# Threads of the Mythology

[Mulder: They're here, aren't they?  
Deep Throat: Mr. Mulder, they've been here for a long, long time.]

[CSM in the Pentagon basement. Max suspended in mid-air. Scully running. Bodies in fluid-filled tanks. Young Mulder calling after Samantha. Duane Barry being lifted into the air. Abducted Scully opening her eyes. Mulder bathed in light. Mulder on top of the ski-lift car. Scully's expanded abdomen and alien probe. Scully in a boat on a lake. The Alien Bounty Hunter. 'Mulder' throwing Scully. The submarine in the ice. Scully sitting by a hospital bed. Mulder punching Skinner, in the FBI hallway. Scully firing her gun and shooting Mulder. Mulder in a coma surrounded by dead people. CSM. An alien in the mine. Krycek running from the car just as it explodes.]

#### Threads of the Mythology Abduction

##### Time Line June 24, 1952 – Origins of the X-Files While investigating a strange case of Xenotransplantation, FBI Agent Arthur Dales is informed that such odd cases are stored under 'X' where there is more room in the file drawer.

[Woman: I recognize one of these names. It's in an X-File.   
Dales: An X-File?   
Woman: Yes, unsolved cases, filed them under 'X'.  
Dales: Why don't you file them under 'U' for unsolved?   
Woman: That's what I did until I ran out of room. Plenty of room in the Xs.]

Chris Carter  
Creator/Executive Producer

In the beginning, I didn't think of them, the episodes, as specifically as mythology episodes, because they were just stories we wanted to tell and they involved Mulder and his personal quest and ultimately Scully. And what happened is that through the telling of those stories, we saw that the most personal episodes became the mythology episodes, the ones that were about his life, ultimately became about the relationship between Mulder and Scully and she became very involved in his life and they were really, I think of them as the most romantic episodes in the show because it was where the characters really learned most about one another.

[Mulder and Scully and baby William.]

Frank Spotnitz  
Executive Producer

Part of the reason the mythology unfolded the way it did was because we were afraid of the pretentiousness of a quote-unquote mythology and so things were always oblique, there were always lots of questions asked.

[Scully: Agent Mulder, I'm Dana Scully. I've been assigned to work with you.]

Frank Spotnitz:

Chris from the very beginning had an idea about what the end of the show was, where it was all going, but he was smart enough to be flexible about the path the mythology would take over the life of the series, so that if you had a new idea or something broke in the news or you found it in a magazine or newspaper, if an actor ended up being wonderful, the mythology could go in a different direction and still have that sort of floating destination out on the horizon. I realized just how wise that approach was as the series went on and on and on.

[Mulder: What am I on to?   
Deep Throat: A dangerous path.]

Frank Spotnitz:

To a certain degree, it was a good thing that people couldn't quite understand the mythology. Because when you start talking about little green men and flying saucers, it can sound ridiculous very quickly, so the more shadowy, complex, intellectual, you know, high-minded these things seem, the more plausible they seem.

[Spaceship hovering over Mulder on the airfield.]

Kim Manners  
Executive Producer/Director

It isn't a show for dummies. It was a thinking man's show. You had to sit down and give this some real thought. And you had to pay attention. If you didn't pay attention, you'd get lost. And I think that was part of the charm of the show.

[Mulder looking down on people in a crater.]

Frank Spotnitz:

The important thing for us was not relying on the audience remembering a past episode, or having seen a past episode, but rather in the beginning of a mythology episode re-stating in some way what we felt you needed to know to go forward.

[Scully: I'm a federal agent.   
Man: Hold on. You're not going anywhere until we can see some ID.   
Scully: There is no time for this. A man is dying.   
Mulder has been put in a tank of water.   
Mulder: (voice over) What happened to me out on the ice has justified every belief. If I should die now it would be with a certainty that my faith has been righteous. And if through death, larger mysteries are revealed I will have already learned the answer to the question that has driven me here. That there is intelligent life in the universe other than our own. That they are here among us.]

##### Time Line November 27, 1973 – Samantha Disappears Samantha Mulder is allegedly abducted. Her brother Fox begins his search for the truth about her disappearance.

[Samantha: Fox!   
Samantha is floating in mid-air.   
Mulder: Samantha! Samantha!]

Frank Spotnitz:

You know, one thing people don't often think about with the mythology episodes was that they were really our only chance to advance the emotional lives, and the personal lives of the characters of Mulder and Scully. And all the standalone episodes - they were essentially static, they were about the case, they were plot-driven. And these were the episodes when you met their parents, met their siblings, learned about their childhood. You know, they were the personal stories. And I think that's as much a part of their appeal as the big stuff about aliens and the spectacle of the production values.

