

THE X-FILES

"War of the Coprophages"

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TV Calling - For educational purposes only

November 13, 1995

"War of the Coprophages"

SET LIST

EXTERIORS:

BOONDOCKS
MODEL HOUSE
THE CRAZY BEDBUG MOTEL
MINI-MART/GAS STATION (X)
METHANE RESEARCH FACILITY (X)

INTERIORS:

DR. ECKERLE'S BASEMENT
SCULLY'S APARTMENT
DRUG DEN
HOSPITAL
 /ROOM
 /BATHROOM
MODEL HOUSE
 /KITCHEN
 /ENTOMOLOGY LAB
THE CRAZY BEDBUG MOTEL
 /MANAGER'S OFFICE
 /MANAGER'S BACK ROOM
 /MOTEL ROOM
SCULLY'S CAR
MULDER'S CAR
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF ROBOTICS
 /HALLWAY
 /ROBOTICS LAB
MINI-MART/GAS STATION (X)
METHANE RESEARCH FACILITY (X)
 /CORRIDOR (X)
MULDER'S APARTMENT (X)

November 13, 1995

"War of the Coprophages"

CAST

Fox Mulder
Dana Scully
Dr. Bugger
Dr. Jeff Eckerle
Sheriff Frass
Dr. Rick Newton
Stoner
Dude
Chick
Dude's Father
Orderly
Dr. Bambi Berenbaum
Resident #1
Resident #2
Dr. Alexander Ivanov
Reporter
Customer #1
Customer #2
Customer #3
Customer #4
Customer #5

(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

WAR OF THE COPROPHAGES

1 INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

1

Over darkness, a legend reads: MILLER'S GROVE, MASS. Suddenly, (X)
a light flashes on, capturing a cockroach scampering across a
cement wall. A human hand comes down, grabbing the insect.

DR. BUGGER (O.S.)
Behold, the mighty cockroach.

The roach-holding hand is raised to reveal it belongs to a
scholarly-looking gentleman in his 50s (DR. BUGGER), dressed
in a white shirt and thin black tie. In his other hand he
holds a flashlight, illuminating himself and the roach.
Continuing his professorial dissertation:

DR. BUGGER
Believed to have originated in
the Silurian period, over 350
million years ago, they can be
found in every part of the world --
from the tropics to the arctic.
There exists 4,000 known species,
and in a year, a single female
can produce over half a million
descendents. Radiation doesn't
kill them. By evolutionary
standards, they are nearly
flawless creatures. But
creatures nevertheless.
Possessing only a simple nervous
system, their behavior is
dictated solely by responses to
environmental stimuli. Unlike
us, they are incapable of
thought, of --

He reaches up, and pulls down on an overhanging light bulb,
which illuminates the scene, but only to reveal that Dr. Bugger
stands before a concrete wall.

DR. BUGGER
-- self-illumination. Thus,
compared to the roach, we are
gods, and must therefore act
accordingly.

Dr. Bugger drops the cockroach to the ground, then immediately
STOMPS it to death.

WIDER TO REVEAL

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

we are in a household basement (washer and dryer, water heater, storage boxes, etc.). A wooden staircase leads up to the house proper. Standing beside Dr. Bugger, looking down squeamishly at the crushed roach, is a nervous nellie/nerdy type, named DR. JEFF ECKERLE (40s).

DR. ECKERLE

Is it true if you decapitate them, they continue to live, eventually dying of starvation?

DR. BUGGER

Look, buddy -- I just kill 'em.

Dr. Bugger turns to pick up his pesticide tank, revealing the back of his shirt reads: "DR. BUGGER -- EXTERMINATOR," along with a cartoon caricature of a terrified cockroach.

DR. ECKERLE

Well, that's why I called you.

Dr. Bugger begins spraying the pesticide along the cracks of the wall.

DR. BUGGER

I apologize for not getting here sooner, but I was inundated with calls today.

DR. ECKERLE

I thought nowadays you froze the insects to death.

DR. BUGGER

Freeze 'em? Where's the fun in that? No, we've developed a new pesticide that works like a fungus. It not only kills the infected roach, but that roach then spreads the disease to every other roach it comes into contact with.

DR. ECKERLE

Just as long as you get rid of them. Bugs drive me crazy.

Eckerle gets a case of the "willies" before exiting up the staircase. Dr. Bugger continues spraying. He notices a roach on the wall, right out in the open.

DR. BUGGER

Why, you arrogant little --

1 CONTINUED: (2)

1

Dr. Bugger sprays a generous dose on the bug, which doesn't budge. A low, almost mechanical, CHIRP emits from the insect. The exterminator regards the roach for a moment, before physically knocking it off the wall with his sprayer. He STOMPS on the bug. Lifting his foot, the roach scampers off -- unscathed.

Perturbed, Dr. Bugger chases it down, and STOMPS on it harder, but immediately grimaces, as if having stepped on a nail. He looks down, only to see the roach continue on his way.

Dr. Bugger's look of frustration suddenly becomes one of disturbance, as he grabs his throat, apparently having trouble breathing. He looks up at some crevices on the cement wall.

CREVICES

several cockroaches appear within. They do nothing, except wiggle their antennae. It's almost as if they were... watching.

DR. BUGGER

GASPING for breath, he drops his pesticide tank, and clutches his chest, before falling against the cement wall.

CREVICES

The cockroaches now begin to creep out, and crawl down the wall.

STAIRCASE

descending the stairs, Dr. Eckerle re-enters.

DR. ECKERLE

Oh, I forgot to tell you I also found a roach in the --

Eckerle freezes in mid-step, suddenly terrified at what he sees.

DR. BUGGER

face-down, his hands clenched in pain, he desperately tries crawling across the floor, as cockroaches crawl all over his body.

DR. ECKERLE

Too scared to even move.

DR. BUGGER

Breathing his last breath, his body goes limp. educational purposes only

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED: (3)

1

BACK OF BUGGER'S SHIRT

As roaches scamper over the cartoon roach logo --

FADE OUT:

END TEASER

ACT ONE

2 EXT. BOONDOCKS - NIGHT - SKY

2

The sky radiates with lights, beamed from stars billions and billions of miles away from this planet. Oh, those lucky, lucky stars. Suddenly, an insect lands on the WINDSHIELD we've unknowingly been LOOKING THROUGH, disturbing our celestial view. Silhouetted, it can't be determined whether it's a beetle or a cockroach, but no matter -- a wiper blade enters frame, and swipes the bug away.

A pause, before another bug lands on the windshield, only to also be wiped away by the wiper blade.

WIDE

Parked out in the middle of nowhere, AGENT MULDER sits in his car, with the wiper blades on, contemplatively staring up at the heavens. His cell phone CHIRPS, causing him to turn off the wipers and turn on his phone.

MULDER

Mulder.

SCULLY (O.S.)

Mulder, I've been trying to reach you all day. Where've you been?

MULDER

My apartment complex is being fumigated. I had to go somewhere for the weekend.

INTERCUT WITH:

3 INT. SCULLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

3

Sitting at her kitchen table, Scully cleans her gun.

SCULLY

If you need a place to stay --

MULDER

I'm in Massachusetts.

SCULLY

Oh, visiting your mother?

MULDER

No.

SCULLY

Then what are you doing up there?

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(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

MULDER

I'm just... sittin' and thinkin'.

She regards her phone suspiciously, awaiting Mulder's real explanation.

MULDER

Widespread accounts of unidentified colored lights hovering in the skies were reported in this area last night.

She nods, having figured as much.

MULDER

Scully, I know it's not your inclination, but did you ever look up at the stars at night and feel not only certain that something is out there, but that it is looking down at you at that very moment, and is just as curious about you as you are of it?

SCULLY

Mulder, the only thing more fortuitous than the emergence of life on this planet is that -- through purely random laws of biological evolution -- an intelligence as complex as ours ever emanated from it. The very idea of intelligent alien life is not only astronomically improbable, but at its most basic level, downright anti-Darwinian.

MULDER

Scully... what are you wearing?

Scully responds with a slight SIGH of exasperation.

MULDER

I understand what you're saying, Scully, but I still need to keep looking.

SCULLY

Just don't look too hard, Mulder. You might not like what you find.

Another insect lands on Mulder's windshield. He turns the wipers on again.

3 CONTINUED: (2)

3

MULDER

Isn't that what Dr. Zaius said to
Charlton Heston at the end of
Planet of the Apes?

SCULLY

And look what happened.

A bright light suddenly falls upon Mulder, who shades his eyes.

MULDER

Scully, I have to go.

SCULLY

Mulder, what is it?
(his phone clicks off)
Mulder?

CUT TO:

3A EXT. BOONDOCKS - NIGHT

3A

Mulder pockets his phone, turns off his wipers, and struggles
to see what's in the road ahead.

A silhouetted figure approaches, and it's not until it reaches
Mulder's door that it's revealed to be a uniformed policeman.
SHERIFF FRASS (late 50s) is a no-nonsense officer, but one who
always seems to speak in conspiratorial tones.

