

THE X-FILES

12x12

"Person or Persons Unknown"

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TEASER

FADE IN

SCENE 1

OCEAN SHORES, WASHINGTON

6:17 P.M.

INT. SEALE HOME - EVENING

A young woman, DIANE SEALE, stands in front of her kitchen sink, washing the handful of remaining dishes from dinner just prior. She is maybe in her early to mid 30's, reddish-blond hair. We hear the gurgling sounds of a happy baby off-screen. Diane appears uneasy, making quick glances through the kitchen window.

We CUT to a view through the kitchen window, where Diane's oldest daughter CASIE swings slowly on a small swing set. There is something off about the girl as she just sits, in silence, slowly but rhythmically swinging.

SUDDENLY, Casie snaps her head up to catch her mom sneaking a peek at her through the kitchen window. Diane lowers her gaze immediately. We CUT back inside, where Diane is looking down into the sink, her hands gripping the counter, terrified. Slowly, she lifts her head back up to look out at Casie.

We CUT to Diane's POV, her daughter swinging distantly. Casie looks back up at her, but this time her face distorts, becoming grey-blue, her features broader and more muted. Not quite human, not quite alien.

Diane gasps and averts her eyes, turning around and going over to where her other child, still just an infant, lays in a bassinet. She picks up her baby, holding her close to her chest, her breathing heavy with anxiety.

We CUT to the household at bedtime. Diane looks at the infant in its crib, sleeping silently. She walks down the hall, nudging open the bedroom door where her husband, NATHANIEL, is already fast asleep, snoring.

Diane continues further down the hall to the last bedroom, Casie's room. Diane puts her hand on the doorknob of the closed room, taking a deep breathe before turning it and entering.

Casie is still wide awake, sitting in her pajamas, staring out the window at the night sky, observing the stars.

CASIE  
Our stars are strange.

Diane cautiously goes to sit beside her on the bed.

DIANE  
What do you mean, sweetheart?

CASIE  
I mean that they're strange. And  
the moon is so small.

Diane looks unsettled, watching her daughter closely. Casie's face morphs again, though quicker this time, almost like a glitch in a video game.

DIANE  
You should be asleep, sweetie. Come  
on, let's sing your lullaby  
together, that always helps.

Casie looks over at her mother, confused.

CASIE  
I don't... know it?

DIANE  
"Hush-a-Bye Baby?" It's your  
favorite. You sing it to your  
sister all the time.

Casie shakes her head. Diane looks determined.

DIANE  
Why don't we take a drive?

## SCENE 2

### EXT. FOREST - NIGHT

Diane is driving her minivan up a tight forest trail, deep into the woods. Casie sits beside her, still emotionless.

DIANE  
Do the woods scare you, now? Since  
you got lost?

CASIE  
No, it feels... nice.

Diane pulls the van into a small clearing in the woods. There are several large tree stumps jutting out of the ground, someone having taken the trees for lumber. Fog clings gently to the ground.

Diane gets out of the car, going over and opening the door for Casie, ushering her out. She walks the child over to one of the tree stumps, the only sound being their footsteps and crickets. Diane gestures for Casie to step up onto the tree stump.

DIANE

Ok, which lullabies do you remember?

CASIE

I like "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star".

DIANE

Ok, we're gonna play a game. Like hide and seek! Close your eyes. Now, sing "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star", and once you're done, you can open your eyes and come find me. Ok?

Casie nods, and begins to sing.

CASIE

*Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder what you are.  
Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sky...*

Diane rushes back to the car as Casie continues into the second stanza. She pops open the trunk of the van, quietly as she can, searching for something. She finds it: the tire iron. She slowly creeps back toward Casie.

We CUT to a shot facing Casie as she sings, her mother coming up behind her, the tire iron raised.

CASIE

*Then you show your little light,  
Twinkle, twinkle, all the night.*

Diane strikes, slamming the tire iron into Casie's head. Casie falls to the ground, where Diane hits her again, for good measure.

Diane turns her back, horrified by what she feels she had to do. She takes a step away before we hear the singing continue...

CASIE

*When the golden sun does rise,  
Fills with shining light the  
skies...*

She is continuing the song through gurgles of blood, barely able to breathe. Diane walks back over to her, disturbed. She finishes her song:

CASIE

*Then you fade away from sight  
Shine no more until the night.*

Casie lets out a child-like laugh as Diane raises the tire iron once more and slams it down as hard as she can. Then again, and again. Eventually she collapses in tears beside her daughter's corpse, finally and truly dead. She holds Casie's lifeless hand in hers and sobs.

We CUT to a shot of her from the tree line. We can just barely make out the silhouette of a hooded observer, watching her in despair.

FADE OUT

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN

## SCENE 3

## EXT. CEMETERY - MORNING

MULDER and SCULLY stand in the far distance as a funeral is performed. We see Nathaniel in tears as Casie's casket is lowered into the ground. An older woman, presumably the grandmother, sits holding the baby sister.

We CUT to Mulder and Scully just as Scully turns away from the funeral, unsettled.

SCULLY

Of course *this* would be my last assignment.

MULDER

Our last assignment, Scully. At least on the X-Files.

SCULLY

You're not thinking of reassigning to another department?

MULDER

Maybe. I still got a little fuel in the tank, career-wise. I always thought I could have a career in Human Resources. I could reassign to HR and me and the other girls in the steno pool could just dish and dish, all day long.

Scully rolls her eyes dramatically.

SCULLY

FBI brass would probably jump for joy if you asked to be assigned away from the X-Files.

MULDER

Not as much as if I just retired. Or died.

A YOUNG MAN breaks away from the funeral and approaches, dressed in a police uniform.

The man is, at best, in his mid-20's, clean shaven and looks rather unhappy to see Mulder and Scully. Mulder's eyes widen as he has a realization.

MULDER

Scully... this is the last uncooperative sheriff we're ever gonna deal with!

He holds out a closed fist for a fist bump, which Scully rightfully ignores. The young man stops a few feet from them.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

You're the feds I was told about, then? I'm Sheriff Wiseborn.