[Mulder looking at Scully's headstone.]

Howard Gordon  
Executive Producer

It was a little bit more of a soap opera or an opera, it had that quality of being part of a larger canvas. So in some ways it was permitted to ask more questions than it answered, whereas in a single standalone episode you really have to become cohesive and end it there.

[Leonard Betts emerging from his skin.]

Brett Dowler  
Second Unit Director

Most people, if they tuned in on that Friday night and turned it on, and it was a monster movie, they'd go: 'oh, wow, cool, but I wish it was a mythology one though'. Because the mythology ones always went deeper with the audience, I believe. They did for me.

[Mulder sees Max suspended in mid-air.]

Joseph Patrick Finn  
Producer

They liked to be scared by the monsters of the week but it was the mythology shows that actually hooked them.

[Scully: I said, put your hands against the wall.   
Mulder: What's wrong?   
Scully: Do it!   
Mulder: Scully, it's me.   
Scully: I don't know who you are.   
Mulder: Ok, I'm going to take my left hand and reach into my pocket and get my ID, Ok? Just don't shoot me, I got shot once and I didn't much care ...   
Scully: I said, keep your hands up.   
'Mulder' turns and punches Scully.]

Joseph Patrick Finn:

The mythology shows took on a whole new kind of level of expectation from production point of view.

[Filming a scene in the basement office.]

Brett Dowler:

Generally they had a slightly larger scope in the writing and so they did take in bigger themes and thus they had to have bigger visuals involved in them.

[Submarine conning tower descending through the ice.]

John S. Bartley  
Director of Photography

I used a different film stock for those. I used 5293 for those because there's generally a lot of smoke and it worked well with 93 or it worked well for me and that was a sort of darker stock.

[Bodies lying in tanks of fluid.]

Mark Snow  
Composer

My choice for the mythology shows, musically, was to have the same sort of palette of sounds which would be more of a, perhaps a traditional, orchestral sound albeit done on electronics. So, whenever a mythology show came up I would just go back and pull up that particular palette, you know, using that as if it was a traditional symphony orchestra setup.

[Scully sitting in a boat. The rope tethering it to the shore snaps and the boat starts drifting away.]

##### Time Line December 1991 – Agent Mulder Assigned to X-Files Fox Mulder is assigned to the X-Files, a post he has desired since joining the FBI. His first order of business is opening a file on Samantha's disappearance.

[Mulder: I was twelve when it happened. My sister was eight. She just disappeared out of her bed one night. Just gone. Vanished. No note. No phone calls. No evidence of anything.]

Rob Bowman  
Director/Producer

One of the advantages of Vancouver is that it's a very eclectic architectural environment. There is not a theme, a consistent theme, downtown. And within 20 or 30 minutes you can go from lush, lost forest, to farm.

[Filming a scene at night in a forest.]

Chris Carter:

The Vancouver mists and rain and fog and forests and the variety of neighborhoods, terrains, landscape that you can shoot – it was all wonderful for the show.

Sheila Larken  
'Margaret Scully'

This is a shadowy land. I think X-Files was a shadowy show.

Rob Bowman:

Because of the fog or the overcast conditions at a lot of the time, rain, it maintained a bit of a Sherlock Holmes feel to it for me, right? And I think John definitely found the voice of the show very, very quickly and his way to do it.

John Bartley:

I loved doing dark working and pulling it off, particularly for television.

[Scully at night, walking across a road bridge.]

John Bartley:

You have to have something either to take the audience away, something bright in the background or something hidden away or not stay on the darkness for too long. It can't be too black. As somebody said, there's darkness and blackness, you can have darkness but you can't have blackness.

##### Time Line March 7, 1992 – The X-Files Pilot Agent Dana Scully is assigned to the X-Files project to work with and secretly debunk Agent Fox Mulder's investigations into unsolved cases.

[Scully: Actually, I'm looking forward to working with you. I've heard a lot about you.   
Mulder: Oh, really? I was under the impression that you were sent to spy on me.]

Chris Carter:

Early on, everyone sort of took a part in helping to shape that mythology, but it all sprung from really the pilot episode and the episode right after it, which is called 'Deep Throat' which really sets up the idea that the aliens have been here and as the character of Deep Throat says, they've been here for a long, long time. That really, I think, is the sort of launching moment for the entire mythology, that the government knows something, they've known it quite a while and they've done a good job of keeping it a secret, and it's Mulder now whose quest is to unravel that secret, to expose that secret.