SHERIFF

How ya doin'?
(after Mulder's nod)
What 'cha doin'?

MULDER

I'm just... sittin' and thinkin'.

SHERIFF

Sittin' and thinkin' and talkin'
on the phone. Who with -- your
drug dealer? Let's see some I.D.

Mulder hands his I.D. to the Sheriff.

SHERIFF

The Bureau? Are you on a case
out here?

MULDER

I heard reports of several UFO
sightings here last night. Did
you see anything?

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(CONTINUED)

3A CONTINUED:

3A

SHERIFF

Not personally, sir, but we did receive a lot of calls.

MULDER

Any more tonight?

SHERIFF

No, sir. The FBI keeps tabs on this sort of thing?

MULDER

They don't, I do.

SHERIFF

(nods)

May I ask you something else, sir? Why were you sitting here... with your wiper blades on?

MULDER

I was just knocking off some bugs that landed on my --

Mulder takes note as the Sheriff suddenly puts his hand on his revolver.

MULDER

-- windshield.

SHERIFF

Cockroaches?

MULDER

Maybe. Maybe beetles -- I'm not really good with bugs.

The Sheriff holds up a hand to say, "hold on," as a POLICE RADIO CALL draws him back to his patrol car. Mulder senses something is definitely wrong here. Sticking his head out the window, he gives the heavens the once over. The Sheriff suddenly drives forward, stopping alongside Mulder's car, and hands him back his I.D.

SHERIFF

Sorry to disturb you, sir.

MULDER

Sheriff, what's the matter?

SHERIFF

Another roach attack.

3A CONTINUED: (2)

3:

The Sheriff speeds off. Mulder remains sittin' and thinkin', but now his thoughts are easily discernable: "Roach attack?!"

CUT TO:

4 INT. SCULLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

(Scully's doing business) She picks up her phone after it RINGS.

SCULLY

Hello?

MULDER (O.S.)

Scully, I think you better get up here.

SCULLY

What is it?

INTERCUT WITH:

5 INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

5

Speaking into his phone, Mulder is crouched over Dr. Bugger. On the other side, a medical examiner, DR. RICK NEWTON, inspects the body. In the b.g., the Sheriff talks to a visibly distraught Dr. Eckerle and the other DEPUTIES execute forensic business.

MULDER

I'm not certain, but it appears that cockroaches are mortally attacking people.

SCULLY

Mulder, I'm not going to ask you if you just said what I think you said, because I know it's what you just said.

MULDER

Scully, I'm crouched over a bug exterminator, who was discovered with cockroaches crawling all over his recently deceased body. The local Sheriff says two other bodies were found in the same condition this afternoon.

SCULLY

Where are you again?

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(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED:

5

MULDER

Miller's Grove. It has a large science constituency. The other incidents involved a molecular biologist and an astrophysicist, and the witness to this case is an alternative fuel researcher.

(X)

SHERIFF & DR. ECKERLE

SHERIFF

Just try to calm yourself and get a little rest.

DR. ECKERLE

If you think I'm staying here tonight, you're out of your mind.

MULDER

MULDER

These reports aren't coming from yahoos out in the boondocks.

SCULLY

Are there any insect bites on the body?

MULDER

Insect bites?

Dr. Newton looks up at Mulder, shaking his head "no."

MULDER

No.

SCULLY

Mulder, millions of people are allergic to cockroaches, and there have been reported cases of fatal reactions. It's called anaphylactic shock.

MULDER

Anaphylactic shock?

Dr. Newton reacts -- "Ah, yes" -- as he mouths the words "anaphylactic shock" while nodding his head. The Sheriff, noticing the exchange, makes his way over.

SCULLY

Many such reactions occur to entomologists and exterminators.

MULDER

Well... we'll check that out.

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(CONTINUED)

5 CONTINUED: (2)

SCULLY
Still want me to come up?

MULDER
No, I'm sure you're right.
Thanks, Scully.

A bit dejected, Mulder turns off his phone and stands.

SHERIFF
Who was that?

MULDER
My drug dealer.

CUT TO:

6 INT. DRUG DEN - NIGHT

AN ERLLENMEYER FLASK containing a brown, boiling liquid of a thick consistency. The top of the flask is connected to a tube. FOLLOW THE TUBE as it leads to a complex menagerie of mad-scientist paraphernalia. At the end of this laboratory is a container filled with white smoke which begins draining out and into an air respirator, which covers the mouth and nose of an inhaling teenage STONER.

STONER
(holding smoke in
lungs)
Dude! This is some good crap!

WIDE

The lab actually resides in a teenager guest/club house. Posters of drug-using, dead rock stars (Hendrix, Morrison, Cobain) cover the walls. On the couch sits a teenage CHICK. The proprietor of the lab, a teenage DUDE, busily chops with a razor blade -- what appears to be a pile of animal manure.

DUDE
It's imported -- not from the
mainland. Know what I mean?

STONER
Uhm... not really.
(to Chick)
Come on -- it's your turn.

CHICK
I'm not sure about this, you
guys.

6 CONTINUED:

6

DUDE

You really ought to, you know, try it. This stuff just takes your mind, and, you know, just sort of... expands it.

CHICK

Yeah, well, something tells me it's not your minds you guys are interested in expanding.

The Dude and Stoner freeze. She's on to them.

STONER

Well... how 'bout another beer, then?

CHICK

Okay.

The Stoner opens a container, and as dry ice smoke floats over the sides, he extracts a bottle of beer and hands it to the Chick.

DUDE

I don't know, I think you're making a mistake. Beer is just, you know, beer. But this stuff --

Having opened the Erlenmeyer's lid, the Dude dumps the chopped-up manure into the flask, unaware that a cockroach had been residing under the dung. The cockroach emits a slight CHIRP before quickly scurrying into hiding amongst the lab equipment.

DUDE

-- it, like, takes the doors of perception and swings 'em wide open, so you can see a whole 'nother world out there.

(scratches his arm)

But it's still, like, this world, you know? It grabs a hold of your mind and does the whole altered states thing to it...

(scratches arm)

... and suddenly you see reality, as it, you know, really exists.

The Dude finally becomes conscious of his reoccurring itch. He looks down at his arm to scratch it.

DUDE'S ARM

A small, open scab exists on the forearm. Burrowing directly into this porous sore -- a cockroach!

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(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

DUDE

Naturally reacting with horror -- he clutches his arm. The Stoner regards him with more amusement than concern.

STONER
Dude, what's wrong?

DUDE'S ARM

Underneath the epidermis, the cockroach's outline can be seen scurrying up the length of the arm.

DUDE

As he desperately tries grabbing the moving roach, he notices the wrist of his hand.

DUDE'S OTHER ARM

At the wrist, another cockroach burrows into his skin.

WIDE

The Dude SCREAMS as he tries to catch the imbedded bugs.

STONER
Dude -- you're freakin'!

CHICK
(genuine concern).
What's wrong?

DUDE
Cockroaches! Roaches!

Grabbing his razor blade, the Dude begins frantically (yet discretely) cutting himself.

CHICK
Stop!

As she tries restraining the Dude, the Stoner finally realizes something is wrong, and tries to stop him as well. As the CHICK begins SCREAMING, and the Stoner wrestles with the self-mutilating Dude, the trio falls to the floor.

DUDE
Get 'em out of me! Get 'em out
of me!

CUT TO:

7 INT. SCULLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

7

A cartoon caricature of a flea with a red slash through it is depicted on a bottle of "FLEA-AWAY" dog shampoo.

WIDE

Scully's giving her sudsed-up DOG a flea bath in her kitchen sink. The phone RINGS.

SCULLY
(to dog)
Stay. Stay!
(into phone)
Hello?

MULDER (O.S.)
Scully, I take it back -- I think
you'd better get up here.

SCULLY
Another roach attack?

INTERCUT WITH:

8 INT. DRUG DEN - NIGHT

8

Mulder's crouched over Dude's lifeless, discretely bloodied body. On the opposite side of the body -- Dr. Newton. In the b.g., deputies mingle about as the Sheriff questions the disturbed Stoner and Chick. Sitting gloomily on the couch is the DUDE'S DAD.

MULDER
And this was no allergic
reaction. I have two witnesses
claiming the victim was screaming
about cockroaches burrowing into
his body.

SCULLY
Are the insects still in the
body?

MULDER
We haven't located any, but there
are wounds all over the body.

SCULLY
Made by the cockroaches?

MULDER
The victim did attempt to extract
the insects with a razor blade,
but we aren't certain all the
incisions are self-inflicted -- For educational purposes only
except for the severed artery.

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

8

SCULLY
Mulder, was there any evidence of
drug use at the scene?

Mulder moves over to the lab.

MULDER
He did have a homemade lab set-
up, but I don't know what he was
producing.