SCULLY

You're pretty young to be head of police?

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Yeah, well, full disclosure I'm still pretty new at this. Just got elected a few months ago.

MULDER

I was reading that no sheriff in Ocean Shores has lasted more than a single term in almost thirty years?

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Yeah, well, there's been a lot of keepers of the peace around here. Listen, I'm not trying to seem rude here, but a lot of my boys on the force aren't exactly happy to see you guys around here.

SCULLY

And why is that?

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Well, the Pacific Northwest ain't all hippies and left wingers. These are turbulent times, and a lot of my officers have been speculating you all might be Deep State.

Scully rolls her eyes again, more dramatically.

SCULLY

Sheriff, I can assure you the FBI is in no way affiliated with any sort of "deep state" operation.

MULDER

We're just trying to understand what's happening in your town. I have had reports of everything from Bigfoot sightings to UFOs in the skies come across my desk. Most important of all, I want to find out why a mother would harm her child like this.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

You two wanting to interrogate the mother, I assume? Well, I'm not much for it, but I could use your help. What she's been saying so far has been... unusual. You can follow me to the station.

The three of them walk off toward the road that runs through the cemetery, a line of cars parked along it. Scully walks with purpose, a step ahead of the two men. The sheriff leans in to ask Mulder a question.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

So I get you two are on the straight and narrow, but is there a... you know, "deep state" government?

Mulder glances over at him, deadly serious.

MULDER

Brother, you have no idea.

Wiseborn laughs, thinking it's a joke. Mulder continues to look deadly serious. Wiseborn cuts his laughing short with a nervous gulp of air.

SCENE 4

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Mulder and Scully stand in the office of the police station. Mulder draws a cup of water from a water cooler in the corner. He looks around the office, noticing that several of the other officers are eyeing them nervously. Scully nudges him, pointing to a TV hanging in the corner. "Truth Squad with Tad O'Malley" is playing.

SCULLY

No wonder these people think we're deep state.

MULDER

Yeah... It's equal parts admirable and pathetic, being so devoted to the idea of an alternate truth that you lose touch with reality.

Scully turns her head to give Mulder a supremely incredulous look.

SCULLY

How in the hell have we been partners for 25 years and you just now come to that realization?

Mulder shrugs.

MULDER

Hey, you can lead a horse to water...

Wisborn opens the door of one of the interrogation rooms, ushering Mulder and Scully in. Diane Seale sits inside, handcuffed to a chair, a distant look of mourning and exhaustion on her face.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Mrs. Seale, this is Agent Mulder and Agent Scully from the FBI. They're gonna ask you a few questions.

Mulder and Scully sit down across from her. Scully eyes her, critically and skeptically.

MULDER

So, your daughter, Casie, was six years old. You, by all accounts, were a loving mother and married working professional. So walk it back for me. Tell me when you started to feel... differently, about your daughter.

Diane speaks readily but wearily. She seems to have accepted her fate, though she still seems uneasy.

DIANE

It was the goddamned woods. It's always those woods.

SCULLY

Casie got lost in the woods?

DIANE

The woods took her for two days. The woods on the outskirts of town draw people in, somehow. Been happening my whole life, someone gets curious about the forest, they go wandering in, exploring. The ones that come back don't come back the same.

MULDER

So you're saying your daughter came back... different? Different how?

DIANE

At first it was just little things. She was acting funny, forgetting things. Her first dinner back at home she'd forgotten how to use her fork. She couldn't think of the name of her favorite doll. I just thought she was tired, or whatever. But then she just started... behaving strange. One day we were walking down the street, going to dinner. My husband was pushing our baby girl Jodie in the stroller, and I was holding Casie's hand as we walked. A stray dog came running up toward the stroller, howling. Rabid probably. Nathaniel gave it a good kick in the ribs and it ran off, but it scared the baby, and she started crying. Casie... well, Casie just started laughing at her. Not scared at all, just laughing hysterically.

SCULLY

And when did you start to have homicidal ideation toward Casie?

DIANE

...when I started seeing her true face.

MULDER

Her "true" face?

DIANE

\*nods\*

Sometimes you'd be looking at her and her face would just... *change*, into another face.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Her eyes were broader, her skin grey, her nose smaller. Not human-like. That's when I knew I had to kill her.

Scully shifts uncomfortably in her seat, distressed. Mulder notices this.

MULDER

Mrs. Seale, your file says you're a painter, is that correct?

Diane nods dejectedly. Mulder takes out a pen and a piece of paper, pushing the supplies across the table to her.

MULDER

Could you draw the face you were seeing, as reference for us?

Diane stares at the pen a minute, as if she doesn't want to do it, but eventually she picks it up and slowly starts to draw.

CUT TO:

Mulder and Scully enter the adjacent room, a one-way mirror looking in on the interrogation room where Diane continues her drawing. Sheriff Wiseborn remains in the room with Diane, monitoring her. Mulder closes the door behind him and looks at Scully with gentle concern.

MULDER

Were you ok in there?

SCULLY

I'm fine. Heard worse things.

Scully shrugs off his concern and Mulder clearly knows that her own impending motherhood is clashing with the details of the case. He tables the discussion for another time.

MULDER

So what's your take on the case?

SCULLY

Well, it's obvious, Mulder. I mean, she just had her second daughter less than two months ago; she clearly is suffering from postpartum psychosis.

MULDER

But with postpartum psychosis, why would she target the older child rather than the infant that was just born?

SCULLY

It doesn't have to make logical sense, Mulder, it's psychosis. Her grasp on reality right now is clearly tenuous at best. Severe postpartum psychosis, left untreated, can easily develop into the kinds of delusions and anxieties she was talking about.

Unbeknownst to them, Diane has finished her drawing. Sheriff Wiseborn takes it from her and walks up to the mirror, slapping the likeness against it. The drawing is a spot on rendering of what Diane was seeing, part-human, part-alien.

MULDER

Huh. Correct me if I'm wrong, but that looks kind of like a...

