mass of blood and bone that used to be Bernard about twelve feet in front of him. Mulder stumbles over slowly, his eyes welling with tears. He stops and drops to his knees near the lone wolf, putting his hand out on his fur.

Mulder weeps.

He doesn't cry, he doesn't sob, he weeps. He sheds the tears of a man defeated; of someone who thought they knew just how harsh the world could be only to find he hasn't even begun to discover the depths of the world's cruelties. He weeps for the animal, the piece of meat; he weeps for the kindred spirit, the friend. All the glories and brutal confines of nature at large, all coming down on Mulder now, giving and taking away.

EXT. CAMP - MORNING

The camera CUTS to a single LONG-SHOT of Mulder, crouched by the shore of a creek, selecting rocks for Bernard's grave.

Mulder walks back into the camp, carrying the stones in one of the backpacks. The camera follows Mulder as he digs a little grave out from the snow using the spade before striking the solid earth beneath. Mulder goes over to where Bernard lays, picking the dead wolf back up and walking his body over to its final resting place, burying him in snow. We see Mulder placing the stones around the grave, delicately and ceremonially.

Mulder picks up two little sticks from the ground, fastening them into a cross with some fishing line.

He sticks the little cross at the head of the grave and crouches down near the grave, staring intently at it. We are right back where we began.

MULDER (V.O)
Drive him to the plains.

SCENE 16

EXT. FOREST - DAY

We JUMP CUT to an indeterminate time later, Mulder arriving back where he had shot and stabbed one of the creatures just hours before. The camera PANS along two TRACKS OF FOOTPRINTS. One track seems to be able to walk in reasonable strides, the other set almost seemed as if they are being dragged along.

Mulder takes out the iPod, speaking into it like a log, forgoing his monologues to himself. He keeps the logs vague as to who he is addressing but we can't help but feel that he wishes he could speak to Scully.

MULDER
I'm not sure at this point if it is scientific curiosity, my wide-eyed...

hesitates
...boyish nature, desperation or rage that makes me keep going. But at least one is direly injured, and I'm on their trail. Where we are now, the tracks would have to double back to escape back into the forest. I'm gonna catch up and force him right out onto the plains. Once we reach the plains, there is no turning back. Just whatever end may come.

He cuts the video and puts the iPod back in its pocket, moving forward. Mulder keeps the rifle in his hands, not slung over his shoulder. He won't risk being in any danger.

SCENE 17

EXT. THE PLAINS - DAY

Mulder has followed the footprints and occasional trail of blood, much to his shock, to the edge of the tree line where the vast plains begin. The snow is falling, and the wind blowing harshly, but still Mulder can see some of the footsteps.

Mulder follows behind them, often directly stepping into the divots their large legs have made in the snow.

MULDER (V.O)

They didn't try to escape, or evade. They went exactly where I wanted them to, without me having to provoke them at all. Perhaps it's me who is going exactly where they want me to? Maybe it's me who dies here.

The visibility slowly starts to worsen. Through the snow and howling wind up ahead, Mulder begins to hear yet another animal, moaning and wailing in pain. He picks up the pace, but ever so cautiously, rifle at the ready. He begins to see a mass up ahead, and the Sasquatch's footprints are starting to vary wildly, as if in a struggle of some kind.

Ten more feet ahead and Mulder has come upon a dead polar bear. The corpse of the bear is wretchedly thin, not unlike Bernard's. The sound of the pain and moaning comes not from the adult, but from a polar bear cub, spared, left pawing at its dead mother's chest, trying to get her to move. Mulder looks sadly at the terrified little bear.

MULDER (V.O)

The bear attacked, and they killed it. But they didn't kill the infant, or eat the adult. Why spare them if they are so desperate to survive?

Mulder looks heartbroken at the little one, knowing it isn't going to make it. He points his rifle at it.

MULDER (V.O)

Even after everything, I struggled to raise the rifle. I know it would be more cruel to walk away than just pull the trigger. But still, I hesitate...

Mulder puts the gun down, exhaling hard. In his focus, Mulder has not noticed a FIGURE has appeared to his right: the male Sasquatch, the one Mulder had burned. The Sasquatch makes no move toward Mulder, just breathing and looking him over.

Mulder grips the rifle and slowly turns to face the Sasquatch. The Sasquatch angles its head toward baby bear, motioning. Mulder looks to the bear, then back at the Sasquatch, confused. The Sasquatch again motions to the bear, and then to Mulder. Mulder gasps, finally understanding.