Mulder opens the Erlenmeyer flask and takes a whiff.

MULDER
Smells like a septic tank.
(to deputy)
Make sure this gets analyzed.

SCULLY
Mulder, there's a psychotic
disorder associated with some
forms of drug abuse, where the
abuser suffers from delusions
that insects are infesting their
epidermis.
(picks a flea off her
arm)
It's called Ekbohm's Syndrome.

MULDER.
Ekbohm's Syndrome?

Dr. Newton reacts "Ah, yes," mouthing the words "Ekbohm's
Syndrome" while nodding.

SCULLY
The victims often cut themselves
in an attempt to extract the
imaginary insects.

Mulder, silenced, nods in defeat.

SCULLY
Do you still want me to come up?

MULDER
No. You're probably right.
Sorry to bother you, Scully.

SCULLY
It's no bother, Mulder.

She hangs up the phone, reaches out to the sink, as if to grab
her dog, but the dog is gone. After a slight take, she looks
O.S.

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(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED: (2)

8

SCULLY

Hey!

A BARK is heard before Scully lunges out of frame.

CUT TO:

8A INT. DRUG DEN - NIGHT

8A

As Mulder pockets his phone, the Sheriff approaches.

SHERIFF

These kids are hysterical. I can't get anything out of them.

MULDER

Can you get a drug test out of them?

SHERIFF

Sure.

MULDER

Is that the boy's father?

After the Sheriff nods, Mulder approaches the bewildered father.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Sir, I'm sorry to have to ask you at a time like this, but did you know if your son had a drug problem, or do you know what he was producing in this lab?

The Dad finally looks up. He gestures at the lab and all he can manage to say is --

DUDE'S DAD

My son... he... flunked Chemistry.

As he hangs his head, Mulder realizes it's a lost cause. He turns back to the lab, and suddenly freezes. The Sheriff notices this response, and turns to spot what Mulder sees. Mulder stealthily begins to creep toward the lab. -

MULDER'S POV - LAB TABLE

We move close to the lab, we still don't know why.

MULDER

8A CONTINUED:

8A

Continues his cautionary approach. The other people in the room seem to have noticed Mulder's odd behavior, and have become riveted to his action. As he crouches down to the lab --

FROM UNDERNEATH TABLE

A cockroach -- hanging upside down from the bottom of the table. Behind the insect, Mulder's descends into view. With lightning action, he reaches out and grabs the roach in his hand.

SHERIFF

Did you get him?

MULDER

(nodding)

Get me a container.

The Sheriff grabs a glass bottle. Everybody in the room excitedly/nervously crowds around for the unveiling. Mulder holds his hand over the bottle and shakes it a little.

MULDER

I think I killed it.

Mulder slowly opens his hand -- revealing nothing but a palmful of black, crushed granules.

SHERIFF

You didn't kill it -- you annihilated it.

MULDER

It must have molted. It was just an empty exoskeleton.

Mulder dumps the crushed remains into the bottle. The crowd can't help but react disappointedly, they withdraw back to their business. The Sheriff pats Mulder on the back.

SHERIFF

Well, at least we finally have evidence that cockroaches were actually in the room.

MULDER

We have more than that, Sheriff. I think that bug's exoskeleton was made out of metal.

Mulder shows his hand to the Sheriff as blood rises up to the skin surface on several fingers.

FADE OUT:

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END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

9 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

9

Mulder sits on an examining table while Dr. Newton puts gauze around his finger.

DR. NEWTON

Just a skin abrasion, nothing more than that.

MULDER

An abrasion caused by a metallic substance?

DR. NEWTON

Why don't we wait until the analysis of the "compound" is finished before we jump to any conclusions.

The Medical Examiner finished putting on the gauze, then stares at Mulder for a beat.

DR. NEWTON

Agent Mulder, as a doctor I always find it's best to be completely honest with my patients. No matter how unpleasant the information, I always tell them everything. Communication -- it's such a vital human trait.

MULDER

(checking finger)
What do you need to tell me?

DR. NEWTON

I need you to tell me something.

Newton leans in closer.

DR. NEWTON

(hushed)
What the hell is going on here?

MULDER

I don't know.

The doctor looks perturbed, sure that Mulder is hiding something.

DR. NEWTON

Should I evacuate my family?

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(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

MULDER

Doctor, not only do I not know what's occurring here, I don't even know if anything is occurring here.

DR. NEWTON

No? Then why are you here?

Before Mulder can answer -- thankful, since he has no answer, the Sheriff enters.

SHERIFF

Doctor, they're ready for you to examine the boy's body.

DR. NEWTON

As soon as I take a break -- after talking with Agent Mulder, I suddenly feel a little constipated.

Dr. Newton exits.

SHERIFF

What's his problem?

MULDER

He's upset that I don't know what's going on here.

The Sheriff nods, pauses. Then leans closer to Mulder.

SHERIFF

So what the hell is going on here?

CUT TO:

10 INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM - NIGHT - DRAIN PIPE

10

From within the dark interior, an echoing CHIRP emits. Shortly thereafter, a pair of antennae creep out. They wiggle a bit before a cockroach crawls out of the drain and scampers along the tile floor.

LOW ANGLE - TOILET STALLS

Dr. Newton's pants hang loose around his shoes -- the only stall in use. Scampering into frame, enters the cockroach.

(CONTINUED)

10 CONTINUED:

10

DR. NEWTON

On the can, reading a copy of Scientific American (the magazine is held in such a way to ensure discretion). Appearing a bit discomfited, he flips the page -- causing a subscription leaflet to fall out and to the floor. Without taking his eyes off the magazine, Dr. Newton reaches down to the ground.

SUBSCRIPTION LEAFLET

Dr. Newton's hand picks it up -- revealing a cockroach had been underneath it. The roach scampers away.

DR. NEWTON

places the leaflet back in the magazine. His discomfort seems to increase. Reaching back, he rubs his neck. MOVE PAST HIM -- enough to see the lid of the toilet tank. Crawling up from behind the tank, appears a cockroach. Then another. What the hell -- make it three!

DR. NEWTON - FROM THE SIDE

So as to include the toilet paper roll on the side of the stall. Grimacing slightly, Dr. Newton shakes his head and grabs for the toilet paper. Eyes still glued on the magazine, he pulls down a few sheets -- causing a cockroach on the paper to roll up into view. As Dr. Newton yanks off his sheets -- leaving the roach on the roll --

CUT TO:

11 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

11

MULDER

I see the correlation, but just because I work for the Federal Government doesn't mean I'm an expert on cockroaches.

SHERIFF

So you're saying you don't know anything about the government's experiments being conducted here?

MULDER

(curiosity piqued)
Experiments?

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

SHERIFF

A couple months ago, an agent claiming to be with the Department of Agriculture set up base on a couple acres across town. No one knows exactly what is going on out there -- it's all top secret -- very hush hush.

MULDER

So what are you suggesting?

SHERIFF

Killer bees were a genetic experiment gone awry -- let loose on an unsuspecting populace. What's to say our government hasn't created a new breed of killer cockroach?

At the tail-end of the Sheriff's dialogue, a NURSE has entered, and picks up a tray off the examining table. Mulder waits for her to exit before replying --

MULDER

You might want to keep that to yourself, there's no need to create widespread panic.

Suddenly, an O.S. SCREAM is heard, along with shouting for HELP, and other sounds of panic spreading. As Mulder and the Sheriff hustle out --

CUT TO:

12 INT. HOSPITAL BATHROOM - NIGHT

12

Dr. Newton's dead body is slumped onto the floor. Several hospital workers/onlookers stand about as an ORDERLY takes Dr. Newton's jugular pulse. Mulder and the Sheriff enter, breaking through the crowd --

SHERIFF

What the hell happened?

ORDERLY

I came in and found him dead on the ground... cockroaches... cockroaches were all over him.

SHERIFF

I don't see any roaches.

TV Calling (CONTINUED) for archival purposes only

12 CONTINUED:

12

ORDERLY
I went out to call for help and
when I came back, they'd
disappeared.

Mulder begins to look about, as does the Sheriff and the
onlookers. Suddenly Mulder spots --

SINK

a cockroach crawls down the side of the basin.

MULDER

lunges at the roach, just as it scurries down the drain. His
frustration mounts.

INTERCUT WITH:

13 INT. SCULLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

13

(Scully business.) Phone RINGS.

SCULLY
Who died now?

MULDER
The medical examiner. His body
was found dead next to a toilet
with roaches all over him. I
really think you should come --

SCULLY
A toilet? Mulder, check his eyes --
Is one of them bloodshot with a
dilated pupil?

As Mulder checks this, we see, in fact, that Dr. Newton has a
bloodshot eye with a dilated pupil.

MULDER
Yes.

SCULLY
Mulder, he probably had a brain
aneurysm.

MULDER
Brain aneurysm?

The Orderly next to the doctor reacts, "Ah, yes" as mouths the
words "brain aneurysm" while nodding.

