

THE X-FILES

"Arcadia"

Written by

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Directed by

Michael Watkins

Episode #6ABX13
Story No. E00378

Prod. Draft Full Script
Blue Rev. pgs. 16, 30, 46, 51-62
Pink Rev. Full Script

December 04, 1998
December 10, 1998
December 14, 1998

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Pink Rev. - December 14, 1998

"Arcadia"

CAST LIST

Agent Fox Mulder
Agent Dana Scully

Ben Kline
Win Shroeder
Nona Kline
Pat Verlander
Big Mike
Cami Shroeder
Gordy
Gene Gogolak

Non-Speaking:
Sissie (Gordy's wife)

Omitted:
Security Guard
Neighbor
35ish Man

*
*
*

"Arcadia"

SET LIST

EXTERIORS

PLANNED COMMUNITY ENTRANCE
VARIOUS NEIGHBORHOOD STREETS
KLINE'S/PETRIE'S HOUSE
 /FRONT YARD
GOGOLAK'S HOUSE
BIG MIKE'S HOUSE
SHROEDER'S HOUSE
 /SIDE YARD

INTERIORS

KLINE'S HOUSE
 /KITCHEN
 /FRONT HALL
 /BEDROOM
 /STAIRCASE
 /LIVING ROOM
 /HALLWAY
GOGOLAK'S HOUSE
 /DINING ROOM
 /DEN
BIG MIKE'S HOUSE
 /BEDROOM
SHROEDER HOUSE
 /DINING ROOM
 /DEN

OMITTED:

EXT. KLINE'S BACK YARD
EXT. ANOTHER LOVELY PLANNED COMMUNITY
EXT. SHROEDER'S BACK YARD

INT. ISUZU TROOPER
INT. MINIVAN

TEASER

1 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD ENTRANCE - DAY

A gentle waterfall tumbles over the front wall of this planned community, LEGEND: NORTHERN SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

"The Falls at Arcadia," the development's name, is written in a rich, gold script. A gate controls access. Approaching it... (X)

AN ISUZU TROOPER

Pulls to a stop at a keypad stanchion. BEN KLINE, 40s, sticks an arm out of his driver's window and leans for the keypad. He can't quite reach. Meanwhile, a soothing VOICE greets him.

COMPUTER VOICE

Welcome to the Falls. Please enter your code now.

Kline really stretches, but no dice. Annoyed, he gives up and gets out of his truck.

COMPUTER VOICE

Welcome to the Falls. Please enter your code now.

KLINE

Yeah, yeah.

BEEP, BEEP, BEEP, BEEP -- Kline punches in his code. The gate rolls open and he climbs back into his Trooper.

COMPUTER VOICE

Welcome home... Mr. Kline.

Kline drives through. The gate silently closes behind him.

2 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

2

We're rolling along a flawless ribbon of black asphalt right at the speed limit -- fifteen miles an hour. We're passing upper-middle class homes. And, I mean...

... This place is perfect. Fresh paint, clipped shrubs, lawns like putting greens. There's not a blade of grass out of place. (X) (X)

This is where BMW engineers go when they die. We PAN off this passing scenery to find Kline's Trooper keeping pace ahead of us. We favor a bumper sticker: "Question Authority." (X) (X)

3 OMITTED

(X) 3

AND

4

4

5 EXT. KLINE'S HOUSE - A MINUTE LATER

We see a tableau of the Middle-American Dream: a large-ish, modern home, immaculately kept. It fits in perfectly with all the other houses we've seen. (X)

Into frame drives the Trooper, stopping in front of the mailbox.

CLOSE - THE MAILBOX

Is neatly stencilled "The Klines." It's painted a color which probably has some name like "desert sage." Fresh paint. Really fresh, because when Kline's hand reaches to open the mailbox...

... It comes away with desert sage all over it. We ADJUST to show Kline -- he makes a face at the wet paint on his fingers.

MAN'S VOICE

Oops! Sorry about that, Ben!

KLINE'S POV - HIS NEIGHBOR

A man we'll come to know as WIN SHROEDER cranes his neck from behind a hedge next door. He steps into view holding a brush and a gallon of paint. He gives a wave.

SHROEDER

Just thought I'd be neighborly!

(cheerful smile)

You gotta be up to code. (X)

This neighborliness clearly pisses Kline off. Simmering, he grabs the contents of his mailbox -- a brown paper-wrapped PACKAGE -- and rounds the Isuzu into his driveway.

Kline exits his parked truck and stalks toward his house in b.g. Off him, we RACK TO Shroeder padding over to Kline's mailbox. Shroeder's friendly smile dissipates now that Kline is gone.

ANGLE FROM INSIDE MAILBOX

Looking out at Shroeder, we see he now looks deadly serious. (X)
With his brush, he touches up the wet paint. He attends to this (X)
as if it were the most important work in the world.

Finished, he closes the mailbox door, sending us into BLACK.

6 INT. KLINE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - THE BROWN PAPER PACKAGE (X) 6

Gets plunked down atop the kitchen table. (X)

KLINE (O.S.)

I swear to god, that's it --
call the paint store.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

WIDER

Kline paces in his kitchen, wound tight. His wife NONA looks on.

KLINE

I'm painting the mailbox pink.
Hell, forget the mailbox -- I'll
paint the whole damn house pink!

NONA

Ben...

KLINE

/-- I'll make the whole damn
place look like you won it
selling cosmetics! You'll see!
Buncha Nazis!

NONA

Honey, would you just calm down?
Rules are rules -- we knew what
we were getting into when we
moved here.

KLINE

Not this! Not when I've got
that weirdo Shroeder repainting
our mailbox because it's "desert
sienna" instead of "desert
sage!" Freakin' weirdo.

Ready to change the subject, Nona looks to the kitchen table.

NONA

What's that?

Kline sighs disgustedly, then checks out the mysterious package.

KLINE

It doesn't say who sent it.

He shrugs, unwraps it. Inside is a WHIRLIGIG: a painted
plywood yard sculpture -- when the wind spins the propeller on
the end, a little man chops an axe. It's not exactly high art.

NONA

Whoa.

KLINE

Tasteful.

(X)

Nona gives the propeller a spin, making the man CHOP, CHOP, CHOP.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

NONA

Boy... wouldn't the neighbors hate this.

(X)
(X)

Kline cocks his head at his wife and levels a look at her: "good idea." Off this:

7 EXT. KLINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - THE WHIRLIGIG

7

Is mounted high on a porch post, the little man CHOP-CHOP-CHOPPING in a steady breeze. We CRANE UP from him, framing an open upstairs window.

(X)
(X)

8 INT. KLINE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

8

Off the window, we SLOWLY DRIFT to Kline and his wife, asleep in their bed. The CHOP-CHOP-CHOP is easily heard here, too.

(X)

Abruptly, it STOPS. After a moment, Kline opens his eyes, reacting to this sudden silence. He turns his head and sees the CURTAINS still WAFTING gently in the breeze.

Kline wonders at this when... CREAK. We hear a faint squeak of floorboards somewhere in the house. Kline sits up in bed, inadvertently awakening his wife. She's in a sleepy fog.

NONA

Honey..? What is it?

CREAK. There it is again, a little louder -- Nona hears it, too. Kline gets up silently. He looks around, takes a "CPA of the Year" trophy off a dresser and holds it as a weapon.

KLINE

Stay here.

He creeps out of the bedroom, leaving behind his wife -- sitting up wide-awake and nervous now.

9 INT. KLINE'S HOUSE - FRONT HALL - KLINE'S BARE FEET

9

Pad down the stairs from the second floor. He descends into frame and pauses, apparently smelling something -- something rank. He spots something below which increases his fear.

(X)
(X)
(X)

HIS POV - THE CARPET

Creamy ivory, it has gigantic, muddy FOOTPRINTS tracked across it, coming from the closed front door. They pass through the darkened living room, circle out of sight through the kitchen.

(X)
(X)

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

RESUME - KLINE (X)

Raises his trophy in both hands, ready to swing it. Freaked and breathing fast, he follows the prints. (X)

HIGH ANGLE - FROM BEHIND (X)

We round a corner, revealing Kline ahead of us. We CREEP AFTER Kline, looking down on him. He's unaware, wondering what in hell is going on when... a SHADOW falls over him from behind. (X)

Kline whirls around, looks up. He barely has time to SCREAM. (X)

CLOSE - ON THE CARPET

We hear a heavy, wet SPLAT! o.s. The CPA trophy bounces off the floor at Kline's feet -- then his feet get yanked off the floor, straight up out of frame. A strangled YELL, more WET NOISES...

10 INT. KLINE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

10

Nona is hearing this and losing it. She fumbles for the bedside phone, drops it. Now she hears... FOOTSTEPS slowly approaching. (X)

NONA

Oh god. Ben...? Honey..?

BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. Big footsteps. Nona's wide eyes look to a glass of water on the bedside table beside her -- the water RIPPLES with each footstep, like in "Jurassic Park."

11 OMITTED

(X)11

12 INT. KLINE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS - NONA

12

Is ready to climb the walls. Something enters the room now. She SCREAMS. We DRIFT OFF her, to the half-open window.

13 EXT. KLINE'S HOUSE - UPSTAIRS WINDOW

13

More SCREAMING, a little fainter out here. A BIG SHADOW passes over the curtains. A CRASH -- a bedside lamp breaks, and now the window is dark. We DRIFT OFF this unseen carnage and frame the neighborhood, quiet and peaceful. Perfect. Off this: (X)

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

14 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE (FORMERLY KLINE'S HOUSE) - DAY

(X) 14

Again, that tableau of the Middle-American Dream. LEGEND: "SIX MONTHS LATER." Into this frame eases a big WELCOME BASKET. We come around on it to see the woman holding it. She is...

PAT VERLANDER

A sweet-faced dumpling. Her basket is stuffed with oranges, sparkling cider and the like, and says "WELCOME, NEIGHBORS!" She shifts its weight to peek at her watch. She is alone in the Kline's front yard, waiting antsyly for someone to arrive.

We hear a truck RUMBLE up the street. Pat is visibly relieved.

PAT

Here they are...

A MOVING VAN

Motors into view and backs into the empty driveway. A teal minivan arrives behind it, pulling up to the curb. Pat hurries to the minivan, struggling with the huge basket.

CLOSE - THE MINIVAN'S DRIVER DOOR

Opens. A pair of loafer-clad feet touch down. We TILT UP khaki Dockers and a pale pink golf shirt to reveal...

... MULDER, fists on his hips, proudly surveying the house.

MULDER

Honey? What do you think?