SCULLY

Mulder, don't say it.

Mulder smiles slightly, amused Scully doesn't want him to use the "A" word.

MULDER

Well, let's just say there's something in those woods, and starting tomorrow, I plan to find out what.

## SCENE 5

### INT. PRISON CELL BLOCK - DAY

A SHRILL ALARM sounds as doors to the cell block are buzzed open by the SECURITY DESK ATTENDANT. Diane is escorted through by an OFFICER to the desk. When they stop, Diane looks at the officer's face, trying to be low key and unseen. Sure enough, her paranoia proves correct as the officer's face GLITCHES and MERGES into a face similar to that she had been seeing in her daughter. The officer's face returns to normal as he notices she's looking at him.

OFFICER

Eyes on the floor, lady.

SECURITY ATTENDANT

So where's that dimwit Wiseborn  
want us to keep Casey Anthony here?

OFFICER

Isolation, end of hall, no yard  
privileges.

SECURITY ATTENDANT

That's ritzy treatment for a kid  
killer. Alright, the iso-cell is  
open, go ahead and get her in, I'll  
start the paperwork.

The officer nudges Diane to get moving, walking her down  
toward the end of the dimly lit cell block. The CAMERA  
FOCUSES IN on her handcuffed hands. She is cuffed from the  
front, her hands shaking in fear.

They finally reach the isolation cell near the end of the  
hallway, far away from the security desk. The officer half-  
halfheartedly pushes her up against the wall.

OFFICER

Back against the wall, eyes down,  
bitch.

The officer opens the cell door, keeping an eye on her as he  
does it. He then approaches her again, unclipping his keys  
from his belt, bending down ever so slightly to take her  
handcuffs off...

SHE STRIKES. She throws the chain of the cuffs over his neck  
and rushes around him, pulling the chain tight around the  
officer's neck in a second flat. The officer struggles but  
she is committed, the two falling to the floor as the officer  
starts to choke and twitch

We CUT to a shot of the security attendant desk, where the  
attendant is hunched over the desk, stamping some paperwork.  
The camera PANS OVER his shoulder and onto the screen  
depicting the security cameras. We see that the officer is  
dead, lifeless on the ground. Diane has unsheathed the  
officer's service pistol from its holster, holding it up  
against her temple and pulling the trigger. The security  
attendant leaps from the desk and rushes down the hall toward  
the gunshot as we...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN

## SCENE 6

INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

Scully leans over as best as her pregnant self can, inspecting both the body of Diane and the officer she killed. Mulder and Sheriff Wiseborn stand behind her, watching her work.

SCULLY

Well, there's nothing outwardly interesting with Diane's body. Clean, self-inflicted gunshot wound to the head.

Scully shuffles over to inspect the corpse of the officer, losing her balance and nearly slipping, her hand jutting out reflexively to right herself, landing on the officer's chest. Once she regains her balance, she stares quizzically at the officer's chest. She feels the chest with her hand.

SCULLY

This is odd.

MULDER

What's wrong?

Scully loosens the officer's uniform shirt and runs her fingers down the chest toward his stomach.

SCULLY

Well, this is where the ribs should be...

Sheriff Wiseborn claps his hands on his own ribs, idiotically, as if participating by answering the teacher's question. Scully brings her hand back up toward the officer's chest.

SCULLY (cont'd)

...but this is where his ribs seem to be. And here seems to be his chest plate.

She knocks gently on the area above the stomach where his ribs should be, producing a hollow thud; solid bone.

SCULLY

I need to autopsy this body.

MULDER

We should autopsy all three, if we can; Diane, Casie, and the officer.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Hold on there, you two. Now, I can swing the autopsy on Officer Simmons' body. I know the family, so I should be able to get next of kin's consent. Even if not, here in the state of Washington the coroner has the legal right to demand an autopsy without it. But as for the Seale girls, I'm not gonna go ask a grieving father and husband for his permission to cut open his loved ones. I just won't. You wanna autopsy them, you can ask yourselves.

Scully stands, removing her rubber gloves.

SCULLY

Then that's what we'll have to do.

SCENE 7

INT. SEALE HOME - MORNING

Mulder and Scully are sitting on the couch when NATHANIEL walks into the frame, holding a hot cup of coffee for Mulder and tea for Scully.

NATHANIEL

Alright, a cup of coffee for the gentleman, and a tea for the lady. Diane always drank tea when she was pregnant. Less caffeine.

Nathaniel plops himself down in a chair near the couch, his eyes red from tears and exhaustion. He lets out a long sigh, trying to direct his attention to the agents.

MULDER

Thank you for the drinks.

NATHANIEL

Of course, I insist.

SCULLY

Do you have someone here to help you with your daughter?

NATHANIEL

Yeah, my mom. Jodie's grandma. She's been here ever since it... it, uh... happened.

MULDER

That's good. How're you holding up?

Nathaniel becomes quickly agitated, almost shouting.

NATHANIEL

Alright, look. It's been... one-hundred and some odd hours since my wife beat my girl to death. And it's been 12 hours since my wife killed a cop and then herself. And, I got my newborn baby girl I have to pull myself together for, so, I'm not really in for the supportive "I can't imagine how you feel" chit chat. So just say your piece and leave me be.

SCULLY

I do know how you feel. Not even six months ago, a very evil man shot my son right between the eyes, right in front of me.

NATHANIEL

...I'm sorry. Are you going to tell me "it gets better"?

SCULLY

No. The only solace for someone in our position is that we're not alone. Hopefully that's enough.

She gives Mulder the briefest glance, almost imperceptible. Nathaniel softens some.

NATHANIEL

Just... tell me what you guys need from me.

MULDER

We would like your permission to perform an autopsy on your wife's body, and... also on Casie.

Nathaniel stiffens.

NATHANIEL

You do what you want to *her*, but  
you leave my Casie in the ground.  
Please don't touch my little girl.  
Now... please leave.