13 CONTINUED:

13

SCULLY

Straining too forcefully while on the toilet is a very common place for a brain aneurysm to burst.

MULDER

Then how do you explain the roaches?

SCULLY

Did you capture any?

MULDER

No.

SCULLY

Well, I don't know what to tell you then. I just hope you're not implying you came across an infestation of killer cockroaches.

A beat, as Mulder considers.

CUT TO:

14 EXT. MODEL HOUSE - NIGHT

14

With no other residence in view, a normal-looking suburban house -- the kind developers use as a model to sell subdivisions -- stands in the b.g. SEEN THROUGH a chainlink fence that surrounds the property. Posted at the fence, a sign reads "NO TRESPASSING -- PROPERTY OF THE UNITED STATES DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE."

After a pause, the fence begins shaking as if someone were climbing over it. Someone is -- Mulder drops into frame, on the other side of the fence and heads for the house.

Approaching the door, Mulder's cell phone RINGS. He answers.

MULDER

Mulder.

INTERCUT WITH:

15 INT. SCULLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

15

(Scully's business)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

SCULLY

Mulder, I've been doing some research. Back in the mid '80s, a breed of cockroaches found only in Asia made its appearance in Florida and now have established themselves in this country.

MULDER

Do they attack people?

SCULLY

Of course not, but they do exhibit behavior that's different from our domestic breeds. For instance, they can fly for long distances and are attracted to light.

MULDER

But they don't attack people?

SCULLY

No, but I'm suggesting that what's happening up there might simply be the introduction of a new cockroach breed to this continent -- one that is attracted to people.

Mulder tries to peek into the window of the house.

MULDER

That explanation is a little too pat for my taste, Scully.

SCULLY

You have an alternative theory?

MULDER'S POV - DARKENED INTERIOR

MULDER

No, but I've found out that -- under the guise of the Department of Agriculture -- the government is conducting some sort of experiments up here.

SCULLY

(pause)

Mulder... you're not thinking of trespassing onto government property again, are you? I know you've done it in the past, but I don't think this case justifies ~~for~~ educational purposes only

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

MULDER

Too late -- I'm already inside.

Scully gives a slight SIGH OF EXASPERATION. Pause, before suddenly becoming overcome with curiosity.

SCULLY

(gossipy)

So what's going on? What do you see?

CUT TO:

15A INT. MODEL HOUSE - NIGHT

15A

Mulder steps in the center of the big room. He turns on his flashlight, and inspects the place. Spotlessly clean, sparsely furnished.

MULDER

I'm in a house. It's apparently empty.

A MOTORIZED NOISE is heard. Mulder flashes his light upwards.

CEILING

In the corner, hanging from the ceiling, a video camera is turning, shifting its position until it's pointed at Mulder.

ROOM

MULDER

Except for the camera at the ceiling.

SCULLY

Well, what's the place look like?

MULDER

It's just a normal, suburban house. A large living room, some furniture. Hardwood floors, fireplace. A dining room, with a table -- set for four. A kitchen, wallpapered.

SCULLY

It sounds like you're describing my dream house.

MULDER

Yeah, except for the fact that the walls are moving.

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(CONTINUED)

15A CONTINUED:

15A

SCULLY
The walls are moving?

CUT TO:

15B INT. MODEL HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

15B

Mulder has his light shining on one of the kitchen walls.

MULDER
They're rippling.

Mulder moves to the wall for a closer inspection. The wallpaper is, in fact, undulating. Mulder taps the wall with his flashlight. Suddenly, at a tear in the wallpaper, cockroaches come streaming out. Mulder moves back a bit.

MULDER
Cockroaches --

SCULLY
What?!

Mulder flashes the light towards various places in the kitchen -- each place the light falls, cockroaches scamper away.

MULDER
Cockroaches -- they're everywhere! I'm surrounded.

Mulder flashes the light down toward his feet. Cockroaches scamper between his shoes.

SCULLY
Mulder get the hell out of there.
Now!

MULDER
Ugh!

SCULLY
Mulder! Are you all right?

Mulder, completely in the dark, shaking his flashlight.

MULDER
My flashlight went out.

Suddenly, the house lights come on. Mulder turns to see who turned on the lights. Mulder suddenly freezes, having spotted something O.S. Whatever he sees must be something truly incredible, for Mulder's eyes light up almost in terror, and his mouth drops open, agape.

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(CONTINUED)

15B CONTINUED:

15E

SCULLY
What? What happened?
(then)
Mulder, what's going on?

MULDER
(rushed)
I have to go.

Mulder's phone is heard turning OFF.

SCULLY
Mulder? Mulder?!

Still staring O.S., Mulder gulps.

CUT TO:

15C INT. MODEL HOUSE - NIGHT

15C

MULDER'S POV -- ENTOMOLOGIST EXTRAORDINAIRE

Describing her like one of the insects she studies, DR. BAMBI BERENBAUM has luscious mandibles, a voluptuous pair of thoraxes, and a great ovipositor, all of which are accentuated by her tight-fitting flannel shirt, African safari shorts, and hiking boots. She stands with her hands defiantly on her shapely coxae (hips).

BERENBAUM
May I ask why you're trespassing
on government property?

ROOM

MULDER
I'm a federal agent.

BERENBAUM
So am I.

Mulder pockets his phone, then flashes his badge.

MULDER
Agent Mulder -- FBI.

BERENBAUM
Dr. Berenbaum -- USDA-
Agricultural Research Service.

MULDER
Dr. Berenbaum, I need to ask you
some questions.

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(CONTINUED)

15C CONTINUED:

15C

BERENBAUM
For instance?

MULDER
(pause)
What's a women like you doing in
a place like this?

Scully stares anxiously at her phone, placed directly before
her on the table. Hold for a couple beats.

CUT TO:

16 INT. ENTOMOLOGY LAB - NIGHT

16

The lab (microscopes, vivariums, various magnified photos of
insects hanging on the walls) is set up in the guest house.
Berenbaum enters with Mulder following behind. Close behind.

BERENBAUM
... by studying how the insects
respond to changes in light,
temperature, air currents, food
availability, we can determine
the best ways to eradicate them.

MULDER
Why all the secrecy about your
research, then? You have some of
the town folk suspicious.

BERENBAUM
You expect us to advertise that
we've intentionally infested a
house in their neighborhood with
thousands of cockroaches?

MULDER
What kind of cockroaches are
these?

BERENBAUM
Blatella Germanica.

MULDER
Is that a..."normal" species?

BERENBAUM
It's a common one.

MULDER
Have you ever come across a type
of cockroach that is...attracted
to people?

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(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

BERENBAUM

Most cockroaches have been known to actually wash themselves after being touched by humans.

MULDER

So there's never been an instance of a cockroach... attacking humans?

BERENBAUM

Well, they crave water more than food, so there have been cases where cockroaches crawled into a person's ear or nose.

MULDER

Nose?

A hint of horror crosses Mulder's face, as he contemplates this possibility -- possibility for him anyway. Suddenly, his attention is caught by a contraption on the entomologists table -- a live stink bug (or beetle) is mounted onto the top of a Tesla coil.

MULDER

What is this for?

BERENBAUM

Oh, just a pet project of mine.

She pushes an ignition switch, causing a blue electrical discharge to shoot off the insect's exoskeleton.

BERENBAUM

I have a theory that UFO's are actually insect swarms.

Now Mulder's curiosity is also aroused.

BERENBAUM

I don't know if you know anything about UFOs, but the typical sighting occurs at night, a colored, glowing light suddenly appears hovering in the sky, often causing interference with radio and television signals, then, just as suddenly, vanishes.

MULDER

That can all be explained by insect swarms?

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

BERENBAUM

Nocturnal insects swarming through an electrical air field will have all the same characteristics.

MULDER

That's fascinating.

BERENBAUM

Everything about insects is fascinating. They're truly remarkable creatures. So beautiful, and so...honest.

MULDER

Honest?

BERENBAUM

Eat, sleep, defecate, procreate. That's all they do; that's all we do, but at least insects don't kid themselves that it's about anything more than that.

(pause)

Does my scientific detachment disturb you?

MULDER

Quite the contrary -- I find it refreshing.

Mulder's cell phone RINGS. He quickly pulls it out.

MULDER (CONT.)

(into phone)

Not now.

(hangs up)

You know, I've always been interested in insects myself.

BERENBAUM

Really?

He nods, and smiles at her. She smiles at him.

MOUNTED STINK BUG

as a blue flame shoots off its back --

CUT TO:

17 EXT. THE CRAZY BEDBUG MOTEL - NIGHT 17
ESTABLISHING SHOT of nondescript motor lodge. LEGEND.

CUT TO:

18 INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT 18
A nondescript motel manager's office. Behind the counter, an opened door allows a view of the manager's back room.