(X)

CLOSE - THE PASSENGER DOOR

Opens. TILT UP flats, black Capri pants and a blousy white shirt tied at the waist (ala Mary Tyler Moore) to reveal... SCULLY. She grins fondly at Mulder, gives a nod of approval.

MULDER

Is this place us, or what?

Pat Verlander approaches, gives them both a flustered smile.

PAT

You must be the Petries. Hi, welcome. Welcome to the Falls!

She pushes the basket on Scully, who is surprised by its weight.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

14

MULDER

Hi, I'm Rob. This is my wife,
Laura.

Familiar with the Dick Van Dyke show, Pat looks confused. (X)

PAT

Rob and Laura... Petrie? Really? (X)

SCULLY

(glancing at Mulder) (X)
We pronounce it "Pee-trie." (X)

PAT

Isn't that something? Well, (X)
it's so nice to meet you. I'm (X)
Pat Verlander. I live six doors
down. I'm the neighborhood
Welcome Wagon!

SCULLY

So nice to meet you, Pat.

PAT

Yes, I uh...

Pat seems preoccupied... sort of worried. She keeps looking toward the moving van in the driveway. The THREE MOVING MEN aren't working particularly quickly. Pat checks her watch again.

PAT

You know, I have to say, it's
already ten after five. I don't
know if you're going to make it.

SCULLY

I'm sorry?

PAT

The six o'clock cut-off. All
move-ins are required to be
completed by six p.m.

(off their stares)

It's... it's in the CC&Rs. It's
one of our rules.

Mulder and Scully nod thoughtfully, glancing to one another.

MULDER

Well... shoot.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

14

He gives Pat a sheepish smile and a shrug, then strolls toward his new house, his arm around Scully's shoulder. Scully isn't having an easy time with the heavy welcome basket.

This isn't the answer Pat wanted to hear. She stares after them, then nervously glances around the neighborhood. She checks her watch again.

CUT TO:

15 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - THE CARPET

(X) 15

Is luxurious ivory -- and absolutely SPOTLESS, unlike the last time we saw it. We TILT UP to find Mulder looking around the place. Scully hunts for a spot to set down the damn basket.

MULDER

Wow. The photos didn't do it justice.

Pat hurries in behind them, speaking low to the nearest Mover:

PAT

Guys? Fast. Gotta hustle.

The man gives her a sideward glance, then continues at his same pace. Scully finally manages to set her basket on the floor.

MULDER

The previous owners left it so clean!

He looks to Pat, who forces a smile and changes the subject.

PAT

What do you do for a living, Mr. Petrie?

MULDER

I work at home mostly. Which is great for Laura... she gets me al-ll to herself.

He beams at Scully. Scully hesitates, then turns back to Pat.

SCULLY

So... this house is immaculate, Pat. I'd love to send a thank you note to the previous owners.

PAT

That's sweet.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED: (2)

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SCULLY

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PAT

That's sweet.

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

Friendly Pat clearly doesn't want to talk about the previous owners. She checks her watch again, then looks out the window.

PAT

Oh, good.

She quickly exits the open front door. Mulder and Scully move to the window. Looking out, they see:

THEIR POV - THE MOVING VAN

The Movers are standing back, looking askance at a bucket brigade of six or seven NEIGHBORS unloading the truck like it was on fire. They're piling furniture in the driveway.

Mulder and Scully look to one another, wondering at this. They head out the door after Pat..

16 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - A ROCKING CHAIR

(X)16

Bobs up the walk, being carried by Win Shroeder -- he's got it upside-down over his head, looking out through the back like prison bars. He manages to extend a hand to Mulder and Scully, who meet him coming the opposite way.

SHROEDER

Rob and Laura Petrie?

(X)

SCULLY

"Pee-trie."

(X)

(X)

SHROEDER

Isn't that a stitch! Win Shroeder, your next-door neighbor. Welcome, welcome!

(X)

MULDER

(shakes his hand)

Yeah... hi. Win.

SHROEDER

Don't you worry -- we'll have you in before six! TIME?!

A male neighbor, GORDY, checks his watch and calls back:

GORDY

Five-nineteen! --

Shroeder smiles at Mulder and Scully as he hurries to the house. Taken aback, Mulder and Scully head to the truck, sidestepping more folks carrying their stuff. Everyone says hi.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

Scully sees something up ahead that makes her quicken her pace.

SCULLY

Excuse me!

A CARDBOARD BOX MARKED "CHINA"

Is being lifted by a large and sweet, though slightly sweaty guy named BIG MIKE. Scully tries to take it from him.

SCULLY

I've got it, thanks.

BIG MIKE

Don't be silly! It's heavy --
I got it!

Showing off, he hoists it on his shoulder... where it slips off and falls behind him with a LOUD CRASH. Other Neighbors stop to look at him, disgusted. Scully stares deadpan down at the box. Big Mike is ready to hang himself.

BIG MIKE

Oh, no. I'm so sorry. I...

(X)

A woman approaches -- she's around Scully's age, apparently pleasant and sane. Her name is CAMI.

CAMI

It's okay, Mike. Go help Gordy.

BIG MIKE

(to Scully)

Please send me any bills.

Scully manages a pained smile as he retreats, then bends down to lift the banged-up box. Cami stoops to take one end.

SCULLY

Thanks.

CAMI

I'm Cami Shroeder, by the way.
Win's wife.

SCULLY

Laura. Nice to meet you.

Cami smiles warmly as she and Scully carry the box out of frame.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

MULDER

Stands by the back of the moving van, watching all this with his arms crossed. Behind him, two Movers unload a regulation-size basketball hoop and post -- the kind with wheels on the base.

MOVER

Where's this go?

MULDER

In the driveway.

(X)

Shroeder, coming back for another load, does a take on the hoop.

SHROEDER

Whoa. Rob -- let's talk.
(takes Mulder aside)
B-ball fan! Shooting hoops!
That's uh... that's not good.
That would definitely stand out
in your front yard there.

MULDER

Stand out, Win?

SHROEDER

As in, not be "aesthetically
pleasing." To the eye.

(off Mulder's stare)

Hey, maybe you can get a special
dispensation from Mr. Gogolak,
the president of the Homeowner's
Association. I'd take it up
with him. But in the meantime...

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

(mock whisper)

I'd put that in the garage.

Mulder looks to the Movers, who have been waiting to hear the outcome of this. Off Mulder's shrug, they carry the hoop into the garage. Shroeder smiles.

SHROEDER

Alright. Let's finish getting
you folks moved in!

Off Mulder, wondering whether all his new neighbors smoke crack:

CUT TO:

17 OMITTED

(X) 17

18 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - FORTY MINUTES LATER - CLOSE ON A WATCH (X) 18

Which is at 5:59:55 pm and counting. (X)

MULDER (X)

Stares at his watch, shows it to Scully. They look from it to: (X)

THEIR POV - OUT THEIR OPEN FRONT DOOR (X)

We can see the moving van chugging out of their driveway. The (X)
neighbors, having just finished the move with seconds to spare, (X)
wave goodbye from the street. A few call out "welcome to the (X)
neighborhood!" as they all go their separate ways. (X)

SEEN FROM BEHIND - MULDER AND SCULLY (X)

Wave back, then glance to one another again. They close the (X)
front door and turn to face... the bulk of their furniture and (X)
belongings piled floor-to-ceiling by the front hall. (X)

MULDER

Oh, yeah... nothing weird going
on around here.

(Scully edges past)

You didn't let me carry you over
the threshold. (X)

She moves into the living room, closes the window blinds. (X)

SCULLY

You ready?

MULDER

Let's get it on. Honey.

SCULLY

Alright, then.

With the blinds closed, they have privacy. Mulder approaches (X)
her. They stare at each other as they both produce EXAM GLOVES. (X)
They pull them onto their hands, snapping the rubber. (X)

They go their separate ways, each one heading to a different
part of the room. Mulder checks out the walls, the mantle,
while Scully stoops over the cardboard box that says "China."

CLOSE - THE BOX

Is dog-eared from its fall. Scully opens the sealed top and
pulls out a high-tech LAMP (referred to as an "Alternate Light
Source" in the forensic technology literature). This lamp is
obviously broken -- glass shards fall loose.

Scully RATTLES it, annoyed. She looks to Mulder.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

SCULLY

Thanks to our helpful neighbors,
there'll be no fluorescein
bloodstain enhancement.

(X)

MULDER

Might not make any difference.
This place is so clean; you
could build computer chips.

(X)

He yanks up the carpet, getting a look at the floor underneath.
Nothing stands out. Scully clunks the ALS back into its box and
pulls a digital CAMCORDER out of a nearby overnight bag.

She turns on the camcorder and slowly pans it around, taking in
the entire room. The camcorder is one of those tiny JVC deals
about the size of a fruit juice box. Scully speaks for the mike.

SCULLY

Six oh one pm, February 24.
Agents Scully and Mulder --
(Mulder waves to her)
-- In the former home of
Benjamin and Nona Kline, who
disappeared without a trace last
July: the Klins being the
third such couple to vanish from
this neighborhood since it was
built in 1991.

(X)

While Mulder drifts through the downstairs rooms, checking for
evidence, Scully keeps taping, moving along with him to document
the interior. We move seamlessly through the HALLWAY, the
KITCHEN, the DEN... whatever's here. Every room is spotless.
Scully keeps up her monologue throughout.

SCULLY

All were apparently stable,
professional people with no
histories of violence, mental
illness or domestic discord. In
each disappearance, it took an
employer or family member to
realize they were gone -- along
with their cars and a few
personal items.. Everything else
remained untouched. What local
police found in each case was...
nothing. Just impeccably
maintained homes and a community
of neighbors who professed total
ignorance that these people had
vanished.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED:

18

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(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (2)

18

MULDER

Hard to swallow, huh? Given how nutty that bunch is about being "neighborly."

Scully runs a gloved fingertip across a dust-free light switch, thinking about it. She continues with her notes.

SCULLY

Given the dearth of physical evidence pointing to any crime, plus the lack of cooperation from the neighborhood Homeowner's Association, local police were at a dead-end. They sought help from the FBI.

(beat)

A.D. Skinner, in assigning us this case, felt a more fruitful investigative approach would be for us to go undercover and pose as new home buyers -- as this planned community would seem to hide a dark, possibly murderous, conspiracy of silence. (X) (X) (X) (X) (X) (X)

Mulder comes around a corner, steps in front of Scully's lens. (X)

MULDER

We gonna make that honeymoon video now?

Scully clicks off the camcorder. (X)

SCULLY

"Rob and Laura Petrie?" (X)

MULDER

"Pee-trie," I thought you said. (X) (X)

SCULLY

If we ever go undercover again, I get to pick our names. (X) (X) (X) (off his shrug) (X) It just tells me you're not taking this assignment seriously. (X) (X)

MULDER

I'm taking it seriously -- I just don't know why we're on it. (X) (X) (X) (more)

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (3)

16

MULDER (cont'd)

(beat)

Our first catch back on the X-
files, and this is what they
give us? This isn't an X-file.