MULDER (V.O)

Almost like he was telling me it was right, not to let the little thing suffer. Like he was telling me maybe he had come back to finish the job; do the right thing.

The Sasquatch nods again.

We CUT away to a LONG SHOT of Mulder and the Sasquatch, the wind and snow partially obscuring our eyes and ears.

A rifle shot sounds throughout the Plains, echoing.

SCENE 18

EXT. THE PLAINS - DUSK

The sun is setting. The camera follows behind the Sasquatch, just a hulking figure cutting through snow and howling winds. Mulder follows behind him, rifle down.

MULDER (V.O)

It was as though he wanted me to follow him. As if after all this he has something to say.

As they walk, the topography begins to rise up, higher than the level of the arctic plains around them. Mulder stops, confused by the rise of elevation. He walks back to where the ground was level and pulls out his spade, digging down into the snow toward the topsoil. The Sasquatch only watches as he does this. Eventually Mulder hits something.

MULDER (V.O)

Solid ice, not soil. He was taking me to an island, of all things. The region has dozens of islands but this one was uncharted, unmapped, unknown; surrounded by grassy plains in the summers. Back before the winter with no end.

The two walk around the rim of the island to a place up against some protruding rock. The Sasquatch lifts a handmade cover from an entrance into a cave cut into the rocks, made out of wood and tied together by grass and weeds and other material.

Mulder moves to go inside the cave, but the Sasquatch grunts, moving its head away. Mulder steps away, the animal replacing the cover.

MULDER (V.O)

Not now? Later?

The pair of them walk up and into the trees of the island, moving through the forest. The forest grows thicker and thicker until eventually they enter a clearing. The snowstorm has mostly subsided, leaving the moonlight to illuminate the clearing in a pale blue light.

In the center of the clearing is a burial mound, similar to the one Mulder had buried for Bernard. Next to it is the body of the female Sasquatch, not yet covered in snow. The burial mound that is complete is much smaller; the grave of a juvenile.

MULDER (to the Sasquatch)

You were a family.

The Sasquatch grunts in response.

MULDER (V.O)

Of course they were a family.

The male motions to the body of the female. He walks over to the body, crouching down and piling some snow onto his mate. He looks up at Mulder to do the same.

Mulder approaches the other side of the body, kneeling down, helping the Sasquatch bury his family.

MULDER (V.O)

They buried their dead. Just like we do. That's why we never found a body. They intended to be left unfound, mysterious to the world at large. Some of nature's secrets should be kept.

Rather than stones, the Sasquatch outlines the grave in long, slender twigs it has gathered. It bows its head, almost as if it might be about to cry, before throwing its head up and letting out an otherworldly, mournful howl. The creature stops, looking to Mulder.

Mulder is unsure what to do. The Sasquatch nudges him in the shoulder, nodding at him, as if to repeat. Mulder rears his head back and lets out his best howl into the night. He mutters in pain at the end, breathing in so deeply having hurt his battered, bruised side.

Mulder holds a hand to his side in pain. The Sasquatch puts its hand on its burnt side, where some spots of the fur has burned down to the skin. The Sasquatch motions up and down as if to sympathize with Mulder's pain.

A moment passes, Mulder looking the animal in the eye:

MULDER

What do you want from me?

Mulder puts both of his hands out toward the ape, then pulls them inward at himself. In return, the Sasquatch puts its hands in toward its chest: I. He then puts his hands out toward Mulder: you. Finally, the Sasquatch approximates the firing of a rifle before pulling its hands back to its chest.

I want you to kill me.

Mulder shakes his head, vigorously.

MULDER

I can't.

The Sasquatch motions to its family, and then brings its hands back to its chest emphatically. It motions frantically at the rifle, whimpering, wanting relief.

Mulder puts his hands to his chest, puts them out toward the Sasquatch, and shakes his head, misty-eyed.

MULDER (V.O)

I couldn't.

Mulder holds up one hand as if to tell the Sasquatch to wait. Mulder reaches around, pulling out his pistol. He holds it up to show him. Mulder removes the clip, checking to make sure there isn't a round in the barrel. Mulder takes the safety off of the emptied weapon.

Mulder points it to the side, pulling the trigger twice to an empty CLICK CLICK. Mulder then points the gun to his head, illustrating, again pulling for a CLICK CLICK. Mulder returns the clip to the pistol, walking over next to the female's grave, where the male has already dug a grave for himself. Mulder sets the pistol on the barren ground before walking back to the Sasquatch.