CUT TO:

19 INT. MANAGER'S BACK ROOM - NIGHT 19
The only light emanates from a television set, placed on a small stand, and tuned to the LOCAL NEWS. On a three-cushion couch reclines the slightly elderly, barefooted MOTEL MANAGER. He watches the news report with a disgusted grimace.

TELEVISION

A LOCAL NEWS REPORTER stands in front of a hospital.

REPORTER

This is the fifth report of a deceased body being found amongst a horde of cockroaches, but police are not confirming -- at least not yet -- that the insects have anything to do with the fatalities.

END OF SOFA

In the crack between the last cushion and the arm rest, a pair of cockroach antennae creep up into view. Wiggling about, they brush up against one of the Manager's bare feet. With his other foot, he scratches his tickled foot.

REPORTER (O.S.)

Police have also disaffirmed the rumor that these deaths were the result of an outbreak of the E. Boli virus somehow being spread by infected cockroaches.

MIDDLE OF SOFA

Between the cracks of the middle cushion, several antennae make their appearance. Slight CHIRPS can be heard.

(CONTINUED)

19 CONTINUED:

19

REPORTER (O.S.)

As for now, these incidents remain under local jurisdiction, but a nurse here did confirm that an FBI agent is on the case.

TELEVISION

Two men in yellow contamination suits exit out the hospital doors, behind the Reporter.

REPORTER

Police are asking that if you see any cockroaches -- don't panic. Simply notify the local authorities, and evacuate the area immediately!

MANAGER

With a slight shake of the "willies," he reaches for the t.v. remote control, lying by his side.

REMOTE CONTROL

Just before his hand grabs the remote, the cockroaches that are crawling all over it, quickly scamper off.

MANAGER

Unaware of his circumstances, he points the remote, and flips the channel.

CUT TO:

20 INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

20

Mulder lies in bed, apparently asleep. Suddenly, he slaps his shoulder, and checks to see if a bug was on him. There wasn't. He closes his eyes. Pause. His body squirms. Quickly, he lifts up his sheets to see if any bugs are in his bed. There aren't. He lowers the covers, and then his eyes. Pause. His face twitches. His eyes bolt open, and he grabs his nose. He blows the air out both nostrils. Nothing seems to have crawled in. He pauses, before grabbing his telephone.

INTERCUT WITH:

21 INT. SCULLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

21

Scully is asleep, her phone in her hand. When it RINGS, it is instantly up to her ear.

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(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

SCULLY
Mulder? Are you all right?!

MULDER
I can't sleep.

SCULLY
Mulder, what happened at the USDA site?

MULDER
They're conducting legitimate experiments. I met a Dr. Berenbaum, an entomologist, who agrees with your theory of an accidental importation of a new cockroach species.

SCULLY
Did he suggest how to catch them?

MULDER
No, but she told me everything else there is to know about insects.

SCULLY
(pause)
She?

MULDER
Yeah -- did you know the ancient Egyptians considered scarab beetles to be gods, and possibly honored them by erecting the pyramids, which may just be symbolic dung heaps?

SCULLY
Uhm, no. Did you know the inventor of the flush toilet was named Thomas Crapper?

MULDER
Bambi also has this theory about UFOs being --

SCULLY
Who?

MULDER
Dr. Berenbaum. Her theory is --

SCULLY
Her name is Bambi?

21 CONTINUED: (2)

21

MULDER

Her parents were both
naturalists.

Scully does a slight take to the phone. Who is this Bambi
woman, and how does Mulder know so much about her?

MULDER (CONT.)

Anyway, her theory is that UFOs
are insect swarm passing through
electrical air fields. She has
a lot of scientific data to back
it up.

SCULLY

Ah, Mulder...scientist don't know
everything. They're just modern
day myth-makers.

MULDER

Scully, can I confess something
to you?

SCULLY

Sure. What is it?

MULDER

I... I hate bugs.

SCULLY

Mulder, many people have a fear
of insects. It's actually a
natural, instinctive reaction to --

MULDER

No, I don't fear them, Scully --
I hate them.

(pause)

One day, back when I was a kid,
I was climbing up this tree, and
I noticed a leaf... walking
towards me. It took me forever
to realize that this was no leaf.

SCULLY

A praying mantis?

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED: (3)

21

MULDER

I had a praying mantis epiphany, and as a result, I... I screamed -- not a "girly" scream, but a scream of being confronted by some before-unknown monster, that had no business existing on the same planet I inhabited. Did you ever notice how a praying mantis' head resembles an alien's head? The mysteries of the natural world were revealed to me that day -- but rather than be astounded, I was confounded.

SCULLY

(pause)

Mulder... are you sure it wasn't a girly scream?

Just as Mulder begins his "I should have known better" take -- a very manly, terrified SCREAM is heard O.S.

SCULLY

What the hell was that?

MULDER

I have to go.

Mulder shuts off his phone and heads out of the room.

SCULLY

Mulder?!

She waits for a response, getting none again. As she punches her pillow --

CUT TO:

22 INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

22

A handful of sleepy, lowlife MOTEL RESIDENTS, amongst them the luckless Dr. Eckerle, apprehensively make their way into the office.

DR. ECKERLE

Did you hear that, too?

RESIDENT #1

It came from in here.

RESIDENT #2

TV Calling - For educational purposes only
What the hell's going on?

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED: 22

As they move towards the back office --

CUT TO:

23 INT. MANAGER'S BACK ROOM - NIGHT 23

The residents are at the doorway.

DR. ECKERLE

Hello?

He flips on the light switch, illuminating the manager lying on the ground, covered by cockroaches. The insects immediately scamper off the body.

Dr. Eckerle SCREAMS, followed by the other residents. They immediately scamper out of the room.

CUT TO:

24 INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - NIGHT 24

Mulder arrives at the door and tries to make his way past the scurrying residents, finally fighting through them, he makes it to the back room.

CUT TO:

25 INT. MANAGER'S BACK ROOM - NIGHT 25

Mulder stands in the doorway -- all he sees is the dead manager on the floor. All the cockroaches have disappeared.

FADE OUT.

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

26 INT. SCULLY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

26

Scully, fully dressed, is hurriedly packing a duffel bag. Her phone RINGS and she answers.

SCULLY

Mulder, what happened this time?

INTERCUT WITH:

27 INT. MOTEL - BACK ROOM - NIGHT

27

Deputies perform their forensic duties, as several NEWS CAMERA CREWS stand in the manager's office, shooting footage. The Manager's body is still on the floor. Mulder sits on the couch, staring at it in contemplation.

MULDER

The motel manager died.

SCULLY

Cockroaches?

MULDER

Witnesses claim they were covering his body, but I didn't see any myself.

SCULLY

Mulder, I'm coming up there right now.

MULDER

Scully, I think this man died simply from a reaction to the cockroaches.

SCULLY

Mulder, two cases of anaphylactic shock in the same day and town is highly improbable.

MULDER

I mean, I think he had a heart attack.

(looks at news crews)

The word about the cockroach infestation -- and the deaths related to it -- has gotten out. This man might have come across some cockroaches, and simply scared himself to death.

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(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

27

Sheriff Frass enters, handing a folder to Mulder, who begins studying the reports inside.

SCULLY

Regardless, Mulder, something strange is definitely going on up there.

MULDER

Maybe not. All your conjectures have proved correct. The exterminator did die from anaphylactic shock.

(flips page)

The teenage boy did die from self-inflicted wounds and was getting high off methane fumes derived from burning manure.

SCULLY

Manure?

MULDER

The medical examiner did die from a brain aneurysm.

SCULLY

Still, I can't explain the roach appearances at all those sights.

MULDER

(still reading)

Or the fact that their exoskeletons are made of metal.

SCULLY

Metal? Mulder, what are you talking about?

Mulder's attention has suddenly been grabbed by something O.S. He gets off the sofa, and moves, almost entranced, toward the television set.

SCULLY

Mulder? Mulder, I'm coming up there.

MULDER

Whatever.

Mulder pockets the phone. Arriving at the t.v. set, he kneels down, and we now see what has entranced him. Peeking out from under the television stand is a roach motel. Mulder picks up the insect trap and looks inside.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

27

MULDER'S POV - ROACH MOTEL

Stuck to the interior tar, three insect legs (the third leg having part of the abdomen still attached to it) wiggle helplessly, desperately trying to pry themselves loose.

CUT TO:

28 INT. ENTOMOLOGY LAB - NIGHT - MAGNIFYING HUMAN EYE

28

SEEN UP THROUGH a magnifying glass/circular lamp. Another eye (Mulder's) moves into the magnified circle.

MULDER

Can you tell what kind of
cockroach it is?

The third leg and abdomen, held by tweezers, are brought up into the f.g.

DR. BERENBAUM

I should be able to -- the
abdomen's still attached and we
differentiate species by their
genitalia.

WIDE

to reveal Mulder and Dr. Berenbaum examining the insect segment at her workbench.

DR. BERENBAUM

Oh my God --

MULDER

Is it abnormal?