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

SCULLY

Sure it is -- it's unexplained.
What else do you want? Aliens?
Tractor beams?

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

MULDER

Wow. Admit it -- you just want
to play house.

(X)
(X)

Scully's expression says "yeah -- right." She continues looking
around the place. Mulder eyes her, then: (X)
(X)

MULDER

Woman?! Make me a sandwich! --
(off her glare)
Just getting into character.

Good thing for Mulder that right then, the DOORBELL RINGS.
Scully eyeballs him on her way to answer the door.

CLOSE - AT THE FRONT DOOR

Scully's hand swings open the door, revealing... Big Mike
standing on the porch. He smiles nervously down at her. He's
holding an open cardboard box in his hands: it's full of DISHES..

SCULLY

Oh, you didn't need to do that.

BIG MIKE

Please. I've got more dishes
than I need. I usually just eat
off one and then... wash it.

(clears his throat)

I'm Mike Raskub, by the way.
"Big Mike," for obvious reasons.
I live the next street over.

Scully takes the dishes and smiles up at him, appreciating the
sentiment. She notices something at his throat. We see:

CLOSE - A CHAIN

Big Mike wears -- this may be something we noticed earlier.
It's a gold caduceus. Scully indicates it.

(CONTINUED)

18 CONTINUED: (4)

18

SCULLY

Caduceus. You're a doctor, Mike?

BIG MIKE

Uh, vet. Veterinarian. If you folks are planning on getting a dog or something, I'd be happy to check it out, no charge.

(lower)

Just, uh... you're allowed no more than sixteen pounds of pet. That's one of the CC&Rs.

Scully takes this in, nodding.

SCULLY

That's so nice of you. With hospitality like this, I can't believe the Klines ever left.

Big Mike suddenly freezes like a deer in headlights.

BIG MIKE

Uh...

SCULLY

Wasn't that their name? The people who lived here before us?

BIG MIKE

(checks his watch)

Whoops. Uh... heh. I gotta go.

He gives a wave and hurries off down the steps. Scully stares after him for a moment, then shuts the door with her elbow.

SCULLY

Ok-kkay then.

Burdened with dishes, she shuffles down the hall. No Mulder. (X)

SCULLY

Mulder..?

MULDER (O.S.)

The name is Rob.

Following his voice, she backtracks into... (X)

THE LIVING ROOM

Where she finds Mulder staring at a white ceiling fan about eight feet up. He's studying something in particular. (X)

18 CONTINUED: (5)

18

SCULLY

What is it?

He pulls out an evidence baggie, moves a nearby chair and stands on it to reach the fan blade above him. We see: (X)

CLOSE - THE FAN BLADE

A little dab of dark SCHMUTZ is adhered to the edge of the white blade. A couple of coarse HAIRS stick out of it. The whole thing would have been easy to miss. (X)

Mulder flicks it into the baggie, then holds the baggie up for Scully to see. Now, with light behind it, the stuff is dark RED.

MULDER

Looks like whoever cleaned this place up missed a spot.

(looks to her)

~~What do you think: blood?~~

Maybe a couple of scalp hairs?

Scully clearly agrees. She takes the baggie and pockets it.

HIGH ANGLE - LOOKING DOWN

We're shooting past the fan's blades, focused on Mulder and Scully down below us. Mulder steps down off the chair. (X)

SCULLY

How'd it get way up there? (X)

Off the two of them, staring up at the fan: (X)

CUT TO:

19 EXT. GOGOLAK HOUSE - NIGHT - A DESERT SAGE MAILBOX (X) 19

Just like all the others is prominent in frame. This one says "Gogolak" on the side. We ADJUST off it to establish an immaculate home, a bit larger than the others. (X)

20 INT. GOGOLAK HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT 20

We slowly ROUND a dining room table as a group of neighbors talk over their empty plates. Dinner is over. We see Pat Verlander, Shroeder and Cami, Big Mike, Gordy and GORDY'S WIFE (a woman we've probably seen earlier).

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

PAT

I didn't really learn that much about them. He just says he works at home... which tells me she's got money.

CAMI

They seem nice. A cute couple.

BIG MIKE

Very cute. I mean, uh...

Gordy gives Mike a sidelong glance and snorts. Shroeder turns to address someone we haven't seen yet.

SHROEDER

What do you think, Gene?

Coming around on the head of the table, we wait until last to reveal a man we haven't seen before. He's 60-ish, tanned and vigorous, with too-white teeth -- the kind of guy who argues with the twenty-somethings to play tackle football, not touch. This is GENE GOGOLAK, the head of the Homeowner's Association.

GOGOLAK

Ladies... my compliments to the chef.

Pat takes the hint, smiling to the younger women at the table.

PAT

Cami...? Sissy...?

Pat and Gordy's wife get up and clear the dishes. Cami knows full well she and the others are supposed to make themselves scarce so the men can talk. However, she doesn't move.

Shroeder looks to his wife, warning her with his eyes to leave. Cami realizes everyone's looking at her. She finally pushes her chair back and takes her plate to the kitchen, resenting this.

Now that the women are in the kitchen, Gogolak speaks up, addressing Shroeder.

GOGOLAK

These Petries... are they gonna play ball?

SHROEDER

"Pee-tries." So far, so good.
I'm keeping an eye on them.

(X)

Gogolak sips his coffee. Big Mike tentatively speaks up.

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

20

BIG MIKE

Mr. Gogolak, don't you think
maybe this time, we should...
tell them?

SHROEDER

Mike, you and I have been
through this. We don't know yet
if we can trust them.

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

BIG MIKE

It's just there's so many rules.
Maybe they'd keep up with them
better if they only knew... what
happens to them if they don't.

(a beat; more firm)

It's the neighborly thing. I-I
think we should do this.

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

Shroeder and Gordy warily look to Gogolak, deferring to him.

(X)

GOGOLAK

(shrugs, smiles)

Son... godspeed.

(X)

Mike smiles, proud of himself, and amazed. All this backbone
has taken its toll, however. He puts a hand to his stomach.

BIG MIKE

Thank you. May I use your, uh..?

GOGOLAK

Second door on the left.
There's Glade under the sink.

Mike excuses himself. Gogolak turns to Gordy.

GOGOLAK

Gordy, how about you go make
sure he finds the Glade.

Gordy gets the message and leaves. Once he's gone, it's just
Shroeder and Gogolak. Gogolak stares pointedly at the younger
man, who understands and looks uncomfortable.

SHROEDER

Gene, I can talk him out of this.

GOGOLAK

Win... the boy's a weak link.
And a strong chain can't survive
with a weak link.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (3)

GOGOLAK (cont'd)

(beat)

Are we on the same wavelength?

After a moment, Shroeder reluctantly gives a nod.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. BIG MIKE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT - THE MAILBOX

21

Is identical to every other mailbox in the community -- although this one says "Raskub." We CRANE OFF it to establish a neat and tidy bachelor's/rancher, modest in size for this neighborhood.

CLOSER - THE LAMP POST

In Big Mike's front yard is of a tasteful, carriage house style, glowing brightly in the night. We ANGLE AROUND it until we're RAKING down a line of identical carriage house lamp posts, one in every neighbor's yard. All glow cheerily... all mounted in one perfectly straight line to a vanishing point down the street.

22 INT. BIG MIKE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT - THE TV

Plays a Discovery Channel-type wild animal show -- orangutans grooming one another. The volume is low. We reveal Big Mike lying atop his bed in boxers, undershirt and black socks, sipping a diet cola and watching the show with fascination.

The room is darkened. We PUSH IN on Mike as... a faint LIGHT on his face FLICKERS and GOES OUT. Mike looks up, wondering. He rises, pads over to the window. He stares out and sees:

MIKE'S POV - HIS FRONT YARD

His lamp post is now DARK. His alone -- everyone else's is LIT.

Mike's reaction seems completely out of proportion. He freaks. (X)

BIG MIKE

Oh no... Oh no...

(X)

23 EXT. BIG MIKE'S HOUSE - LATE NIGHT - THE LAMP POST

(X) 23

Inside the lamp housing, the bulb is BROKEN. We RACK from this to the b.g., where -- the front door comes banging open. Mike hustles down the steps in his boxers, carrying a light bulb. (X)

(CONTINUED)

23 CONTINUED:

23

He runs to us, gets on tip-toes and works to unscrew the broken bulb. Ouch, ouch, ouch... it's all jagged glass, snapped off down to the neck. It takes a whole lot of machismo -- or raw fear -- to do this with your bare hands, but Mike gets it loose.

Mike jams the fresh bulb into the socket and threads it until it LIGHTS UP brilliantly in his face. Victory! His panic gradually subsiding, Mike squeezes shut his eyes and works to catch his breath. Everything's going to be okay.

Mike sucks his injured fingers, turns his back on the lamp post and plods toward his house. We FOLLOW AFTER him. But now...

... A SHADOW rises, looming over Mike's back. He turns around, staring up at something horrifying. Something that sets him quivering with fear. He points to the lamp. (X)

BIG MIKE

No. I fixed it! I FIXED IT! -- (X)

His sentence turns to a SCREAM as something BLACK and quick -- something large enough to make Big Mike look like Tiny Mike -- launches through f.g. and tackles him out of frame.

CLOSE - THE LAMP POST

Glow cheerily in the darkness as o.s. we hear WET, BUTCHERING SOUNDS and strangled CRIES. Off this...

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

24 EXT. BIG MIKE'S HOUSE - MORNING - WHITE STEPPING STONES

24

Through the putting green grass of Big Mike's front yard are RED with blood. A spray of water hits them, turning the blood pink, then washing it away.

WIN SHROEDER

Is the man with the hose. He looks sick this morning, looks like he's gone without sleep. He hoses in a wide swath, unaware of an OUT-OF-FOCUS COUPLE approaching him from behind.

MULDER

Good morning --

(X)

Shroeder turns too fast, nearly spraying Mulder and Scully. Mulder jumps back, rattling the BOX OF DISHES he carries.

(X)

SHROEDER

Oh, jeez -- sorry, Rob. Good morning! How was your first night? Peaceful?

(X)

MULDER

Wonderful. We spooned up and fell straight to sleep. Isn't that right, Honeybunch?

SCULLY

(pained smile)

That's right, Poopyhead. Win, are we at the right place? Isn't this Big Mike's house?

SHROEDER

Oh, yeah. I'm just, uh... helping out. Mike had to leave town on business.

SCULLY

What kind of business? He's a veterinarian.