Nathaniel's head falls into his hands, tears coming again. Scully and Mulder get up to leave through the front door, Mulder pausing momentarily in the doorway. He looks to Nathaniel, sympathetically.

MULDER

A good friend of mine once told me  
that it isn't enough to just mourn  
what's gone, but that you have to  
hold on to what's left. I know that  
doesn't mean anything to you right  
now, but... maybe in time.

Mulder exits, the CAMERA PANS over to Nathaniel into a CLOSE-UP. His face MORPHS and GLITCHES, revealing the inhuman nature behind his human exterior.

Outside, Mulder and Scully approach their car.

MULDER

I'm gonna drop you off at the  
morgue so you can get started on  
the autopsies. Call me with  
whatever you find.

SCULLY

And what are you gonna do?

MULDER

I'm going to go down to Ocean  
Shores city hall. I want to see  
some of their records and figure  
just how weird this town has gotten  
in the past.

SCENE 8

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Scully stands at the wash sink, thoroughly washing her hands before the autopsy. She catches her eye in the mirror, looking intently at her face. She tilts her head one way, then another, almost as if she expects a different face to appear.

Sheriff Wiseborn bursts in, snapping Scully out of her contemplation.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Considering the sensitive nature of this case, I'm going to be observing, if you don't mind.

SCULLY

Fine by me. Just stay quiet, and I hope you have a strong stomach.

She straps a surgical mask on and approaches Diane's body, prepared for her on the surgical table.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Why start with her?

SCULLY

I'm not sure I want to see what's inside the deputy's body yet, Sheriff.

She picks up a scalpel and prepares to begin.

SCENE 9

INT. CITY HALL RECORDS DEPARTMENT - DAY

Mulder approaches an older, white-haired woman, sitting behind the record requests desk. She looks up to meet his eye as he pulls out his badge.

MULDER

Agent Mulder, FBI. I'd like to take a look through some city records, if you don't mind.

RECORD KEEPER

Well, I'm the keeper of our records, so I can certainly help you.

CUT TO:

The Record Keeper pushes open the door of a musty record room, full of shelves of boxes and a few old computers.

RECORD KEEPER

Looking for anything particular?

MULDER

Old newspapers and clippings, court reports?

RECORD KEEPER

Most of the physical copies of the court documents are filed on the left over there, and any newspapers we have still would be filed along the back wall. I must say, we haven't had a proper newspaper in nearly 15 years in this town, so most of the city's newspaper information is still saved on microfilm.

MULDER

Old school. Alright. No town paper, huh? You guys don't like your news?

RECORD KEEPER

I guess our town doesn't churn out many aspiring journalists, unfortunately.

We follow Mulder along through a brief montage of investigation, the CAMERA poised near the door, framing the entire room. We see Mulder going from box to box, paper to paper, almost like time lapse photography.

We settle in on him at the dusty and old microfilm viewer, scrolling through on newspaper headlines, like an old-fashioned detective story.

He stops on one particular paper's front page: The Ocean Shores Weekly Report. The date is for March 17th, 1963. The headline reads: **TEACHERS TO BLAME FOR ELEMENTARY ASSAULTS?**

Mulder pauses, reading the story. He then picks up a folder, searching for a separate item he remembers seeing. The desk is covered in old newspapers and folders of court reports.

Mulder's phone rings, vibrating on the desk. Scully calling. He answers, cutting back and forth between their two locations as they speak:

SCULLY

I completed the Seale autopsy, and I'm about to autopsy Officer Simmons now. Did you find anything interesting in your deep dive at city hall?

MULDER

Something, yeah. I've dredged up a couple dozen newspapers and court documents and found a pretty troubling trend, starting about fifty years ago.

SCULLY

What kind of trend?

MULDER

Well, starting in the mid-60's, there was a dramatic uptick in sexual assaults, especially sexual assaults against children. But get this, Scully. Most of the newspaper reports obviously blamed the teachers or parents, but going over the court documents, not one trial ended with one of the accused being sentenced. And in multiple court documents, the accused even testified that the children were assaulting *each other*. The trend doesn't seem to break, either. I bet if we go over current police reports right now we'll find that Ocean Shores still has an unusually high number of cases of underage sexual assault.

SCULLY

What would cause this sort of trend, though, Mulder, especially in barely-pubescent children?

MULDER

Your guess is as good as mine, Doc. You find anything on the autopsy?

SCULLY

Not on the autopsy, no. But I did find something interesting while going over Diane Seale's medical records. Put simply, Diane Seale should have been completely infertile, Mulder. Turns out she had a prior marriage in her early 20's. They tried to conceive but to no avail. She had every fertility test in the book done.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Blood tests, pelvic exams, transvaginal ultrasounds, a hypersterosalpinogram, fertility treatments... I mean, you name it, Mulder.

MULDER

Do her records show any similar tests being done around the time she would have married Nathaniel?

SCULLY

Not a one.

MULDER

The man must have some swimmers, then. Have Sheriff Wiseborn meet me where they found Casie, after she was lost. I think it's about time we look into these woods, Scully.

Scully hangs up the phone.

SCENE 10

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Scully stands over Officer Simmons' body, instruments in hand. She speaks into a hanging microphone.

SCULLY

About to make the Y incision...

Scully begins cutting down the corpse's abdomen. Already Scully's movement seems troubled, unsure.

SCULLY

Alright, something is definitely off here.

Moments later, the body's flesh is pulled away, exposing the ribcage and chest bone are, indeed, basically reversed.

SCULLY

The ribcage and the chest plate of the body seem to be inverted, in each other's rightful places. I'm going to try and remove the ribcage and chest plate together, as one entire piece, to preserve it for further study.

Scully makes further incisions along the sides of the body, further opening the corpse up. She cuts away at sinews and connective tissues before pulling the entire piece of bone away and from the body, setting it on an examination table. She returns her attention to the open body, examining the different organs. Even through her surgical mask we can see her jaw drop.

SCULLY

Oh my god...

SCENE 11

EXT. FOREST - DAY

Mulder and Wiseborn are preparing for their search in the woods, checking their weapons and packing some basic supplies into a backpack.