DR. BERENBAUM

I'll say. He's hung like a club-
tailed dragonfly!

She moves over towards her microscope, placing the leg under the lens for inspection.

MULDER

Does it still look unusual?

DR. BERENBAUM

Well... yes. For an insect
genitalia, but maybe not for a
micro-processor.

(pause)

I think this insect is a machine. TV Calling - For educational purposes only

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

Off Mulder's confused reaction --

CUT TO:

29 INT. SCULLY'S CAR - NIGHT

29

While driving, Scully punches in a number on her phone.

MULDER

Mulder --

SCULLY

Mulder, I'm not sure what you meant about insects made of metal, but it brought to mind an article I read on an artificial intelligence researcher who constructs robots with an insect-like design. And if I'm not mistaken, his lab --

INTERCUT WITH:

30 INT. MULDER'S CAR - NIGHT

30

Mulder drives while talking into his phone.

MULDER

-- is in Miller's Grove. His name is Alexander Ivanov.

SCULLY

You're familiar with his work?

MULDER

No, but Dr. Berenbaum was. She made the same connection you did. I'm on my way over to hopefully talk to him.

SCULLY

It's not likely he's still working at this hour.

MULDER

Bambi says scientists are as nocturnal as cockroaches.

SCULLY

Well, I'm almost at the airport. I'll call when I get up there.

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She turns off her phone, then grips the steering wheel firmly with both hands.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

SCULLY
(under breath)
Bambi --

SPEEDOMETER

As the MOTOR REVS, the needle accelerates forward.

CUT TO:

31 INT. ROBOTICS HALLWAY - NIGHT

31

LEGEND reads: "MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF ROBOTICS"

Mulder walks down an institutional hallway. White, sterile, nothing out of the ordinary. Suddenly, a glimpse of a foot-long, insect-like designed -- yet definitely mechanical-looking robot -- scampers across the floor, before disappearing into an open doorway.

This gives Mulder pause. He continues down the hallway towards the open door. He is given pause again, when a pair of antennae, resembling car curb feelers, poke out from behind the door frame. As Mulder resumes his approach, the antennae withdraw back into the room. Mulder lunges out, into the doorway.

CUT TO:

32 INT. ROBOTICS LAB - NIGHT

32

Mulder finds himself standing at the entrance of a cross between a computer science lab and a machinist shop. Seeing the insect-robot dart around the corner of a work bench, Mulder enters. Making his way to the work bench, he looks around the corner -- only to find the insect-robot gone again.

Hearing a MECHANICAL NOISE approaching behind him, Mulder whirls around -- only to find himself confronting --

DR. ALEXANDER IVANOV

He looks at Mulder through thick, distorting eyeglasses. A scrawny, impish-looking being, he resembles... aw, look -- just cast Alex Diakun in the part. Bound in a wheelchair (an electric one, but mysteriously, Ivanov never touches any gears, the chair just seems to know where to go), a voice transducer (a gizmo that allows people with vocal chord problems to "talk"-- but in a mechanical sounding voice) is rigged up to be near his throat.

MULDER
Dr. Ivanov?

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(CONTINUED)

32 CONTINUED:

32

Ivanov presses his throat against the transducer.

IVANOV
Why are you scaring my robots?

TIMECUT TO:

33 INSECT ROBOT

33

lying on its back, on a workbench, its legs occasionally move, much in the manner of a real insect.

WIDE

to reveal Mulder studying the machine with Dr. Ivanov.

IVANOV
My colleagues in artificial intelligence have been trying for decades to create a robot that can navigate by itself. They have failed because they have tried to duplicate a human's brain. A human brain is too complex for its own good. It thinks too much. But insects just react.

Ivanov nods to the ground. Another insect robot moves along the floor, heading towards Mulder's feet. During Ivanov's speech, Mulder shuffles around a bit, but the insect follows wherever he goes.

IVANOV
I used them as a model, not only in design, but by giving them the simplest of computer programs. Go to light. Go away from light. Go to moving object. Go away from moving object. Governed only by sensors and reflex responses, they take on the behavior of an intelligent, living being.

MULDER
(re: robot at feet)
So this one is programmed to just head towards any moving object within the field of its sensors?

IVANOV
No.

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(CONTINUED)

33 CONTINUED:

33

MULDER

Then why is it following me?

IVANOV

It likes you.

TIMECUT TO:

34 ANOTHER WORKBENCH

34

Mulder and Ivanov study construction designs on a computer screen.

MULDER

Your contract is with NASA?

IVANOV

The goal is to transport a fleet of my robots to another planet, and allow them explore the terrain at their will. It sounds slightly fantastic, but the only major obstacle I foresee is devising a renewable energy source. In any case, this is the future of space exploration. It does not include living entities.

MULDER

I'm just speculating here, Doctor -- but if extra-terrestrial life forms do exist --

IVANOV

No need for speculation. I believe they do.

MULDER

-- assuming they're more technologically advanced than us, and if your ideas about the future of our space exploration is correct --

IVANOV

Then the interplanetary explorers of alien civilizations will likely be mechanical in nature. Yes, anyone who thinks alien visitations will come not in the form of robots, but in living beings with big eyes and grey skin, has been brainwashed by too much science fiction.

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(CONTINUED)

34 CONTINUED:

34

Mulder pulls out an evidence bag, containing the three insect legs.

MULDER

Doctor, can you tell me what this is?

IVANOV

I'm not really good with bugs -- a cricket's leg?

MULDER

Under the microscope.

Slightly puzzled, Ivanov places one of the legs under the microscope lense on the workbench. As he peers through the eyepiece, Mulder's phone RINGS.

MULDER

Scully, I thought you were --

SHERIFF (O.S.)

Agent Mulder, this is Sheriff Frass--

INTERCUT WITH:

35 INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

35

The room is crowded with PATIENTS, as nurses and orderlies rush about. Sheriff Frass stands amongst the throng.

SHERIFF

I'm down at the hospital. We've suddenly become inundated with cockroach-related injuries. I'd appreciate it if you came down here.

MULDER

I'll be right there.

Mulder turns off his phone, and turns back to Dr. Ivanov, who is gloomily slumped in his chair, looking off in a bewildered daze.

MULDER

Dr. Ivanov, are you all right?

Ivanov nods, barely.

MULDER

Can you identify this object?

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(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

A pause, before Ivanov slowly turns his head to Mulder. He listlessly mouths a few words, but because his throat was not touching his voice transducer, nothing was heard.

MULDER

Sir?

Ivanov leans his throat against the transducer.

IVANOV

It's beyond my comprehension.

As Mulder is thrown off by this reaction.

CUT TO:

36 INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

36

A general commotion. Medical staffers rush about, as hysterical patients are strewn everywhere. Sheriff Frass is trying to calm one of them, as Mulder approaches. The Sheriff leads Mulder to a relatively quiet corner.

SHERIFF

This entire town is in a panic. We've got over two dozen people in here suffering from pesticide poisoning.

MULDER

They all saw cockroaches?

SHERIFF

None of them did, but they've all heard about the attacks, and got carried away trying to protect their homes.

(VISUAL FX NOTE: a cockroach appears to quickly scamper across the viewer-at-home's television screen.)

SHERIFF

Now, damn it -- I want to know what you know about what's going on around here.

MULDER

I have only the most speculative of theories, Sheriff.

SHERIFF

Enlighten me.

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(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

MULDER

(pause)

These insects are not actually attacking people. In fact, they're not even insects. They may be some sort of interplanetary, exploratory, artificially intelligent robots.

The Sheriff has listened to Mulder's explanation with studious attentiveness. He nods, as if mulling the idea over. Suddenly, he SLAPS Mulder across the face.

SHERIFF

Come on, son -- stay with me, here. I don't need you to lose your head like everyone else is.

MULDER

Then what's your theory, Sheriff?

SHERIFF

Well, to be honest, I have seen something like this once before. It was back in 1944, in my hometown of Mattoon, Illinois.

MULDER

(trying to recall)

Mattoon, Illinois? The Mattoon Phantom Gasser?

SHERIFF

That's right. One night, some woman woke up, and thought she saw some guy peeking in her window. Then she smelled some gas, and the next thing she knew, her legs were temporarily paralyzed. The headlines the next day read: "Anaesthetic Prowler On Loose"

MULDER

In the next two weeks, over twenty women reported similar attacks.

SHERIFF

The whole town was gripped in fear. And then the alleged attacks suddenly stopped. No reports were ever substantiated, and no evidence was found to ever prove the existence of the "Mad Gasser of Mattoon."

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

MULDER

I've read about that, it's a famous sociological case study. So you're suggesting that everything that's occurred here today was simply the result of over-active imaginations? Of mass hysteria?

SHERIFF

Oh, not at all -- I'm saying that maybe this mad gasser has relocated here after all these years, and if he has -- I'll be damned if I'm going to let him terrorize my town, on my watch!

(X)

The Sheriff marches off.