Shroeder nods thoughtfully.

SHROEDER

Veterinarian business. I just know he's gone weeks at a time.

Mulder and Scully share a subtle look. He heads for the porch.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

MULDER

I'll leave these by the door,
then.

Shroeder drops his hose, hurrying to take the box from Mulder.

SHROEDER

You know what? I'll hold onto
those. Just tidier-looking than
leaving them on the porch.

Shroeder grins at Mulder as he nearly wrestles the heavy box
from his hands. Mulder finally lets go of it.

MULDER

More "aesthetically pleasing." (X)

SHROEDER

Exactly. Say, would you two (X)
like to join Cami and me for
dinner this evening? About six?
We eat early.

Mulder is distracted, glancing at Mike's house. Scully answers. (X)

SCULLY

Thank you. That sounds great.

Mulder nods and smiles. He puts an arm around Scully and ushers
her toward the street. He stops, remembering something.

MULDER

Win? You said I should talk to (X)
someone about putting up my
basketball hoop. Who was that (X)
again? (X)

Off Win's frozen smile, as he stands there holding the dishes:

CUT TO:

25 INT. GOGOLAK HOUSE - DEN - MORNING - A RITUAL CARVING

25

Sits on a table. It is exotic-looking, from the Far East -- a (X)
scary, totemic MONSTER-GOD. We DRIFT off it to find other such (X)
works -- Tibetan, it will turn out -- hung on the walls. (X)

GOGOLAK (O.S.)

All right then, let's see...

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

2

Into this frame strolls Gene Gogolak, thumbing through a hefty black 3-ring binder. We get a good look at the cover: "The Falls at Arcadia -- CONTRACTS, COVENANTS and RESTRICTIONS."

GOGOLAK

Basketball hoop and backboard...
Portable...

WIDER ON ROOM

Gogolak hunts through the binder while Mulder and Scully wait on the sofa with their hands on their knees, glancing around at the preponderance of things Tibetan. Gogolak wears a warm-up suit, looks like he's off to tow a string of row boats with his teeth. (X) (X) (X)

GOGOLAK

Nope, sorry -- not allowed. (X)

MULDER

You're kidding. (X)

GOGOLAK

Afraid not. Rules are rules. It may not sound like much -- a simple basketball hoop. But from there, it's just a few short steps to spinning daisy reflectors and a bass boat in the driveway.

MULDER

In other words, anarchy.

Gogolak nods grimly, not realizing Mulder is being sarcastic.

GOGOLAK

It may sound tough, but ours is a system that works. It's why the Falls is one of the top-ranked planned communities in all of California.

(smiles to Scully)

Most of our homeowners have been here since day one.

SCULLY

Nobody ever leaves?

Gogolak is slow answering. Mulder turns to Scully.

MULDER

Honey, obviously people leave occasionally. The Klins left.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

SCULLY

Well, of course the Klines.
That's different, though -- they
apparently packed up and left in
the middle of the night.

MULDER

(chuckle; to Gogolak)

That must have been the topic of
some serious conversation.

GOGOLAK

I don't really recall.

MULDER

What do you figure -- folks
can't make their mortgage and
skedaddle? It's happened here
more than once, right?

Gogolak stares down at them with a frozen smile like the one (X)
Shroeder had earlier. Mulder figures he won't get much out of (X)
the guy -- something else is interesting him now, anyway. He
gets up to take a closer look at the scary monster-god carving. (X)

MULDER

I love the decor, Mr. Gogolak.
It's Asian? *

GOGOLAK

Nepalese and Tibetan mostly. I
go twice a year on business.

(off Mulder's look)

I run Pier Nine Imports. I can
get you a great deal on rattan
furniture, if you're interested.

(adds)

Indoor only -- outdoor use is
prohibited by our CC&Rs.

He smiles and taps the big binder under his arm. Mulder smiles
at Scully, who smiles back at him and hugs her knees.

Off Mulder, his expression cagey, his gears turning:

CUT TO:

26 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - LATE EVENING

26

The sun sets red over the picture-perfect Falls of Arcadia.

27 INT. SHROEDER'S HOUSE - LATE EVENING - A LITTLE WHITE DOG (X) 7

Stares up at us pitifully, begging on the floor by the table.

SHROEDER (O.S.)

Uh-uh, Scruffy. Go on, now.

Scruffy the dog obediently pads out of the dining room. We TILT UP to the table, where a colorful tuna dish gets passed, a pair (X) of woman's hands spooning a portion onto a plate.

SHROEDER (O.S.)

Cami, did you use the dolphin-safe tuna this time?

We TILT UP to find Cami attached to the hands we're watching. She forces a smile and sets the casserole down on its trivet.

CAMI

Dolphin-safe, all the way.

WIDER ON ROOM

Cami and Shroeder sit across from Mulder and Scully, all of them settled down to dinner in the Shroeder's tasteful dining room.

SHROEDER

We always use the dolphin-safe.

MULDER

Gotta love the dolphins. Although they're tasty, too.

No one thinks this is funny. Mulder's smile fades. Scully finishes a mouthful of food and speaks up.

SCULLY

This is really delicious.

Mulder agrees. Cami smiles appreciatively at them.

SHROEDER

Yeah, just a pinch more lemon pepper and I think it would've been perfect, Cam.

(to Mulder and Scully)

So, how'd you two meet?

Mulder and Scully glance at one another, hesitate. Mulder considers, then takes the lead.

MULDER

We met at a UFO conference.

Dismay shows in Scully's face.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED:

SHROEDER

Flying saucers? You folks believe in that stuff?

MULDER

Not me so much. But Laura is quite the New Ager: crystals, magnetic bracelets... she goes for all that stuff, god love her.

Shroeder and Cami look to Scully, surprised. Scully's pleasant expression masks darker thoughts.

CAMI

I wouldn't have guessed that.

SCULLY

No kidding.

Ever on the job, Scully glances to Mulder, wanting to get their investigation back on track. He changes the subject.

MULDER

Win, you know how you told us this morning that Big Mike was out of town on business?

(beat)

I don't think that's true.

Shroeder clears his throat and looks up, feigning nonchalance. (X)

SHROEDER

You don't?

MULDER

I don't. Because... we called his office today. Didn't we?

SCULLY

We did.

MULDER

Yeah, we're thinking of getting a dog. We asked his office if they had a number where we could reach Mike, get his advice. But guess what?

SCULLY

They don't know where he is.

(CONTINUED)

27 CONTINUED: (2)

Shroeder has a good poker face, but he's sweating around the edges. Mulder and Scully watch his reaction closely. Cami (X)
stares at him too, hearing about all of this for the first time. (X)

SCULLY

Where do you think he is, Win?

SHROEDER

I... couldn't tell you.

MULDER

It must be something freaky-deaky, right? If he's gonna lie and say he's going off on business? He must have some wild secret life going.

(innocent shrug)

But I guess every community has its dark underbelly.

SHROEDER

We don't have any underbelly.

(adamant now)

As far as I'm concerned, this community is the American Dream.

Cami rises from her chair. She does her best to sound casual. (X)

CAMI

I uh... I'm sorry, but I realize (X)
it's past time I walked Scruffy. (X)

A bit self-conscious now, Shroeder gives everyone a smile. (X)

SHROEDER

Cam? Don't let him eat the (X)
monkey grass this time. (X)

Cami smiles cheerfully -- as in cheerfully contemplating burying (X)
an axe in her husband's brain. Scully speaks up. (X)

SCULLY

Would you mind some company? (X)

Off Cami's grateful look: (X)

CUT TO: (X)

28 OMITTED

(X) 28

29 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT - SCRUFFY

29

Scurries along at the end of his chain, his tiny legs pumping.

SCULLY AND CAMI

Stroll through the peaceful neighborhood, past uniform lamp posts and mailboxes. Cami looks troubled, but trying to hide it. Scully knows it, and eventually speaks up.

SCULLY

So, is it the American Dream?

(off Cami's look)

This place.

Cami shrugs, forces her umpteenth smile of the evening.

CAMI

It's a nice neighborhood. It's a lot of people who want the best for their families.

SCULLY

It's just not your dream.

(X)

Cami doesn't answer. They're both silent for a beat.

(X)

SCULLY

I can't help notice you've walked us by Mike's house twice. Are you worried about him?

(X)

(X)

Cami slows to a stop, a little flustered now.

(X)

CAMI

I... I don't really know what you mean.

(X)

(X)

Scruffy goes apeshit now, BARKING wildly. The little dog takes her by surprise, running at his leash and yanking it free. Like a shot he's gone, streaking toward a storm drain in the curb.

(X)

(X)

(X)

CAMI

Scruffy? --

Whoomp -- he's into the drain. Cami and Scully hurry to it, Cami kneeling down and peering inside, whistling to her dog.

(X)

CAMI

Scruffy, get out of there!

We hear Scruffy's faint BARKING -- he's excited about something. Scully produces a tiny xenon flashlight, twists it on.

(X)

(X)

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

SCULLY

Let me take a look. (X)

The fact she has a flashlight faintly surprises Cami. (X)

CAMI

I should get one of those. (X)

SCULLY

I find I use mine a lot. (X)

Scully kneels and shines her light into the sewer. There's just room for her here. Searching for the little dog, she focuses on something which takes her aback. (X)

SCULLY'S POV - INSIDE THE STORM DRAIN (X)

No sign of Scruffy -- but on a concrete ledge just out of reach glints... a familiar CADUCEUS NECKLACE. It's Big Mike's. (X)

Scully squeezes closer, trying to get a better look. (X)

CAMI

Do you see him? Scruffy?! (X)

We hear a faint, low GROWL now, too -- THROATIER than we'd think a little dog capable of.

INSIDE THE DRAIN, LOOKING OUT (X)

Scully gingerly reaches her arm in toward us, shining her light and straining for the necklace. No luck. But now we hear a shattering YELP, and something LAUNCHES itself at her. (X)

CLOSE - OUTSIDE THE DRAIN (X)

Scruffy BLASTS into view like he was shot out of a cannon, startling Scully and bowling her on her butt. Cami runs to grab Scruffy's leash as he rockets past, stopping him. (X)

Scully gets up as Cami brings Scruffy to heel. The little dog is scared -- trembling (if possible). Otherwise, he's unhurt. (X)

SCULLY

What's the matter, Scruff? You alright? Watcha got there? (X)

Scully squats down to check him out. She notices his muzzle is coated with a weird, blackish SCHMUTZ, familiar to us by now. She pulls out a handkerchief and wipes him off. She looks at it -- on the white handkerchief, the stuff looks RED. (X)

Cami sees this stuff, looks uncomfortable. Scully notices. (X)

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED: (2)

29

CAMI

Let's get you home, Scruffy.