[Deep Throat: Mr. Mulder, why are those like yourself, who believe in the existence of extraterrestrial life on this earth, not dissuaded by all the evidence to the contrary.   
Mulder: Because all the evidence to the contrary is not entirely dissuasive.   
Deep Throat: Precisely.]

Chris Carter:

The whole idea of the show is really about this quest to find the truth about his sister and to possibly find his sister. So, the idea of a mythology is kind of built in to the show because Mulder's quest takes him far and wide and into the paranormal. So I really think of every episode as a mythology episode in a sense, but then there are these episodes that really become about that specific quest, which is the search for his sister, the episodes that involved specifically the truth about alien extraterrestrial life and the possibility that his sister was abducted by aliens.

Rob Bowman:

The quest for finding her, that she is out there, a lost child, I mean we could lose a child now and there is an amber alert and the whole nation knows when one child's missing. And it's a worrisome thing.

[Scully: You never found her?   
Mulder: It tore the family apart, no-one would talk about it. There were no facts to confront, nothing to offer any hope.]

Howard Gordon:

Mulder's main motivation in season one was uncovering the secret about his missing sister and that was really, I think, what drove season one and certainly the entire mythology of the X-Files was the basis that was Samantha Mulder.

##### Time Line July 7, 1994 – Little Green Men Mulder heads to Puerto Rico hoping to find hard evidence of the existence of extraterrestrials after he learns that an abandoned radio telescope was the site of a recent UFO encounter.

[Inside the telescope station. The door is slowly opened, admitting a bright light into the room. Mulder pulls the trigger of his gun several times, but it doesn't fire. He checks the clip and when he looks up he sees an alien figure in the bright light.]

Chris Carter:

I had asked Morgan and Wong, Glen Morgan and James Wong, to write the first episode coming back in the second season and this is what they chose to do simply and that was just taking something that had been established which is the idea that Mulder's sister possibly was abducted and using it in an interesting way. Taking something like Arecibo, which was in that episode, and taking something that existed, something that was real, which is what made the best episodes really click, taking the literature, if you will, of the search for extra-terrestrials and wrapping it around, contextually around the Mulder and Scully story.

##### Time Line August 7, 1994 – Duane Barry Mulder and FBI Agent Alex Krycek are assigned to a hostage negotiation where the deranged hostage taker, ex-FBI Agent Duane Barry, tells Mulder he was kidnapped and tortured by aliens.

[Duane Barry is being pulled up into the air from his bed, while alien figures look on.]

Howard Gordon:

The abductions were often, in the first season in particular and then into the beginning of the second season, very intimated, very kind of off-camera. You'd see the result of an abduction, you'd see the footprint of an alien, and in fact we thought that was the secret of the show, that was what was wonderful about the show that for a very limited special effects budget we could actually scare people with what you didn't see rather than what you saw. And I think sometime in the middle of the second season the abductions and aliens became much more graphically rendered. You'd think you'd see the aliens on camera and as we got more money we could show it.

##### Time Line August 7, 1994 – Ascension Mulder tracks down Duane Barry who has kidnapped Scully and plans to rendezvous with an alien ship and hand her over instead of himself.

[Duane Barry breaks into Scully's apartment.]

Frank Spotnitz:

The mythology of the series didn't really blossom until an unexpected event late in the season one which was the pregnancy of Gillian Anderson, the real-life pregnancy of Gillian Anderson, which forced the X-Files to be serialized in a way I don't think it was ever intended to be serialized. Suddenly there had to be an arc of stories that dealt with the fact that Scully was going to be gone for who knew how many episodes.

Chris Carter:

There was talk of actually making her have an alien baby which would have been a terrible idea and so what we ultimately decided to do was to shoot around her pregnancy and her pregnant stomach. What we did is, we had Scully abducted during the two-parter of 'Duane Barry' and 'Ascension' and then she went off and had her baby and she came back.

Howard Gordon:

We knew we had a window where we had to write her out and fortunately this is a show about abduction so we abducted her.

Frank Spotnitz:

It was sort of a happy accident and there is a beautiful irony in all that because ultimately Gillian Anderson's real-life pregnancy leads to the story line about Scully not being able to have a baby and then miraculously by the end of the series having a child, and all of that is a piece, and it's a wonderful sort of blur of real life and fiction, because it was all, you know, one would not have happened without the other. If Gillian Anderson had not had Piper in season one of the X-Files, the show never would have evolved the way it did.

['Requiem'. Mulder steps into the bright light from the alien craft.]