Mulder places his hands toward the Sasquatch, motions to the pistol, and shakes his head no, tears in his eyes. The Sasquatch motions its hand to its side again, referencing its physical pain from the burns. He then puts his closed fists against his chest, showing Mulder he is in a deeper pain.

The Sasquatch leaves him and heads toward the grave. Mulder turns and walks away, again turning a blind eye to the specter of death.

SCENE 19

INT. CAVE - NIGHT

Mulder is sitting inside a cave, dimly illuminated by a small fire he has built for himself. He sips on some water, eating a piece of dried fruit.

The cave walls are elaborately decorated in pictorials, drawn, presumably, by the family of Sasquatch. We see pictorials of animals in fields, the sun crudely drawn in the corner of the image. Another pictorial shows what appears to be a dead animal, with little pinpricks of snow drawn falling.

He takes out the iPod, pointing the camera at the murals, then turning it around on himself.

MULDER

Scully... this is their home. The male's last act of kindness was to give me shelter in his home. I wish I could tell you all this has taught me a lesson about the fragility of life. But it hasn't, so much. It's taught me about the toughness of survival, of everyday life. We're all stuck on a rock spinning around over a thousand miles an hour each day, a boiling sun coming down, and yet somehow here it all is. On this strange rock, here I am, and here you are. I should have never left you at the lake, reading your Nazi literature. I should have just stayed, with you. I should have always just stuck by you...

Mulder wipes an errant tear from his cheek before resuming.

MULDER

In the morning I'm hiking back to the ranger's station and launching another SOS. I'll light a flare. I'll burn the whole damn forest down if it just means getting back to you, Scully.

SCENE 20

INT. ROYAL CANADIAN AIR FORCE SEARCH AND RESCUE HOSPITAL -
DAY

We CUT to a removed view of the iPod, the video playing, held in Scully's hands. She sits beside a hospital bed where an unconscious Mulder lies in recovery. We realize all of Mulder's voiceover was likely testimony from the videos, intended as a last testament to her if he didn't make it back. The video continues on the screen.

MULDER (V.O)

You may be able to survive without
me, Scully, but I can't survive
with you.

Unbeknownst to Scully, Mulder has awoken from his slumber.

MULDER

I buried him the next morning.

Scully smiles through held-back tears, getting up and going over to sit beside him. She kisses him on the forehead. The two just sit together a moment, sitting in silence and each other's arms.

SCULLY

I should have made you stay.

MULDER

No. I should have never gone,
Scully. I could have left you, and
our daughter, alone, to face all
this pain that's in the world.

Mulder enters a coughing fit, falling back into unconsciousness. Scully stands, her hand on his shoulder.

SCULLY

You should rest, Mulder.

MULDER

Promise me you'll get rid of that.

He nods toward the iPod. Scully looks somewhat taken aback.

SCULLY

But Mulder, this is proof, of an
unknown species, the location of
physical evidence, photographs!

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

It's validation for every X-File
you never solved. It's the truth.

Mulder smiles wistfully at her.

MULDER

I love you, Scully. *That's* the
truth.

Mulder nods back into sleep, Scully standing with the iPod,
conflicted by the value of the scientific discovery.

SCENE 21

EXT. HOSPITAL BALCONY - DAY

Scully walks out onto an isolated balcony of the Air Force
Hospital. She stands at the railing, the iPod in hand. The
facility sits on the edge of a lake, greenery all around, no
telling how many miles away from the plains and the winter
without end.

Scully opens up one of the videos on the iPod, not of Mulder,
but one the Ranger took. We CUT to a closeup of the video:

The Ranger is pointing out through the cabin window, out
toward the tree line. Like all Bigfoot videos, the quality is
terrible, shaking and blurred. But we hear the old man speak
as he films these amorphous three shapes coming in and out
the trees.

RANGER (narrating)

And if you look real closely there
you should be able to spot the
little one. I can't tell much about
his behavior from what bit I've
seen of the juvenile, but the
little guy does often seem
agitated. Probably starving, poor
thing. Just as well, I suppose.
Mummy and daddy are just doing the
best to protect their way of life.
Aren't we all?

Scully exits the video clip and, after a moment, tosses the
phone away from the balcony and into the lake. She turns,
stopping momentarily to think on her decision.

Scully looks back, at the lake and the vast mountain range
beyond, serene and beautiful. Scully turns, going back
inside. The camera PANS OUT to get a better look at the lake
and the mountains, capturing a moment of calm as we...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END