Rubbing his brow, Mulder shakes his lowered head disbelievingly. Suddenly, he freezes. Scurrying on the ground, across the floor from Mulder, is a cockroach.

(X)

After a pause, Mulder pushes a nearby stretcher across the floor, ahead of the insect, while he doubles back behind the roach.

(X)

As the wheels of the stretcher hit the side of the wall, the cockroach instinctively heads in the opposite direction -- right into Mulder's waiting hands.

(X)

Mulder lifts the creature up to his face for closer inspection.

(X)

MULDER

Greetings from planet Earth.

(X)

COCKROACH

as it squirms between Mulder's fingers --

(X)

FADE OUT:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

37 EXT. MINI-MART/GAS STATION - NIGHT

37

Cars are lined up at every gas pump, HONKING impatiently at the cars that are currently filling their tanks. The owner of those latter cars SHOUT non-obscene obscenities back at the honking cars. The few parking spaces are filled, and as one car pulls out, another immediately peels into its place. CUSTOMERS run into the mini-mart, as more customers run out, carrying armfuls of merchandise.

Into this tempest rides Scully. Pulling into the lot in her rental car, she must wait for an open parking spot. She takes in the scene -- from all appearances, civilization has broken down.

Suddenly, a car -- at full speed -- backs out of a parking space, barely misses Scully, then speeds out of the lot. As Scully, bewildered, watches the car drive off, another car sneaks into her space. Scully leans on her HORN.

CUT TO:

38 INT. MINI-MART - NIGHT

38

A mini-mart maelstrom. The tiny store is crowded with hysterical customers, who hurriedly pick up cans of bug spray, and stock up on survival essentials: water, batteries, and toilet paper.

Scully enters, and is immediately bumped by a customer making a hasty exit. She moves to the counter, addressing the harried CLERK.

SCULLY

Excuse me, do you have road maps?

Hurriedly ringing up items for a CUSTOMER #1, the Clerk only has time to nod.

SCULLY

Do you mind telling me where they are?

CUSTOMER #1

(to clerk)

Come on -- hurry it up!

SCULLY

What is going on here?

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

38

CUSTOMER #1

Haven't you heard about the roaches? They're devouring people whole! Everybody's gettin' the hell out of here!

SCULLY

Have you seen any cockroaches yourself?

CUSTOMER #1

No -- but they're everywhere!

As Scully watches Customer #1 dash out the store, Customer #2 drops his supplies on the counter.

CUSTOMER #2

The roaches aren't attacking people, lady, their spreading the Ebola virus.

(gives clerk \$20)

Look, keep the change.

(as he exits)

We're all going to be bleeding from our nipples!

Customer #3 drops off his goods.

SCULLY

Cockroaches?

CUSTOMER #3

No -- I heard there's some mad gasser going around killing people with nerve gas.

As murmurs of "Nerve gas?!" spread throughout the store, Scully pulls out her badge, and addresses the customers.

SCULLY

All right, listen up -- I'm Agent Dana Scully with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. I'm assuring you that you are not in any danger. Everything will be okay if everyone just calms down, and begins acting rationally. Now -- where the hell are the road maps?

Suddenly, a fight breaks out between two customers, each with a death hold on the last can of bug spray.

CUSTOMER #4

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Hey -- this last can is mine!

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (2)

38

CUSTOMER #5
Give it up or I'll squash ya!

Customer #4 pushes down on the aerosol pump, spraying pesticide into Customer #5's face. Still holding onto the can, the two shove each other into a food display stand, and all three CRASH to the floor. Upon impact, small, black objects shoot out from under the pile, and dart across the floor.

CUSTOMER #3
Roaches!!

The other Customers SCREAM, and everyone stampedes out of the store -- including the Clerk.

Only Scully remains. Moving to the fallen display stand, she kneels and inspects one of the black objects. She then picks up an open box of Junior Mints (if we can't use product name, may I suggest Choco-Droppings?)

Looking out at the hysterical crowd, Scully can only shake her head, then pop a Junior Mint (or Choco-Dropping) into her mouth.

CUT TO:

39 INT. ENTOMOLOGY LAB - NIGHT - COCKROACH

39

pinned to a dissecting tray, being prodded by a probe and tiny forceps.

MULDER & BAMBI

Looking through the magnifying glass, Bambi huddles over the insect, while Mulder huddles over both.

MULDER
Well -- ?

BERENBAUM
Well... it's a cockroach, all right.
(after Mulder's
puzzlement)
It's not like the leg segment you had me examine earlier. This is just a typical cockroach.

MULDER
Even the --

39 CONTINUED:

39

BERENBAUM

-- Yes, even the genitalia is normal.

(shrugs)

Cockroaches are common in this area at this time of year. It's one of the reasons I set up my study here.

Frustrated, Mulder -- not violently -- brings his fist down onto the ignition switch, causing another blue spark to shoot off the stink bug. His cell phone RINGS, and he answers.

MULDER

Mulder.

INTERCUT WITH:

40 INT. SCULLY'S CAR - NIGHT

40

Still parked at the mini-mart, Scully sits in her car consulting an open road map, and some report folders. In the b.g., Customers continue to run in and out of the store.

SCULLY

Mulder, this town is insane.

MULDER

Where are you?

SCULLY

At a gas station on the outskirts of... civilization. Look, Mulder -- I think I might have come up with a lead. Remember the alternative fuel researcher who witnessed the exterminator's death? The fuel he's researching is methane gas. Methane derived from manure.

MULDER

Manure?

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

40

SCULLY

He has an import license to bring in animal dung samples from outside the country. Now, maybe you can confirm this with your Dr. Bambi, but I think cockroaches are dung-eaters, and if so, a few might have accidentally been shipped along with the samples. The research facility was probably ground zero for the infestation. What do you think?

MULDER

Scully, if an alien civilization was advanced enough to build and send artificially-intelligent robotic probes through the outer reaches of space, might they not have also perfected the extraction of methane fuel from manure -- an abundant, replenishing energy source on a planet filled with dung-producing creatures?

Both Scully and Bambi have produced askance looks during Mulder's harangue -- Scully at her phone, Bambi at Mulder.

SCULLY

Mulder, I think you've been in this town too long.

MULDER

Where's the research facility located?

CUT TO:

41 EXT. METHANE RESEARCH FACILITY - NIGHT

41

An industrial plant-like structure, but one with a high-tech sheen to it. A sign on the building reads: Alt-Fuels, Inc., and underneath that, their motto: "Waste is a terrible thing to waste."

Mulder drives up, with Dr. Berenbaum in the passenger seat, parking near the building, under two large windows.

MULDER

You'd better stay here until I make sure it's safe.

(CONTINUED).

41 CONTINUED:

41

BERENBAUM

Be careful. We still don't know what these cockroaches are capable of -- if they're even cockroaches.

MULDER

I'm not so worried about the roaches as much as I am the human element.

CUT TO:

42 INT. METHANE RESEARCH FACILITY - NIGHT - OFFICE DOOR

42

with painted letters on the window, reading: "Dr. Jeff Eckerle, President & Chief Science Officer." A venetian blind blocks our view into the office, but a section of the slats are parted, revealing the crazed eyes of Dr. Eckerle peering out.

FACILITY

A cross between a chemistry lab and an oil refinery. On the various lab benches are found several open containers labelled "Dung Samples," along with other technical information. On top of these samples, which -- for scientific reasons that are too complex to go into -- look like mounds of fertilizer, crawl as many cockroaches as we can get. An occasional CHIRP is heard from them.

DR. ECKERLE--FROM OTHER SIDE OF DOOR

Closing the blinds, he huddles down embryonically against the door. Holding a can of bug spray for dear life, Eckerle visibly shakes. This is more than a case of the "willies" -- this is outright insanity.

MULDER

From a hallway corridor, Mulder enter the facility. Immediately, he spots the cockroaches crawling across the mounds of manure.

Moving towards them, he reaches out to grab a cockroach, but just before he has one in his clutches, a GUN SHOT rings out, as the dung heap flies apart from a bullet impaction.

Mulder ducks, and spins to see the deranged Dr. Eckerle holding a small caliber pistol in one hand, and in the other, a can of insecticide, which he sprays about while nervously making his way through the plant.

MULDER

Dr. Eckerle --

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(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

Eckerle turns to see Mulder.

ECKERLE

They're after me! First at my house, than at the motel, then I... I came here to get away, but -- they're following me!

Mulder cautiously approaches the crazy man.

MULDER

Dr. Eckerle, you're not in any danger. These insects will not harm you.

ECKERLE

I've seen them kill two men!

MULDER

They weren't responsible for those deaths, but they may be for ours if you continue firing your gun in a plant full of methane gas.

ECKERLE

But don't you understand? Bugs... bugs drive me crazy.

CUT TO

43 EXT. METHANE RESEARCH FACILITY - NIGHT

43

Scully drives up, parking next to Mulder's car. She looks at the babe sitting in the passenger seat.