Mulder catches his reflection in the car window, staring at himself for a moment, not unlike Scully. He pulls at his face with his fingers, contorting his expression. Wiseborn tosses Mulder an orange vest, snapping Mulder out of his fixation.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Best put that on, Mulder. We don't have many hunters in these woods, but best to remain visible.

Wiseborn goes back to his prep when Mulder's phone rings, and he answers, greeting Scully.

SCULLY

Mulder, I was right. Not only were his ribs and his chest plate inverted, but his organs are... different.

MULDER

Different how?

SCULLY

He has a strikingly similar anatomy to an ordinary person, but it's *different*. His lung, specifically.

MULDER

He'd lost a lung?

SCULLY

No, Mulder, that's the thing: it looks like he was born with just one, larger, singular lung. It's almost... evolutionary.

MULDER

What do you mean, evolutionary?

SCULLY

So, our chest plate is especially thick, to protect our heart, our most essential organ. We developed two lungs rather than one to make space in the chest cavity for the heart. Then the ribs protect our lungs and less vital organs. His chest plate is larger than ours, protecting his heart *and* lung, which were placed closer together, and his ribcage was shorter, protecting fewer organs. It's like he's a different kind of human.

MULDER

Like a missing link?

SCULLY

Like a *separate* link, Mulder. As if he belonged to a species similar to ours that developed in an almost identical way through some impossibly extreme form of convergent evolution.

MULDER

Keep working with the body, write down your observations. I'm going to investigate the woods with Wiseborn. I'll call you soon.

SCULLY

Be careful, Mulder. I'm not sure what is happening in those woods.

He hangs up the phone, looking over at the sheriff, who looks more than a little spooked.

MULDER

Why am I getting major *Pet Sematary* vibes from these woods, Sheriff?

Mulder motions for the sheriff to follow, and enters the forest.

Wiseborn hesitates, watching Mulder disappear into the trees. A large gust of wind comes along behind him, blowing leaves in his direction, just ominous enough to scare the poor paranoid cop into the woods after Mulder.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN

SCENE 12

EXT. WOODS - DUSK

Mulder stands in a small clearing, getting his bearings. Wiseborn comes up behind him, still clearly frightened.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

So do you have any idea where we're going?

Mulder nods, pulling out a compass from a pocket on the supply backpack. Mulder flips it open, mumbling to himself.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

What's the matter, compass broken?

MULDER

On the contrary, I think it's working just as it should.

Mulder steps further into the clearing, a bit of slightly overcast sky visible through the trees.

MULDER

Alright, pop quiz: the sun sets in which direction?

Wiseborn shrugs his shoulders, Mulder rolling his eyes. Mulder points dramatically in the direction of the slowly setting sun, its rays streaming through the trees.

MULDER

West. Which should mean that's east, that's south, and this should be north.

He points in the northerly direction before pulling Wiseborn over to him to look at the compass.

MULDER

The compass is pointing to a different north.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

So it is broken?

Mulder lets out a sigh.

MULDER

Or something is distorting the magnetic field nearby, and I'm guessing it's in that direction.

SCENE 13

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

The two men continue their trek, Mulder still following his compass, Wiseborn following Mulder. Wiseborn stares up at the sky, where the stars seem immensely bright, no clouds anywhere. Wiseborn looks down at his watch, catching the time.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Sky sure is clear tonight. They said it was supposed to storm by 9 but here we are at 9:30 and I haven't seen stars that bright in a long time.

Something small and globular floats in from out of frame, running into Wiseborn's face and running down his cheek like tears. Wiseborn panics.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

What the hell!? *Is it drizzling or something?*

MULDER

You just said yourself, the skies are clear.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Yeah, but something wet just hit me, like a rain droplet or something.

Wiseborn wipes the wet from his cheek and neck, fretting. Mulder squints his eyes off in the distance, everything dark and lit only by moonlight. He takes out his flashlight.

MULDER

What the hell...

He turns the flashlight on, and keeps moving, slowly, through the woods. We start to see little translucent blobs of fluid floating around in the air, more and more appearing as they walk.

Eventually they come to a break in the trees where these thousands upon thousands of floating droplets rise higher into the sky. Mulder and Wiseborn walk further into this field of droplets, down a gently sloping embankment away from the tree line. The two of them are walking through the field of droplets, the droplets striking their clothes and splattering against them.

The two men stop, looking up with their flashlights, the hot orange light from the bulbs refracting through the droplet field. Mulder pokes a droplet with his fingertip, delighting as it cascades apart, but behind him, Wiseborn looks unsettled, his mind chewing on something.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Mulder, I know where we are...

MULDER

Where?

SHERIFF WISEBORN

That compass of yours says north but we're actually heading northeast, right?

MULDER

Should be, yeah.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Mulder... we're standing in the middle of the Skagit River...

Before Mulder can respond, we hear the deep rumble of otherworldly thunder, followed quickly by a brilliant streak of white-blue lightning. The lightning doesn't strike like a normal lightning bolt, rather, it rather seems to snake down from the sky in rigged angles, sort of like a crack in a pane of glass. The bolt doesn't dissolve, it just stands there, lighting the water in blinding light.

We hear more rumbling, and MORE lightning cracks the sky, and MORE lightning. The light becomes so blinding we can't see anything on the entire screen.

The light dissipates, Mulder lowering his arm from shielding his eyes against it, looking around. Wiseborn is nowhere to be seen. Mulder looks, frantically, calling his name. Mulder's panic over the sheriff's disappearance quickly vanishes as he looks down at his feet:

A current of water is running up to his ankles, slowly rising in the riverbed.

Mulder bolts as fast he can northward, fighting the current. The water droplets slowly stretch into oblong shapes as they fall from the sky like crawling rain, the river rapidly refilling and rising. Mulder rushes toward the shore and the trees but the water is too strong, overtaking him and pushing him under.