(X)

(X)

NEW ANGLE - ON THE DECK

(X)

We watch as Cami picks up Scruffy like a baby and heads for home. Scully follows, catching up. As the two women walk away, their backs to us...

(X)

(X)

(X)

... A small MANHOLE, an access plate atop the storm drain, lifts up in f.g. Someone or something we can't see from this angle is watching the women as they depart. Off this:

(X)

(X)

(X)

CUT TO:

30 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

(X) 30

We DOLLY past a big pile of unopened moving boxes to reveal Scully seated on the edge of a queen bed. She's in flannel pajamas, talking on her cell phone.

(X)

(X)

SCULLY

No plate match at LAX? What about Long Beach?

(X)

Mulder enters, dressed in black sweats and a black, hooded sweatshirt. Scully gives him a nod, finishes up on the phone.

(X)

SCULLY

Alright. Thank you, Lieutenant.

She clicks off, exits into the bathroom -- the door stays mostly closed, so WE CAN'T SEE IN. Meanwhile, in f.g. Mulder pulls a flashlight from his kangaroo pocket and clunks it atop a dresser.

(X)

(X)

(X)

SCULLY (O.S.)

(X)

Local p.d. comes up blank on Mike Raskub -- no activity on his credit cards, no sightings of his '97 Mercury Villager.

MULDER

There's no sign of him in his house. I didn't see him in the storm drain, either.

(X)

(X)

From his pocket he pulls an evidence baggie with the GOLD CADUCEUS zipped inside. He peers at it, plops it down, too.

(X)

(X)

MULDER

I'd take it he's dead, Scully.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

SCULLY (O.S.)

Laura. And Win Shroeder did it?

(X)

(X)

Mulder considers, shakes his head.

MULDER

Maybe Win was just cleaning up.

(X)

SCULLY (O.S.)

Cleaning up for who?

(X)

(X)

Mulder isn't sure.

(X)

SCULLY (O.S.)

Speaking of cleaning up -- who
taught you how to squeeze a tube
of toothpaste?

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

Her arm sticks out the door into view, suspending from two
fingers an open toothpaste tube, squished in the middle and
spattered with blue toothpaste.

(X)

(X)

(X)

Mulder shrugs lackadaisically. He picks up two evidence baggies
from the dresser top: the one with the schmutz in it from the
fan blade, and the one with the schmutz-covered handkerchief.

(X)

MULDER

What do we know about this stuff?

(X)

(X)

SCULLY (O.S.)

Tomorrow I'll drive into San
Diego and get it analyzed.

(X)

(beat)

(X)

Third warning: Toilet seat.

(X)

We hear the o.s. CLANG of the toilet seat being flipped down.
Mulder rolls his eyes -- "yeah, yeah." He pulls off his
sweatshirt (he's got an undershirt on underneath) and drops it
on the floor.

(X)

(X)

(X)

(X)

Scully exits the bathroom -- she's got a CUCUMBER MASK on her
face. Mulder must have seen this before, as it doesn't faze him.

(X)

(X)

SCULLY

But why kill Mike? What would
be the motive?

(X)

Scully picks up his sweatshirt, shooting him a cold look. She
folds it neatly and puts it in a drawer. Mulder watches this.

(X)

(X)

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED: (2)

30

MULDER

Compulsive neatness... or a lack thereof.

(X)

(X)

(off her look)

These people are completely obsessed by their neighborhood rules, their CC&Rs. They seem terrified to break them. And maybe Mike's grass was too high, or his shutters were the wrong color, or...

(X)

(X)

(X)

Mulder shrugs. Scully looks at him askance.

MULDER

You know, you fit in great here.

(X)

(X)

SCULLY

And you don't.

(X)

(X)

As if to prove it, Mulder grins and kicks off his sneakers, letting them tumble where they may. He plops on the bed.

(X)

(X)

MULDER

Anyway, I've got a sure means of testing my theory. Tomorrow.

(X)

(X)

He snuggles in, tired. Scully stands staring at him, deadpan -- wondering what he thinks he's doing. He notices this.

(X)

(X)

MULDER

We're married now, Laura.

SCULLY

Scully. Goodnight, Mulder.

She jerks a thumb at the door. He gets the message, takes his pillow and slouches out of the room.

MULDER

The thrill is gone.

As he exits, pulling the door behind him:

CUT TO:

31 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - DAY - CLOSE ON THE FRONT LAWN

(X) 31

The grass is thick and verdant. Into this frame walk two sneakered feet. An unseen man stands his ground for a moment, then jams into the lawn... a plastic PINK FLAMINGO.

(CONTINUED)

31 CONTINUED:

We TILT UP to Mulder staring defiantly at the neighborhood.

MULDER

Bring it on.

He turns heel and marches back to the house (their minivan is gone, by the way, throughout these next few scenes).

CUT TO:

32 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY - THE REFRIGERATOR (X) 32

Gets pulled open -- Mulder grabs a quart of orange juice, drinks right out of the carton. Oh yeah... he's the man. He strolls to a front window, looks out. He's surprised by something. (X)

33 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - THE FRONT LAWN - CONTINUOUS (X) 33

The pink flamingo is now gone. There's no sign it was ever here. Mulder strides into frame, still carrying his orange juice. He looks all around, but sees nothing.

He considers, then walks a few feet to... the desert sage mailbox. It says "The Petries." He tests the strength of the post which supports it, then puts his hip against it and pushes. The post tilts out of plumb.

Mulder flips open the mailbox door for good measure, glances around the quiet neighborhood, then heads back to the house.

CUT TO:

34 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - A MOVING BOX (X) 34

Gets slid across the carpet to a front window. Mulder sits atop the box, on stakeout. He's staring out the window at:

MULDER'S POV - THE FRONT YARD

We have a clear view of his mailbox, cockeyed and hanging open.

Mulder stares out, his attention unflagging. He swigs his orange juice, finishes off the carton. We hold on him for a beat. He checks his watch.

CLOSE - HIS WATCH

The hands read 11:26. Off this, we...

MATCH-DISSOLVE TO:

35 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON - THE WATCH (X) 35

... Now reads 4:53. The SHADOWS have changed on it, too.

MULDER

Is slumped on his box, checking his watch for the umpteenth time. He's been here all day, and it shows.

MULDER'S POV - THE FRONT YARD

The mailbox is still as he left it -- cockeyed and open. Except for the shadows, everything is the same.

Mulder grimaces, crosses his legs and glances to the other side of the room -- he's really got to pee. He checks out the empty juice carton next to him: he considers using that, then thinks better of it. With one more glance out the window, he gets up and runs into the bathroom, his back teeth swimming.

CUT TO:

36 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - A MINUTE LATER - CLOSE ON THE WINDOW (X) 36

The window is empty. From inside the house, we hear a faint FLUSH, then RUNNING FEET. Mulder slides into view, staring past us out the window. He's instantly dismayed by what he sees.

WIDER - FRONT YARD

The front door flings open and Mulder jogs out toward us across the lawn. As we keep him in frame, we SLIDE OVER to INCLUDE...

... His MAILBOX: it is now perfectly plumb, its door closed. Mulder approaches it, looking all around. No one's in sight. (X) Mulder is bewildered, and not a little annoyed. He swats open the mailbox... then notices something inside it.

MULDER'S POV - A NOTE

Lies inside the box. Mulder pulls it out: printed in a crude (X) hand, it says "BE LIKE THE OTHERS... BEFORE IT GETS DARK."

Mulder wonders at this warning, glances around the quiet block. Not done yet, he walks up the empty driveway to his garage door.

CLOSE - THE GARAGE DOOR

Powers open, revealing... a garage that's empty save for the big, portable BASKETBALL HOOP that lies across the floor.

Off Mulder before it, staring around the block defiantly:

CUT TO:

37 EXT. SHROEDER'S HOUSE - NIGHT - FROM AN INKY SKY

We TILT DOWN to find ourselves at the Shroeder house. From this angle, we don't have a view of the Kline place next door. Prominent in frame, the Shroeders' lamp post GLOWS cheerily.

38 INT. SHROEDER'S HOUSE - DEN - CAMI

38

Stalks into frame in her bathrobe, grasping a tumbler of gin. She's lit -- she's clearly been drinking and crying all day.

CAMI

This place is a madhouse!
People can't live like this!
You can't just be perfect all
the time! It can't be done! --

Just home from work, her husband follows after her, undoing his tie. He tries to calm her down. (X)
(X)

SHROEDER

Cami? Cami, would you please
just listen?!
(while she drinks)
I'm sorry about Big Mike. I
didn't want to tell you, because
I knew you'd be upset.

CAMI

Why did it take him? What did
he do wrong?!

Shroeder shrugs, feigning a pained innocence.

SHROEDER

You know Mike... it was amazing
he lasted as long as he did.
(beat)
He was a weak link. And a
strong chain can't survive with
a weak link.

Cami sneers at him, disgusted.

CAMI

Where have I heard that before?

SHROEDER

Cam...

She waves him off and pauses to take another big swig. Silence for a beat... and now we hear something. A faint BALL bouncing.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED:

It takes a moment for Shroeder and Cami to register what this means. When they do, they look to one another nervously.

39 EXT. SHROEDER'S HOUSE - NIGHT - THE FRONT DOOR

Opens and Shroeder exits, followed by Cami. They're in a panic, hurrying down the darkened walk. The SOUND of a basketball bouncing is louder out here. Shroeder pauses, turns to his wife.

SHROEDER

Stay here --

CAMI

Stop him, Win!

(X)

Shroeder nods and hurries on out of frame toward the Kline house next door. Cami stands her ground, hugging herself as she watches her husband round the hedges and disappear. She's so antsy and preoccupied, she doesn't notice...

WIDER - THEIR LAMP POST

Is DARK, its bulb BROKEN. Off it in f.g., Cami in the distance:

40 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS - THE BASKETBALL HOOP *

(X) 40

Looms above us -- a basketball SWISHES through it, nothing but net. We ADJUST off this to find Mulder in his sweats, shooting hoops alone in his empty, lit-up driveway.

Shroeder hustles into view in a low-grade panic. Mulder smiles.

MULDER

Hey, Win -- wanna play "Horse?"

He tosses his neighbor the ball -- Shroeder immediately wings it hard into Mulder's open garage. He doesn't even break his stride, but heads straight for the backboard post, which he attempts to pull down. He hisses at Mulder.

SHROEDER

What the hell are you doing? --

MULDER

What am I doing? What are you doing?

Mulder strolls over and stands on the base, which tips the basketball post upright again. Shroeder struggles against Mulder's weight, desperately trying to pull down the post in a sort of reverse-Iwo Jima pose.