SCULLY

Let me guess -- Bambi?

BAMBI

(nods)

Fox told me to wait out here, while he checked inside first. Should I come along with you?

Scully gets out of her car, and pulls out her gun.

SCULLY

No -- this is no place for an entomologist.

Shoving in her ammo clip with a hint of machismo, Scully hustles off towards the facility. TV Calling - For educational purposes only

CUT TO:

44 INT. METHANE RESEARCH FACILITY - NIGHT

44

Mulder continues to draw closer to the mad doctor.

ECKERLE

Why are these roaches making those weird noises?

MULDER

In Madagascar, they have roaches that hiss by blowing air through holes in their upper thorax.

ECKERLE

(lowers gun slightly)

Really? How... how do you know so much about them?

MULDER

I don't. That's why we shouldn't kill these, but capture them for study. Now, please -- put down your gun.

ECKERLE

Have... have I lost my mind?

MULDER

Not at all. You've just had a very stressful day that's affected your ability to think clearly. You're judgement is a little clouded right now.

ECKERLE

It is?

(re-points gun at Mulder)

Then how do I know you're not a cockroach?

CUT TO:

45 INT. FACILITY CORRIDOR - NIGHT

45

Scully wanders the corridor, apparently unable to locate the main laboratory.

SCULLY

Mulder? Mulder?

Finally, she pulls out her cell phone, and pushes numbers.

CUT TO:

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46 INT. METHANE RESEARCH FACILITY - NIGHT

46

The hapless Dr. Eckerle still has his gun pointed at the helpless Mulder.

MULDER

Dr. Eckerle, I assure you, I'm
just as human as you are, if not
more so --

Mulder's cell phone RINGS -- the tone sounding similar to the cockroaches' chirp.

ECKERLE

You are one of them!

Eckerle FIRES his gun, Mulder dives out of the way, and the bullet hits a holding tank, causing a geyser of methane gas to spray into the air.

Eckerle FIRES at the fleeing Mulder, misses again, hitting another tank, causing another methane geyser.

As Mulder leaps out of the room, Eckerle continues spraying his pesticide and firing his gun in an excessively reckless manner.

CUT TO:

47 INT. FACILITY CORRIDOR - NIGHT

47

Hearing gunfire, Scully readies her weapon. Suddenly, Mulder rounds the corner, and dashes down the corridor towards Scully.

MULDER

Scully, get out -- this whole
place could blow!

As the Agents race down the hall --

CUT TO:

48 EXT. METHANE RESEARCH FACILITY - NIGHT

48

Flying out of the facility, the Agents run towards their cars.

MULDER

(to Bambi)
Get down!

As Bambi ducks down in the front seat, Mulder and Scully dive behind the cars.

WINDOWS OF BUILDING

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As a resounding EXPLOSION is heard within, the glass and frame of the window blows out.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

CARS

The shattered windows crash down onto the cars, followed shortly thereafter by a dense shower of molten fertilizer.

After a pause, an unharmed Dr. Berenbaum sits up in the front seat, looking towards the rear of the car. Slowly rising into view, emerges Mulder and Scully, both covered with dung (not the moist kind, but the kind that will, nevertheless, stick to their skin and clothes). They look up at the plant.

FACILITY

As smaller EXPLOSIONS continue going off inside, smoke and a fiery glow emit from the broken windows.

AGENTS

Mulder turns to his manure-drenched partner. What else is left to say? --

MULDER

Crap.

DISSOLVE TO:

49 EXT. METHANE RESEARCH FACILITY - DAY (NEXT MORNING)

49

A slight stream of smoke still flows out from the facility. Several FIREMEN are now at the scene, as well as a few ONLOOKERS. Amongst the latter, stands Mulder, sandwiched between Dr. Berenbaum and Scully. The Agents still have strong remnants of their dung bath. From the facility, Sheriff Frass approaches the threesome.

SHERIFF

It's like a crematorium in there.
I don't think we'll locate the
doctor's remains.

MULDER

Or anything else, for that
matter.

SHERIFF

Still, it wasn't as bad as some
of the other fires last night.

SCULLY

There were others?

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

SHERIFF

(checking notepad)

Four, to be exact. Plus eighteen automobile accidents, thirteen assault and batteries, and two stores were looted. Thirty-six injuries, all total. We haven't had a report -- about cockroaches or otherwise -- for several hours, though, so maybe this town has finally come to its senses. Now you two ought to go home and get some rest -- you both look pooped.

The Agents can only roll their eyes as the Sheriff walks away.

IVANOV (O.S.)

Agent Mulder -- ?

The trio turns to see Dr. Ivanov wheelchairing up to them.

IVANOV

I was told I could locate you here. I've been thinking... those segments you showed me earlier... may I examine them again?

Reaching into his coat pocket, Mulder retrieves an evidence bag, but it contains nothing but crushed metal granules.

MULDER

They've completely desiccated, just like the molted exoskeleton.

Confused, Mulder hands the bag to Dr. Ivanov, who still examines the contents carefully.

BERENBAUM

You know, many insects don't develop wings until their last molting stage. Perhaps whatever these "things" were, they had their final molt, and have flown off, back to wherever they originated.

SCULLY

(hint of scathing sarcasm)

Yeah... that would explain everything.

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(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (2)

49

IVANOV

May I borrow this, Agent Mulder,
for further study?

MULDER

I've already had a similar sample
analyzed. It's nothing but
common metals. What do you hope
to find from it, Doctor?

Ivanov is too engrossed in examining the granules to answer.

BERENBAUM

His destiny.

Ivanov suddenly looks up at Dr. Berenbaum.

IVANOV

Isn't that what Dr. Zaius said to
Zira at the end of The Planet of
the Apes?

BERENBAUM

It's one of my favorite movies.

IVANOV

Mine, too. I love science
fiction.

They exchange smiles, and by natural instinct, begin to slowly
stroll away together.

BERENBAUM

I'm also fascinated by your
research. Have you ever
considered programming your
robots to behave like social
insects, like ants or bees?

IVANOV

As a matter of fact, I have....

The Agents watch the two scientists wander off. Mulder turns
to Scully, who can only shrug.

SCULLY

Smart is sexy.

Mulder turns back, a bit forlornly, to watch the odd couple
depart.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (3)

SCULLY

Think of it this way, Mulder --
by the time there's another
invasion of artificially
intelligent, dung-eating robotic
probes from outer space, maybe
their Uber-children will have
devised a way to save our planet.

Hinting at a smile, Mulder places his hand on Scully's
shoulder.

MULDER

Scully, I never thought I'd say
this to you, but... you smell
bad.

He walks off, leaving Scully standing there, with a look
acknowledging the fact that this time she's in no position to
argue with him.

DISSOLVE TO:

50 INT. MULDER'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Sitting at his desk, beside an open window, a cleaned-up Mulder
types into his computer.

MULDER (V.O.)

The development of our cerebral
cortex has been the greatest
achievement of the evolutionary
processes. Big deal. While
allowing us the thrills of
intellect and the pangs of self-
consciousness, it is all too
often overruled by our inner,
instinctive brain -- the one that
tells us to react, not reflect,
to run rather than ruminare.

Mulder breaks off a piece of a sunflower seed muffin (if such
things exist), and stuffs it into his mouth.

MULDER (V.O.)

Maybe we have gone as far as we
can go, and the next advance --
whatever that may be -- will be
made by beings we create
ourselves, using our own tech --

The computer BEEPS, freezing up. Mulder pauses before
resuming.

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(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

MULDER (V.O.)

--Tech--

The computer BEEPS again. Mulder throws up his hands -- "What?" -- before trying again.

MULDER (V.O.)

-- Technology. Life-forms we can design and program not to be ultimately governed and constricted by the rules of survival.

Mulder breaks off another piece of muffin, looks out the window, resumes:

MULDER (V.O.)

Or perhaps that step forward has already been achieved on another planet, by organisms that had a billion years head start on us. If these beings ever visited us, would we recognize what we were seeing? And upon catching sight of us, would they react in anything but horror at seeing such mindless, primitive, hideous creatures?

Mulder reaches for another bite, only to suddenly leap right out of his chair. A cockroach is on the plate, eating the last morsel of muffin. Regaining his composure, Mulder takes a closer look at the insect. It is clearly a different species of cockroach than the ones seen previously.

Picking up an X-File, he raises it, as if to strike the creature dead. He hesitates, however. Staring at the insect, he seems to be seeing it in a new light.

Perhaps he is seeing the noble longevity of its lineage, or the truly fascinating design of its body construction, or perhaps he's merely aware of his own violent reflexes at seeing nothing more than a simple insect. In any case, Mulder slowly lowers his instrument of death.

Suddenly, the cockroach makes a mad dash across the table, and Mulder -- instinctively--takes a swipe at it. The instant his X-File crashes down and squashes that fucking bug to death --

CUT TO BLACK:

THE END