SCENE 14

EXT. FOREST EDGE - NIGHT

Sheriff Wiseborn SNAPS to awareness, sitting the front seat of his truck, parked back where he and Mulder first left. He is immensely startled. He pats his body as if to make sure he is still real, catching his eye in the rear-view, examining himself.

Wiseborn catches the readout on the truck's digital clock, stunned for a brief second before:

Scully knocks on the truck window, startling him even worse before realizing who it is. He bursts out of the truck, grabbing Scully by the shoulders.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Agent Scully, is that clock right?

SCULLY

What!?

SHERIFF WISEBORN

*The clock!* Is it right? What time is it?

Sheriff Wiseborn digs anxiously into his pocket, pulling out his smartphone, almost dropping it in shock.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

10:02! The truck clock, 10:02! *Good lord, Siri, tell me what time it is!*

Siri responds in her automated voice: 10:02.

SCULLY

*What is wrong with you?*

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Agent Scully, I was *just* with Agent Mulder, not even five minutes ago, and it was 9:30.

A look of fright dawns on Scully's face.

SCULLY

Oh my god, you lost time... Where  
is Agent Mulder?

SCENE 15

EXT. CLEARING - NIGHT

Mulder AWAKENS, lying on the ground, perfectly dry. He sits up, slowly, looking around him. He is in another clearing, although this one man-made: tree stumps abound, fog clinging to the ground.

When Mulder sits up fully, he sees a hooded figure sitting on a tree stump, near the end of the clearing. The figure sits, silently, its face hidden, little more than a silhouette.

MULDER

Did you save me from the river?

THE FIGURE

I pulled you from the water, yes.

The hooded figure speaks in an odd way, almost lyrical, but with a deep timbre nonetheless.

MULDER

And who are you?

THE KEEPER OF THE WOODS

I am the keeper of the woods, and  
its secrets.

MULDER

And what secrets are you keeping,  
exactly?

Mulder stands, slowly, approaching the figure with a few cautious steps, his hands raised slightly, defensively. The figure takes no notice of his slow approach.

THE KEEPER OF THE WOODS

I guard a bridge. The bridge is why  
you've experienced these moments  
of... unreality.

MULDER

What kind of bridge?

THE KEEPER OF THE WOODS

The bridge between infinity to the  
left, and infinity to the right.

MULDER

Infinity... you mean, a bridge of time?

THE KEEPER OF THE WOODS

A bridge of... place.

MULDER

A bridge of... infinite place... so a portal? Put here by who?

THE KEEPER OF THE WOODS

I am the *keeper* of those secrets. But if you wish, take a few more steps forward, and the bridge is yours.

Mulder steps forward, nervously. He raises his hands higher, as if reaching out to brace himself... SUDDENLY, his arms begin to shake and twitch, seemingly penetrating a near-invisible force-field, not unlike an experience he's had before, in his past.

Mulder's feet leave the ground as his body vanishes beyond this force-field and into nothing.

SCENE 16

INT. UNKNOWN BUILDING - DAY

Mulder SNAPS to awareness, standing in an unknown hallway. Before he can react a bag is forced over his head, two unknown assailants dragging him away. The CAMERA CUTS to Mulder's POV, almost completely blank with only a few brief flashes of light seeping through the fabric of the bag. We hear the DING of an elevator arriving, followed by the sound of the doors opening. They drag him inside, the elevator creaking as it descends.

MULDER

An elevator? Well, apparently that wasn't a portal to the future.

One of the men hits him in the side, punishing him for his sarcasm. The elevator stops and they drag him off, continuing down a dim hallway. We CUT BACK to Mulder's POV, more blackness and shuffling of sounds.

Finally, they shove him down and RIP the mask away from his head.

Mulder looks dazed for a moment, stunned even. A collar has been latched his neck, a green light centered in the collar. He is sitting in a chair in his office; the same dimly lit, dusty basement office he sat in for years upon years. He turns his head to the left, where his desk sits. Pinned up on the board behind his desk is a poster, but not the classic *I Want to Believe* poster he expects. In its place is an adapted American flag, with only three stars and a range of other colors. Embossed over the flag like a slogan are the words WE ALL BELIEVE.

A familiar voice is heard off screen.

VOICE (O.S)

I can tell this is not what you expected to find at the end of some alien portal... Another earth. But then again...

Mulder spots the unknown figure standing in the opposite corner of the room, silhouetted against the doorway. The figure ignites a lighter and raises it to a cigarette hanging from their mouth. The figure steps into the light, revealing themselves to be...

Mulder. The Mulder of another earth, another dimension, another reality.

FOX MULDER (cont'd)

...in your world, life is full of surprises.

FADE OUT

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN

SCENE 17

INT. X-FILES OFFICE - DAY

Mulder sits in the chair, staring up at the other version of himself. The other Mulder walks slowly into the center of the room.

FOX MULDER

You know, Fox, well, can I call you Fox?

MULDER

I'd rather you not.

FOX

Ah, well. I prefer Fox, myself. You know, Mulder, I've been quite excited to meet you. I doubt you'll find this surprising, but I've discovered many other dimensions, and in nearly all of them, you and I are dead.

Fox pulls up a chair, sitting down across from Mulder.

MULDER

How do I know I'm not dead now?

FOX

This isn't hell, and I'm not the devil. I'm just a professional. For example, we wanted to start you off somewhere comfortable to you, somewhere familiar.

The alternate Mulder motions to the decor of the office before he yells to someone unseen.

FOX

Alright, enough with the stage show!

The office around them slowly fades away, a projection. In actuality they are sitting in a nondescript room, nearly all black. We hear foot steps walking into view from behind Mulder, walking to stand beside Fox.

Jeffrey Spender; healthy, unscarred in this dimension. Mulder chuckles desperately.

MULDER

Well, if it's not my brother from another mother.

Spender just looks at him, unfazed.

SPENDER

I'm not sure why that's funny.

MULDER

I guess that reference didn't cross over into this world like I did. Speaking of which, who made the portal that brought me here?

FOX

Couldn't you guess?

MULDER

Colonists?

Mulder points his finger skyward, as if to say that he means aliens.