(CONTINUED)

40 CONTINUED:

SHROEDER

Dammit, get off it! Help me get this thing inside! --

MULDER

Why? What's going to happen if we don't?

Mulder is very casual, baiting Shroeder. Shroeder can't pull the hoop down. He gives up, breathing hard.

SHROEDER

Alright, that's the way you want it?! You were warned!

MULDER

Warned about what?

Shroeder doesn't answer -- just glares at him and backs away. Just then, a woman's SCREAM rings out from next door.

CAMI (O.S.)

No-ooo! --

Mulder glances at Shroeder, who is suddenly petrified with fear. Mulder bolts out of his yard, through the thick landscaping into:

41 EXT. SHROEDER'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS - MULDER'S POV

41

We're in first-person, running flat-out and bouncing around enough that it's hard to get a clear view of things. Tree branches whip us. Up ahead in the darkness, we see...

... Cami, easy to read in her white bathrobe. Something is menacing her on her front lawn. It's dark and shambling, man-shaped -- and BIG. It's easily seven feet, maybe more.

MULDER

Crouches low, ducking the branches at full gallop.

MULDER

Stop! --

MULDER'S POV - RUNNING

Whatever this thing is -- and we don't get that good a look at it -- it spooks and BOLTS around the far corner of the Shroeder house. It can definitely move.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED:

41

MULDER

Runs past Cami as she stands trembling, too scared to move. (X)
Mulder peeks around the corner of the house, but... (X)

MULDER'S POV - THE SIDE YARD (X)

Ends abruptly with a white picket fence. There's nothing here (X)
but more lawn, and nowhere to go -- and no monster. Whatever (X)
that thing was, it seems to have vanished into thin air. (X)

Mulder rejoins Cami, checks on her. From next door, Shroeder
sticks his head into view now that the coast is clear.

Mulder notices that Cami's scared eyes are rooted on something
in particular. He follows her gaze, sees:

MULDER'S POV - THE LAMP POST

Stands at the edge of the yard, DARK -- unlike every other lamp
post on the street.

NEW ANGLE - PAST THE LAMP POST

With its broken-out bulb, we see Mulder, Cami and Shroeder in
the b.g., looking our way. Off the three of them:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

42 EXT. SHROEDER'S HOUSE - SIDE YARD - NIGHT - GRASS

(X) 42

Glow green in the oval beam of a flashlight. The beam sweeps around, searching for something -- but all we see is PGA fescue.

We TILT UP to include Mulder. It is he who holds the flashlight, shining it on the lawn, the trees, the white picket fence with no gate in it. Where did that thing escape to?

(X)

(X)

(X)

MULDER

Do you know what attacked you?

(X)

Cami hangs back, Shroeder's arm around her protectively. Shroeder gives her a subtle, disapproving look, but she starts to speak up anyway. Just as she does:

GOGOLAK (O.S.)

What's all the hubbub?

GENE GOGOLAK

Arrives in his satiny warm-up suit, instantly shutting up Cami. This isn't lost on Mulder, who pauses, then presses on.

MULDER

Cami. What did you see?

Gogolak smiles at her. She's unnerved by his presence. Finally: (X)

CAMI

It was dark. I'm... I've had a little bit to drink. I'm sorry.

MULDER

You were attacked. It was some huge beast -- man-shaped, seven or eight feet tall. I saw it. You saw it, too. Tell me, Cami.

(X)

(X)

(X)

Cami's eyes are on the ground. She's done talking. Gogolak steps in, relaxed. (X)

GOGOLAK

Son, you might have seen a bear. They do come down from the hills occasionally, looking for food.

Mulder makes a face.

MULDER

I didn't see any bear.

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

GOGOLAK

(to Shroeder, Cami)

Guys, I think we're talking
bear. I'll call animal control
in the morning, no sweat.

(X)

Shroeder nods, looking numb. Disgusted, Mulder turns away and
continues searching the side yard. Shroeder takes Gogolak
aside, keeps his voice low.

(X)

(X)

(X)

SHROEDER

Gene? We need to talk. Now.

From his pocket, Shroeder pulls what's left of his broken lamp
post LIGHT BULB. Gogolak looks from it to Shroeder's eyes,
which are gleaming, accusatory. Gogolak nods.

Shroeder shepherds his miserable wife toward their front door.
Gogolak follows, glancing back at Mulder combing the yard.

(X)

GOGOLAK

Mr. Petrie, I noticed you left
your garage door open -- you'll
wanna go attend to that.

Without looking back, Mulder mimes grabbing his crotch, mutters:

MULDER

Attend to this.

Gogolak goes inside Shroeder's house. Alone, Mulder stands his
ground, wondering where to search next. He takes a step, and --

-- Sinks one leg into the lawn mid-calf. Very strange.

Extricating himself and kneeling down, Mulder rolls back the sod
where he just stepped. It's like a big, ragged manhole.

MULDER'S POV - THE GROUND

Underneath the rolled-back sod is a mound of loose, freshly-dug
EARTH. It looks sort of like a giant gopher hole, in the way
that gophers cap their holes with loose dirt. A healthy dollop
of the familiar, reddish-black SCHMUTZ is underneath the dirt.

Mulder sifts his fingers through the loose dirt and schmutz.

MULDER

That's one hell of a gopher.

(X)

CUT TO:

43 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - THE PORTABLE BASKETBALL HOOP (X) 43

Is sideways, being tugged into the garage in fits and starts. We're in a RAKING ANGLE, so that we can't see who's doing this. Once the hoop is inside, the garage door motors shut.

Perfect timing: once the door is closed, we PAN to find a familiar minivan rounding into the driveway. Scully kills the engine and gets out, carries a SHOPPING BAG into the house.

44 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - THE SHOPPING BAG (X) 44

With some Nordstrom's-type logo gets plopped down atop a table. From the otherwise-empty bag, Scully pulls a lab FILE FOLDER.

WIDER - SCULLY

Stands among the boxes and piled furniture, perusing lab results.

SCULLY

Mulder? --

From somewhere in the house, we hear a muffled BANG and the patter of RUNNING FEET. Then, silence. Scully looks around.

SCULLY

Mulder, is that you? --

No answer. Scully lays down her folder and smoothly picks up a poker from a nearby fireplace set. She pads out of frame.

45 IN THE HALLWAY

45

Scully creeps into view around the corner, her poker leading the way. She passes us, making her way up the darkened hallway. Once she gets some distance from us...

... A big, dark FIGURE darts through frame behind her, too close in f.g. for us to make out. Her back turned, Scully doesn't see.

CLOSE - SCULLY

Hears a floorboard CREAK behind her, but the out-of-focus FIGURE is gone before she can catch a glimpse. She stares back behind her, but now the sound of the BACK DOOR easing open whips her head forward again.

Her heart pounding, Scully raises the poker in both hands and pads silently forward to the end of the hallway. Where...

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

45

MULDER

Rounds the corner into view, ducking as Scully nearly nails him. She stops herself at the last second.

MULDER

Whoa!

Scully draws back, then they hear the o.s. FRONT DOOR open and SLAM SHUT. Scully turns back to Mulder, pissed at herself.

SCULLY

Someone was in the house.

Mulder nods, not surprised.

MULDER

Tidying up. Whoever it was, they put away my basketball hoop.

(beat)

Someone's looking out for us, which may not be a bad thing.

SCULLY

What do you mean?

MULDER

I mean, I take it all back: we are on an X-file after all.

(X)

(X)

Off Scully's reaction to this:

CUT TO:

46 INT. SHROEDER'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT - IN A MAN'S HAND

46

Lies the broken light bulb -- just the threaded part, really.

GENE GOGOLAK

Studies it closely. Shroeder enters the room and gently pulls the door shut. The two men are alone.

GOGOLAK

How's Cami?

Shroeder keeps his voice low... but there's a quiver to it, an anger that won't be stifled even though he's scared of this man.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

SHROEDER

You have the gall to ask me that?

(beat)

What did we do wrong, Gene? Is our welcome mat not to your liking? Did I coil my garden hose clockwise instead of counter-clockwise?

(X)

GOGOLAK

Hold the phone. Are you saying I had something to do with this?

Gogolak holds up the broken bulb. Shroeder gives a big nod.

SHROEDER

Who else? The exact same thing, the thing you had me do to Mike? Who else would do that?!

Gogolak eases closer, gets in Shroeder's face. His voice stays calm, but his expression is definitely menacing.

(X)

(X)

GOGOLAK

Son... you'll wanna take a deep breath and rethink that theory.

(X)

(X)

(X)

A beat. Shroeder backs off, intimidated. Gogolak eases up.

(X)

GOGOLAK

It's your next-door neighbor.

(off his surprise)

He's a rabble-rouser, Win. He's trouble with a capital "T." And you and I both know it only takes one rotten apple to spoil the bunch.

(X)

(X)

Shroeder considers this, wonders if it could be true. Off them: (X)

CUT TO:

47 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT - A FLASHLIGHT BEAM (X) 47

Lights a circle of lawn. Mulder's fingers feel the grass, finding the invisible seam of a cut in the sod. Mulder rolls back the sod like the lid of a sardine can, revealing...

MULDER (O.S.)

Here we go...

... A ragged, roundish HOLE filled with loose dirt and schmutz.

(CONTINUED)

47 CONTINUED:

47

WIDER

Scully holds the flashlight for Mulder, wondering at this. (X)

MULDER

I'm guessing there's one in every yard. It's how this thing travels -- maybe, where it lives.

SCULLY

In the ground. This... huge creature you think you saw. (X)

He looks up at her, annoyed. She shrugs, not meaning to offend. (X)

SCULLY

Huge creatures aside, would you care to hear what I think? (X)

He defers to her -- "by all means." She heads for the house, looks to him to follow. He rolls the sod back down and does so. (X)

A48 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - A LAB REPORT (X) A48

Lies open atop the breakfast counter. Clipped to it are the two evidence baggies with dried schmutz in them. Scully's finger points out the first sample they found. (X)

SCULLY (O.S.)

First of all, this stuff we found on the fan blade? The dried blood and scalp hairs?

WIDER - MULDER AND SCULLY (X)

Stand at the counter. Mulder nods. Scully shakes her head. (X)

SCULLY

It's neither. The "blood" is predominantly ketchup and brake fluid, while the "hairs" are bristles from a scrub brush.

(off his confusion)

The same goes for this sample from the dog's muzzle: it's motor oil, eggshells, coffee grounds and about fifty other constituents... with a little Mercurochrome for color.

Mulder stares at her quizzically, waiting for the punch line.

(CONTINUED)

A48 CONTINUED:

A48

SCULLY

In other words, it's garbage.
Which makes perfect sense,
seeing as this entire
neighborhood is built atop an
old landfill.