FOX

That's exactly right. Colonists, able to cross time, space, dimension, all using these portals, and for different reasons.

MULDER

What kind of reasons?

SPENDER

Human life, through time, though different, is always the same.

MULDER

Helpful.

FOX

What's he's trying to say is that... time starts us all as one river, flowing. Then suddenly, there break off tributaries, inlets, creeks, oceans, disrupting the flow of it. In your life, you're in love. You're a dissident to tyrants. Here, I've never met Dana Scully in *my* life.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

In fact, it was an agent of my very office who killed her for protesting in a rally outside the Bureau headquarters.

Mulder looks at him, intently, angrily.

MULDER

The FBI... *killed* Dana Scully?

FOX

Not your FBI, but rather *my* Department of Observation. Here, the only secrets are the secrets I choose to keep. Remember, Mulder, we live in different worlds. In yours, you go left, in mine, I go right. In yours, your planet was wrecked so savagely by industry and pollution the colonists abandoned their plans as though Earth were merely spoiled goods. In *my* life, my planet has already been colonized. Peaceably.

Spender steps forward a bit.

SPENDER

You see, Mulder, the idea of interplanetary colonization from across the cosmos is hilariously outmoded. Colonization will begin as it always has, right here, on planet Earth. Human brothers, overtaking one another, for the betterment of all.

MULDER

The people coming back, through the portal. They're not human?

FOX

An experiment. When their original plans failed, I suggested to our leaders that we form a new hybrid, between human and "alien", between this dimension and yours. A better type of human that can survive in the remains of your Earth. There's of course, one major problem with our plans so far.

Two figures hooded in HAZMAT suits enter the room, approaching Mulder.

One carries a suitcase, while the other is carting in a medical table. One sets up the table, moving to the other side of Mulder, while the other sets down the suitcase and opens it up, revealing a massive needle, two spiraling tubes of brightly colored green and blue liquid in the syringe.

FOX

The problem is, Mulder, it isn't... natural to travel between two dimensions. Two worlds can't exist together, just as a life form made of our two worlds cannot easily live as one organism. You've seen it yourself, Mulder. The experiments that make it back to that sleepy little seaside town. We raised these hybrids to be especially reproductive, potently so, yet so often on your Earth this instilled need for breeding turns violent. Oftentimes, the hybrids who make it back simply die. Then there's the ones like the poor girl whose mother beat her to death.

The man with the syringe STICKS Mulder in the arm, injecting him with the dual solution inside. It seems to hurt, Mulder shouting out. His hands shake, violently.

SPENDER

Something that exists in one dimension cannot exist perfectly in another, even if it manages to survive. Those around such a creature can perceive the rift created by the impact of the two dimensions in a single space. I'm sure you observed these phenomena yourself.

FOX

The changes in gravity and magnetism near the bridge from your earth to mine. Feelings of "unreality".

Mulder continues to shake, moaning in pain before suddenly stopping, calm. The HAZMAT figure on the right places a device to Mulder's temple, getting a reading.

HAZMAT #1

Sir, the hybridization treatment didn't take.

FOX (angrily)

Why?

HAZMAT #1

Because, sir, has already been hybridized.

SPENDER

How!?

Suddenly, the HAZMAT figure on the left brandishes a weapon, shooting the other through the head before turning the gun to Spender and Fox, keeping them at bay. Fox rolls his eyes.

FOX

Let me guess, another *crusader*, trying for a little insurrection. Who is it this time?

SPENDER

If you're going to point a gun at us, you better show me your face, coward.

The figure pulls the HAZMAT hood off of his head, revealing himself to be none other than this world's Alex Krycek. Fox looks unamused, as though they've fought before. Mulder sits, barely conscious.

KRYCEK

Sorry, boys, but it looks like just another failed experiment for you.

FOX

If it's caught *your* interest, I must be on to something, Krycek.

KRYCEK

We'll see. Until next time, fellas.

Krycek reaches behind Mulder's neck, where the collar is hooked, unclipping it from his neck. The room suddenly goes hazy, as if photographed through a blurry lens. Somehow, unclipping the collar has initiated an event of "unreality". Mulder's head lulls to one side as he again falls away into unconsciousness.

SCENE 18

INT. VAN - DAY

Mulder slowly opens his eyes, looking around, clearly not feeling well. Krycek sits over him, in a caring way, not an aggressive way.

MULDER

You know, in my world, there were dozens of times I wanted to kill you.

Krycek smiles, holding up the collar that had been around Mulder's neck.

KRYCEK

Well, for whatever made you want to kill me in your world, cut me some slack for saving your life in mine. The government and the colonists have been trying to develop sustainable trans-dimensional travel for decades now. The best thing they've come up with so far are these collars.

MULDER

What are they?

KRYCEK

They prevent any being from another dimension that is on our planet from causing any lasting damage to the fabric of our reality.

MULDER

How?

KRYCEK

It suppresses some of the effects caused by the dimensional drift for a brief time... and kills you, if you're in our dimension for too long.

We hear the sound of the van's breaks coming to a stop. The driver, an ALIEN similar looking to the hybrids, turns its head, speaking to Krycek in an unknown language before exiting the van.

MULDER

He with you?

Krycek chuckles, helping Mulder up.

KRYCEK

Come on, Mulder. Let me show you a piece of my world.

## SCENE 19

## EXT. RESISTANCE CAMP - DAY

Mulder follows Krycek out of the van, parked on a dry, dusty bank near a river: the Potomac River. A few dozen men and women walk about a makeshift camp. Across the river we see the tattered remnants of Washington D.C.

KRYCEK

We're standing in what used to be Alexandria, Virginia. Now, there's not even a Virginia.

Mulder examines the cityscape. The Capitol Building still stands, but half of the dome has been destroyed, looking almost as if cut clean through by a laser of some kind. The Washington Monument is nothing but rubble.

MULDER

What happened here?

KRYCEK

Well, like they said, Mulder. When civilizations collide, one is destroyed. The colonists and the government began these experiments into other worlds through interdimensional bridges, and slowly, over decades, our entire reality started just to... fall apart. The laws of nature and physics began to fail. The government tried to spin it on the travelers from other worlds, calling them "terrorists of disreality". Now, my world exists in pieces.

Krycek claps Mulder on the shoulder with a friendly but forlorn smile.

KRYCEK

You'll be going home soon, Mulder.

MULDER

How?

KRYCEK

You don't belong here. You belong in your world. When two realities collide, they inevitably separate.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

You'll be back before you know it  
and the gate keeper will see you  
home.

MULDER

The man in the woods?

Krycek smiles.

KRYCEK

An old friend of mine. In fact, I  
think he let you cross the bridge  
so I could give him something.

Krycek hands Mulder a translucent gemstone, a weird flow of  
blue liquid smoke inside the gem.

MULDER

Why tell me any of this? You, them?

KRYCEK

You won't remember it, anyway,  
Mulder.

SCENE 20

INT. THE KEEPER'S CABIN - NIGHT

Mulder's eyes open, standing just as he just stood with  
Krycek. He now stands in a small cabin, lit by a fireplace.  
The Keeper of the Woods sits at a little wooden table behind  
Mulder. He strikes a match against the table, leaning in to  
light a pipe. Mulder turns to face him.

MULDER

Who are you, really?

The Keeper inhales a puff of smoke, exhaling as he brings  
down the hood covering his face, the smoke clearing to reveal  
a man identical to the Cigarette Smoking Man. Mulder looks  
unnerved for just a moment before catching on.

THE KEEPER

Yes, you look quite familiar, too.

MULDER

You are from that world. How do you  
live in this world?

THE KEEPER

I was an engineer, working with the  
government, *for* the colonists.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

They had mastered space travel, though the portal technology they had was... quite crude. You could perhaps transport a person from a planet to a ship, but across time and space? Across worlds?

MULDER

So you helped them.

THE KEEPER

For a time. I was quite high up the ladder, with my two sons becoming star pupils in a government rapidly turning fascist. I was happy until the day my world started to fall apart. The laws of nature ceased to apply, many of the colonists fleeing. A dissident named Krycek helped me flee. I had built the bridge to this earth for them, but vowed to destroy it. However, I wasn't able to figure out how to destroy the portal before I fled. Ever since, I've simply tried my best to guard the portal from their experimentation, choosing to stay in exile.

MULDER

But why did you come *here*?

THE KEEPER

I chose this because in this world the two halves of my heart are not broken.

He looks at Mulder, wistfully. He is clearly talking about a world where his two sons are still good, redeemed men. Even though he could reach out and touch Mulder in this moment, he simply looks at him like an imaginary, hopeful figment of a better future from a life that had already gone by for him.

Mulder approaches the keeper, handing out the gemstone from his pocket. The Keeper of the Woods' eyes light up at the sight of it.

THE KEEPER

How strange the world should bring you here, unaware of my existence, unaware of all the other endless worlds, to bring me this.

MULDER

Maybe it's not so strange. Maybe  
the universe is just...righting  
wrongs.

\*beat\*

Will I remember you?

CUT TO:

SCENE 21

INT. HYPNOTIST' OFFICE - DAY

Mulder sits on a couch against the wall, eyes closed,  
reacting to a question posed by the hypnotist.

MULDER

He said, "Not at all".

HYPNOTIST

And what happened next?

MULDER

I left, back into the forest. And  
not long after I left, there was  
this flash of blue light in the sky  
for a moment.

HYPNOTIST

And then?

MULDER

I remember Scully, waking me up...

The camera pulls back to reveal that Scully is watching the  
session from behind a one-way glass, Sheriff Wiseborn with  
her.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Does this garbage really work?

Scully shrugs, halfheartedly.

SCULLY

You would be amazed what the mind  
can repress. It's also incredible  
what the mind can imagine.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Officer Simmons' family requested that his remains be cremated, now your autopsy is over. I don't know what to tell them.

SCULLY

Tell the coroner to do it. Whatever happened to him, and in this town, just... let there be rest.

Wiseborn nods, still seeming to not grasp his role in this larger, mysterious world.

SHERIFF WISEBORN

Whatever's happening in this town, something tell's me I won't be winning re-election. Give this to Mulder for me, will you?

He places something in Scully's hand, patting her on the shoulder before exiting. Scully turns her attention back to Mulder, who sits alone as the hypnotist is preparing some paperwork at a desk to the side.

We CUT to the inside of the office, where Mulder sits, just staring at his reflection in the one-way mirror, calmly, emotionless.

SCENE 22

INT. CAR - DAY

Mulder sits in the passenger seat of the car, Scully in the driver's seat, driving them back to the airport, presumably. Mulder stares passively out the window, Scully occasionally giving him a worried glance. The radio is on, the volume low, but Scully catches a tune she recognizes.

She turns it up, the song being "Can't Help Falling in Love" by Elvis. We hear Elvis crooning, "*Like a river flows, surely to the sea, darling, so it goes, somethings are meant to be...*"

SCULLY

Hey, Mulder, it's one of your favorite songs.

She nods at the radio. Mulder turns to look at her, disinterested.

MULDER

Hm?

Scully watches him, turning the radio up a bit louder. Mulder seems more like himself.

MULDER

Oh! Yeah, yeah. I love this song.

He goes back to looking out the window. Scully reaches into her pocket, handing MULDER'S COMPASS over to him.

SCULLY

Here, Sheriff Wiseborn wanted you to have your compass back.

MULDER

Nice of him.

Mulder begins to flip the compass open and closed, absent-minded as he looks out the window. Scully turns her attention to the road. The camera slowly zooms in on the compass...

The compass seems normal, the lid clicking shut. He clicks the lid open again, the north hand seeming off from before, then the lid clicks shut. He clicks the lid open again, the hands of the compass acting sporadically. The lid of the compass SLAMS SHUT with a dramatic clang as we...

FADE OUT

END OF ACT FOUR

THE END