This takes Mulder by surprise... but now things begin to click.

MULDER

A landfill.

SCULLY

We found this stuff everywhere
because it is everywhere: it's
just beneath the topsoil. That
protrusion in the front yard may
occur with the venting of
methane gas. But I don't see
that any of this has to do with
the disappearances we're
investigating.

(X)
(X)

MULDER

It does, Scully -- somehow, it's
one and the same. The Klines..?

(beat)

What if they're still here?

SCULLY

You mean, buried in the yard?

(off his nod)

Once we start a forensic
excavation, our cover is blown.

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

Mulder knows that, but smiles faintly. He's got an idea.

(X)

CUT TO:

48 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - DAY - NEIGHBORS

(X) 48

Gather in the street -- we're on a LONG LENS. Most are familiar
faces.. They're staring our way, wide-eyed. We can't hear what
they're saying to each other over the thrum of a DIESEL ENGINE.

(X)
(X)

Pat Verlander comes hurrying in, joining the small crowd. She
and the others watch aghast as a BACKHOE ARM rises into frame in
the f.g., its bucket poised to dig.

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED:

48

NEW ANGLE - MULDER

Stands in his front yard with his fists on his hips, proudly watching as an OPERATOR on a tractor backhoe gouges up a first big chunk of perfect green lawn. We may just hear a GASP from the crowd. Mulder turns and waves to his neighbors. (X)

Pat marches to Mulder, so upset she can barely form words. They both have to yell over the noise. (X)

PAT

Wha... w-what in god's name are you doing?! --

MULDER

Putting in a pool.

PAT

In the front yard! Are you insane?—Have you even looked at the CC&Rs? You can't just put in a swimming pool! (X)

MULDER

Who said swimming pool?

Mulder moves to his nearby minivan, in which sits a fat copy of the CC&Rs. He reaches through the open window and grabs it. (X)

MULDER

It's a reflecting pool. There's no rule in here against reflecting pools -- I checked.

(shrug)
You'll like it. Very tranquil.

Pat looks from Mulder to Shroeder's driveway, her eyes imploring someone o.s. We see she's beseeching: (X)

GOGOLAK AND SHROEDER

Standing watch from the end of Shroeder's property. Gogolak alone looks unruffled. He gives Pat a cool shake of his head. (X)

Pat gives up and stalks off. Shroeder looks to Gogolak.

GOGOLAK

Let him dig his own grave.

Shroeder is deeply troubled by all of this. He clearly didn't sleep last night. He looks to... his wife, who appears farther up the driveway behind him. Cami is still in her bathrobe. She watches the digging, too far gone to care. (X)

(CONTINUED)

48 CONTINUED: (2)

48

MULDER

Eyes Gogolak and the Shroeders, then returns to his fists-on-hips stance, watching the backhoe dig. We ANGLE AROUND to Mulder's back. Off this LOCKED DOWN tableau, we...

MATCH-DISSOLVE TO:

49 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

(X) 49

We're in the same camera position -- only now it's dark, and the backhoe is shut down. The Operator has long since gone home. There's a huge HOLE in the yard, and Mulder seems to be gone.

Into this frame walks Scully, peering down into the hole.

SCULLY

Mulder?

Mulder's head pops up into view. He's filthy, staring up at her from the bottom of the hole.

SCULLY

The Klines aren't down there.
It's time to call it a day.

DOWN IN THE HOLE

Mulder is on hands and knees, working with a flashlight and a trowel, sifting through dirt and trash. It's been a long, fruitless day. He shakes his head, trying to figure this out.

MULDER.

Scully... what if what we're really looking for is garbage?

SCULLY

Then I'd say you found it.

MULDER

No, I mean that thing I saw last night, that creature. What if garbage is what it's composed of?

SCULLY

Garbage monster. Hmm.

Mulder holds up a drippy handful of SCHMUTZ for her to see.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED:

49

MULDER

This stuff -- primordial ooze!
What if this schmutz, these
conditions somehow gave birth to
this thing? By night, it walks
the neighborhood, leaving traces
of itself wherever it goes. On
the Kline's ceiling fan, for
instance -- where it probably
hit its head.

SCULLY

I think you hit your head.

(beat)

And what does this have to do
with the neighbors, with this
conspiracy of silence they keep?
Are you saying this monster
kills them when they break the
rules? Why? -- And why would they
keep quiet about it? Why would
they clean up after it?

Mulder doesn't have the answers. He shrugs and sighs, cranes his tired neck and rolls it on his shoulders... at which point he sees something above him. He shines his flashlight.

MULDER'S POV - THE BUCKET

Of the backhoe is suspended above him. Something COLORFUL is stuck in the gunk between the steel teeth.

Mulder stands and reaches up to the bucket. He pulls loose... (X)
a big piece of the broken WHIRLIGIG we remember from the Teaser. (X)
The little woodsman's axe flops limply. Mulder wonders at this.
He shines his light, peering closer still. He sees:

CLOSER - THE WHIRLIGIG

A MOLAR and INCISOR are embedded in the stout plywood, their bloody roots showing. We see a glint of SILVER FILLING on one.

MULDER (O.S.)

Human teeth, right?

Scully hunkers by the edge of the hole, studying the whirligig under the flashlight. She frowns, agreeing.

MULDER

I'd say it's the Klines, and
their murder weapon, to boot.

(re: the whirligig)

Tasteful.

(CONTINUED)

49 CONTINUED: (2)

Mulder turns the whirligig over in his hands. Now he finds:

CLOSER STILL - A TINY STICKER

Is on the back. It's something we never noticed in the Teaser. It says "Pier Nine Imports -- Malaysia."

Mulder remembers this instantly.

MULDER

Gogolak...

He considers, then hands the whirligig to Scully and climbs up out of the hole.

(X)

MULDER

You wanna get that molar ID'd, Scully?

SCULLY

Yeah. Where are you going?

MULDER

To price some rattan furniture.

He strides off down the street, out of sight. Scully stares after him, then heads for the front door of their house.

(X)

(X)

Now the front yard is deserted, the neighborhood quiet. Out of the silence, we hear a faint BLURBLE.

(X)

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HOLE

The earth trembles, bulges. Something STIRS underneath it.

RAKING ACROSS THE HOLE

A giant black ARM reaches up into view. Now, ANOTHER. A huge FIGURE hoists its tremendous bulk up out of the hole. Rising to its feet, it lurches out of the darkness toward the lit-up house.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

50 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT - A CELL PHONE

(X) 50

Turns on, its keypad glowing. Nimble fingers dial. Scully raises the phone to her ear and turns into frame.

SCULLY

This is Agent Dana Scully -- I need a full forensic team at 450 Autumn Terrace in Oak Grove.

(X)

(beat)

Excavation work. Not tomorrow, tonight.

As Scully listens to an unheard voice on the other end... a sudden, loud THUD from downstairs gets her attention.

SCULLY

I'll call you back.

Scully pockets her phone and pads past moving boxes to the dresser. Silently opening a drawer, she's dismayed to see:

SCULLY'S POV - HER HOLSTER

Lies atop her folded clothes, EMPTY. She picks it up, drops it. (X)

Scully senses it's time to formulate a plan B. She creeps to the bedroom door, listens by it as... from downstairs we hear SHUFFLING NOISES. Slow, heavy, scraping FOOTFALLS.

Scully backs away from the bedroom door... backing past a louvered closet door. Where --

-- BANG! Taking us completely by surprise, the door flies open and a dark MONSTER springs out, grabbing her from behind!

CLOSE - SCULLY

Her eyes go wide as a huge hand, black with schmutz, claps over her mouth, keeping her silent. We hear a hoarse, watery WHISPER:

MONSTER

It's come for you, Laura. You can't make any noise.

More slow, HEAVY FOOTSTEPS from downstairs. The "monster" releases Scully. She whips around, recoils at the sight of him. He's a big man -- hideously mauled. Long, raw gouges run down his swollen, dirty face, and one eye is closed. His clothes are torn and black with filth.

It takes Scully a moment to recognize BIG MIKE, still alive.

(CONTINUED)

50 CONTINUED:

50

SCULLY

Mike? What happened to you?

He lifts a finger to his misshapen lips. Another THUD from downstairs. Scully sees now that Mike has:

HER PISTOL

In his hand, leveled at the bedroom door. As quietly as possible, he slides a big moving box against the door, blocks it.

BIG MIKE

You have to get out of here.

SCULLY

Why? Who's downstairs?
(off his silence)

Mike, who did this to you?

----- Scully is whispering now. Mike slides more boxes, whispers back. -----

BIG MIKE

The Ubermensch. That's...
that's my name for it, anyway.
(beat)

It's our fault. All of us
original owners -- we asked for
it. Now we can't stop it.

SCULLY

Can't stop what -- a monster?
You're telling me there's a
monster downstairs?

BIG MIKE

I tried to give him Schroeder.
Tit for tat, right? Same as
Schroeder did to me. But the
Ubermensch wants you, Laura.
Your husband's broken way too
many rules.. I tried to warn him.

Mike slides the last box. More FOOTSTEPS -- getting louder now.

SCULLY

Give me my gun, Mike.
(puts her hand out)
I'm a federal agent, and I want
you to hand me my gun.

Elephant FOOTSTEPS -- approaching now. Mike forces Scully into the closet and shuts the door. With his last bit of strength, he pulls a heavy dresser in front of the closet, blocking her in.

50 CONTINUED: (2)

50

SCULLY (O.S.)

Mike!

Mike pays no attention. He faces the bedroom door now -- plants his feet and raises Scully's Sig, takes aim. He steels himself.

INSIDE THE CLOSET

Scully shoves, but the door won't budge. BOOM! -- we hear the bedroom door fly open like a bulldozer hit it. We hear moving boxes go tumbling. Scully puts her eye to the louvered door.

SCULLY'S POV - THROUGH THE SLATS

All we can make out is a bit of Mike's feet as --

-- BLAM!BLAM!BLAM! -- we hear the sound of him draining all 13 rounds out of Scully's pistol as fast as he can pull the trigger. Scully flinches. Soon, it's just the CLICKCLICKCLICK of the hammer on a dry chamber.

We hear a deep SNORT, like a rhino makes before it charges. Then... WHAM! Something big -- probably Big Mike -- hits the louvered closet door and cracks it inward. We hear him SCREAM.

Scully falls against the back of the closet. Off her, saucer-eyed and holding her breath, not making a sound:

51 OMITTED

51

A52 INT. GOGOLAK HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT - HANDCUFFS

A52

CLICK shut around suntanned wrists. We TILT UP to Gene Gogolak being cuffed, his hands behind his back.

GOGOLAK

Wait a minute -- you're who?

Mulder finishes and turns the man around, face-to-face.

MULDER

Special Agent Mulder -- FBI.

(beat)

For a guy who's into enforcing rules, you've broken a big one, Gogolak. Conspiracy to commit murder.

GOGOLAK

What are you talking about?

(CONTINUED)

A52 CONTINUED:

A5

MULDER

Let's start with the Klines.
You're responsible for them
being in little pieces in my
front yard.

(X)

Mulder presses the man's shoulder so that he sits down on the
couch. Gogolak glares up at Mulder, eyeing him warily.

GOGOLAK

You're not building a pool.

MULDER

You gave the Klines that yard
ornament, the man with the axe.

Mulder mimes chopping wood. Gogolak nods impatiently.

GOGOLAK

Whirligig.

MULDER

Whirligig. Tacky enough to
break your rules, your CC&Rs.
Tacky enough to mark the Klines
for death.

GOGOLAK

And won't that sound good in a
court of law?

This quiets Mulder. Gogolak grins up at him.

GOGOLAK

When the judge asks you who
killed all those people, what
exactly will you tell him?

Mulder considers this cocky man. From the nearby table, he
picks up the carving of the scary monster-god, examines it.

(X)

(X)

MULDER

A tulpa.

Gogolak's eyes flicker with recognition. Mulder continues.

MULDER

A Tibetan thought-form: a
living, breathing creature
willed into existence by one who
possesses the ability.

Mulder looks around the room, indicates the scads of Tibetan art.

A52 CONTINUED: (2)

A52

MULDER

An ability I think you picked up
on your whirligig-buying trips
to the Far East.

(beat)

Why'd you do it? Is it really
that important that everyone
have the same color mailbox?
The same kind of welcome mat?

GOGOLAK

It's important that people fit
in. That they belong to the
group -- that there's harmony,
not chaos. You want chaos, go
live out there --

(waving outside)

-- There's a world full of it.
I gave my neighbors what they
wanted... what they asked for.

Mulder mulls this over, stares back at Gogolak. He holds up the (X)
carving for the man to see. (X)

MULDER

But they didn't know what they
were getting into, did they?
And I'll bet neither did you.

(beat)

You give it life, but you can't
control it... can you? You can
only hope to stay out of its way.

Gogolak's silence tells us it's true. Finally, he speaks low.

GOGOLAK

My Homeowner's Association
lawyers are going to make you
sound... so stupid... that not
only will I never see the inside
of a jail cell, but you'll be
signing all your paychecks
straight to me.

(beat)

We on the same wavelength, son?

Mulder snorts and hauls Gogolak up off the couch.

MULDER

Rules are rules, dad.

Mulder hustles him out of frame.

B52 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - TWO PAIRS OF FEET

(X)B52

Come striding up the unblemished asphalt of the street. The neighborhood is deathly quiet save for the JINGLE of handcuffs.

MULDER AND GOGOLAK

Walk, Mulder gripping the older man by his elbow. Mulder slows their pace, seeing something up ahead.

MULDER'S POV - THE PETRIE'S HOUSE

(X)

The front door stands wide open. The foyer is dark.

Mulder knows this can't be good. He turns on Gogolak, who is staring at it, too.

GOGOLAK

Can't say you weren't warned.

Mulder yanks the man to the nearby mailbox, where in a flash he undoes one cuff and locks it to the post. Leaving Gogolak behind, he sprints up the lawn past the backhoe to the house.

(X)

As Gogolak tests his handcuffs, stares after Mulder...

SHROEDER (O.S.)

Gene...?

Gogolak turns to squint at:

GOGOLAK'S POV - SHROEDER'S HOUSE

Win Shroeder peeks around his hedges at Gogolak cuffed to the mailbox. He steps out into his driveway, looking confused.

(X)

(X)

GOGOLAK

Win... you live next door to two FBI agents.

(off his amazement)

Cheer up. Not for long.

Shroeder turns to stare nervously at Mulder and Scully's place. Off Gogolak, pulling on the mailbox in an effort to free himself:

(X)

(X)

CUT TO:

52 INT. KLINE HOUSE - NIGHT - THE STAIRS

52

To the second floor have giant, muddy blops every third step -- Ubermensch tracks. We ASCEND, passing over them.

(CONTINUED)

52 CONTINUED: ,

52

MULDER

Creeps up the stairs, his senses on alert. The house is silent.

MULDER

Scully..?

No answer. Mulder reaches the landing, eases around a black schmutz-stained corner.

A53 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

(X) A5:

Mulder steps through a door that looks like it was hit by a crack house battering ram. There's more schmutz here, along with moving boxes and their scattered contents. There's also --

MULDER'S POV - BLOOD

Spattered, sprayed and just plain spilled all over the walls and floor. Otherwise, there's no sign of Big Mike.

(X)

MULDER

Is freaked out -- fearing for his partner.

(X)

MULDER

Scully? --

Behind him, WHAM! -- the closet door kicks open an inch, startling him. WHAM! WHAM! -- someone is trying to get out of the closet, but the blood-spattered dresser is in the way.

SCULLY (O.S.)

Mulder..?

MULDER

Scully! Hang on --

Mulder strains at the heavy dresser, realizes it's partially embedded in the sheetrock wall. He's not budging it.

SCULLY (O.S.)

Check on Mike!

(X)

Mulder glances around, realizing now who all this blood belongs to. Off his sick look:

CUT TO:

B53 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - THE MAILBOX

(X) B53

Says "The Petries." Hands grasp it, RATTLING it hard.

WIDER - GOGOLAK

(X)

Tries to pry the box off. He whacks it two or three times, denting it severely as he attempts to break it loose.

(X)

(X)

GOGOLAK

Come here and help me with this.

(X)

Shroeder hesitates, hanging back.

(X)

GOGOLAK

Wake up, son! Come here.

(X)

FOOTSTEPS pad down the Shroeder's concrete driveway. Shroeder turns to see... Cami walking down the drive toward him. She's still in her bathrobe, looking haunted. She joins her husband.

(X)

(X)

(X)

GOGOLAK

Win? --

(X)

(X)

Shroeder tentatively starts toward him. Cami speaks up calmly.

(X)

CAMI

Win. No.

(X)

(X)

Shroeder looks to his wife, then... stands his ground. Gogolak looks to Cami too, amazed and pissed off. He speaks icily.

(X)

(X)

GOGOLAK

Go back inside, little lady.

(X)

(X)

CAMI

Yeah.

(X)

(X)

Glaring at Gogolak, Cami takes her husband by the arm and leads him back to their house. Shroeder doesn't argue. With one long last look to Gogolak, he heads up the driveway.

(X)

(X)

(X)

GOGOLAK

(X)

Stares at them, enraged. He grabs the mailbox post, tugging it back and forth like a loose tooth. It won't come out. He works up an angry sweat, not seeing...

(X)

(X)

(X)

... The out-of-focus UBERMENSCHER climbing out of the big hole in the yard behind him. As it lumbers closer, growing bigger in frame, Gogolak gradually becomes aware... turns and looks...

(X)

(X)

(X)

UBERMENSCHER'S POV - GOGOLAK

(X)

Cranes his neck up at us as we approach. Off his terror:

(X)

53 OMITTED 53

54 INT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - SLATS (X) 54

Of the louvered closet door get quickly RIPPED loose, one by one. Scully's face appears in the gap. She's unharmed.

As Mulder works to yank out the slats, having given up on moving the dresser... SCREAMS from outside get their attention. (X)

SCULLY

Mulder!

Too late -- Mulder bolts, leaving Scully to free herself.

55 OMITTED 55

56 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT - MULDER (X) 56

Tears ass out the front door and down the steps, pulling up short as he sees --

MULDER'S POV - THE UBERMENSCHER

It's silhouetted in the distance, pounding on the tiny Gogolak the way a grizzly swats an elk to kill it. (X)

The Ubermensch turns and sees Mulder. It lets go of Gogolak, who falls like a rag doll, still handcuffed to the mailbox. The monster starts toward Mulder, sizing him up. (X)

Mulder backs up, looking for options... seeing few. The monster lumbers ever closer. (X)

INTERCUT WITH:

CLOSE - GOGOLAK

Who lies on his gouged face, his eyes staring blankly. His nostrils snort up dust with every labored breath. As his eyes slowly close, and he clearly breathes his last...

THE UBERMENSCHER:

Looming above Mulder... rumbles to a STOP. It SHUDDERS. Then...

... It COLLAPSES onto itself, disintegrating into a big pile of earth and SCHMUTZ -- a huge, rounded compost heap that slides across Mulder's feet, burying his legs right up to the knees.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

56

NEW ANGLE - SCULLY

Appears in the doorway behind Mulder, jogging down to join him. (X)
She stares in amazement at the carnage. She and Mulder turn (X)
their attention to the big pile of shit his feet are buried in. (X)

Off Mulder, extricating one leg with a sucking POP...

DISSOLVE TO:

57 EXT. PETRIE'S HOUSE - MORNING - THE MOVING VAN (X) 57

We saw in Act One sits in the driveway, its loading door open. (X)
Inside, it's packed full of boxes and furniture. As one last (X)
box marked "China" gets placed inside, and the door closed... (X)

... We PULL BACK to find Mulder and Scully, still in their (X)
undercover wardrobe, climbing into their teal minivan. They (X)
take one last, long look-around-the-cul-de-sac, then Mulder (X)
starts the engine. (X)

We CRANE UP, going high and wide on the neighborhood -- the (X)
place looks deserted. The minivan slowly follows the moving van (X)
down the street, finally disappearing in the distance. Even (X)
after they're gone, we keep ROLLING. Because... (X)

... Over this one long shot we superimpose CAPTIONS in our (X)
standard Legend font. They come up along with STILL PHOTOS of (X)
the character they refer to. They are, as follows: (X)

"Win Shroeder was found guilty of conspiracy to commit murder, (X)
and is serving five to thirteen years at the Men's Correctional (X)
Facility in Chino, California. During his tenure as foreman of (X)
the groundskeeping crew, the prison was named "Best-Groomed (X)
Penal Institution" three years running. (X)

"Cami Shroeder divorced her husband and now lives in an artists' (X)
colony outside Ukiah, California. She teaches fingerpainting to (X)
hyperactive elementary school children, and seldom wears a (X)
smock. She was awarded sole custody of her Chihuahua, Scruffy." (X)

"'The Falls at Arcadia' saw its ranking as one of the state's (X)
best planned communities fall drastically, with a subsequent 30% (X)
drop in real estate prices... and a corresponding 300% rise in (X)
spinning daisy reflectors and bass boats." (X)

58 OMITTED

AND

59

57

59

THE END

(X)