Frank Spotnitz:

When it came time to write the season finale for season 7, Requiem, there was a very good chance it was the last season of the show. David Duchovny had announced he was done, but there was some pretty strong sentiment inside and outside the show that it was time to call it a day. So we very consciously went back to the pilot episode, to the characters of the pilot episode, Billy Miles and the Sheriff, and brought them back for that, you know, to come full circle from where we'd been. But we felt it was an appropriate ending to have Mulder abducted and that idea came very early on in the writing of the story.

[Space ship ascending.]

##### Time Line Circa November 1994 – One Breath When Scully mysteriously shows up at a hospital in a coma and her DNA exhibits signs of genetic tampering, Mulder is convinced the government is responsible for her condition.

[CSM is in his apartment watching television. He's alerted by a sound that indicates someone else is in the apartment. He starts to get up from his chair.   
Mulder: Sit down!   
CSM: How'd you find me?   
Mulder: Shut up!]

Robert Goodwin  
Executive Producer/Director

Prior to that, the Cigarette Smoking Man was kind of a dark figure who sort of lurked around in the shadows and didn't do much more than smoke cigarettes. I mean, he really didn't have much dialogue prior to that, you know, and to be truthful with you, I didn't know if Bill Davis... later I learned he was an incredible actor, he teaches acting, he has an acting school, but at that time I didn't know anything, all I knew was he was a guy they brought in to smoke cigarettes. So here we had this incredible scene where Mulder comes into his apartment, with a gun to his head and basically he's going to blow him away because he's sure he had to do, something to do with Scully's disappearance, and Bill was fantastic.

Kim Manners:

There were two characters in the Cigarette Smoking Man. There was the Cigarette Smoking Man played by the actor Bill Davis, and then there was the cigarette. And if you watch closely, again this I owe to Rob Bowman, he knew that that cigarette was its own character, and the lighter could also become a character. And you could tell a story just by a little smoke in the foreground. You didn't even have to see Bill yet, it was like the downbeat and Mark Snow would come in, you knew this was not going to be good because the cigarette smoke was there.

Helga Ungurait  
Script Supervisor

He knew exactly when he did it. And he would do the first take and he would take a puff and he'd talk a bit, and then do the blowing out at a certain time. And the second take I would be keeping track of the puffs, when he puffed, so 'cut, print, move it on, Helga: print take two and four'. I would go up to him and say, 'so we're printing take two' and he'd go 'when did I first puff?' I would tell him the word and he would match himself perfectly.

Kim Manners:

He was the Darth Vader of the X-Files. Again, like all so many things on the X-Files, everything that was given birth, seemed to be given birth for, because it was an accident almost, and now suddenly this man who was nothing more than an extra leaning against a file cabinet became the lead villain in the show.

##### Time Line Circa January 1995 – Colony Abortion clinic doctors who look identical are being hunted by an alien bounty hunter. A woman claiming to be Samantha appears and asks for Mulder's help. An alien bounty hunter captures Scully.

[Woman reporter on TV: ... miraculously survived the extreme arctic temperatures. The man was airlifted to a military hospital in Alaska where he was listed in stable condition but while authorities have been trying to determine just who the pilot is, we have learned that he has apparently walked out of the hospital and is now listed as missing. Reporting from our ...]

Chris Carter:

By the, I'd say, the middle of season two when you get 'Colony' and 'End Game', it's the first time you really get episodes that are specifically written for, and dedicated to, this mythology, this quest. What happens in the middle of season two is the writing staff starts to change and certain people leave the show, and we are now at a point where I've got this mythology and I want to pump it up a little bit, and so I bring someone onto the show, named Frank Spotnitz.

Frank Spotnitz:

I had had an idea that ended up being central to that two-parter, as had David Duchovny, we kind of combined those ideas to make the two-parter.

Chris Carter:

What's nice about having a person like David Duchovny to work with is that he's smart and he's got good ideas. The idea for 'Colony' and 'End Game' came out of David Duchovny saying, 'wouldn't it be great if we had like an alien bounty hunter?'

[The alien bounty hunter is shot, and green blood oozes out of the bullet wounds.]

Frank Spotnitz:

I know that internally on the show, among the writing staff, there was a lot of, I wouldn't say resistance, but uncertainty about whether this was a wise direction to go in. Up to that point, the aliens had been very shadowy, ambiguous, you weren't really sure whether they existed at all. And here we have this Terminator-ish figure, Brian Thompson who played the Bounty Hunter, and he had this alien weapon, this alien stiletto, and it was very explicit that there was something going on.

Brian Thompson  
'Bounty Hunter'

From my interpretation of the Bounty Hunter was that he was incredibly efficient. That he was the alien version of Mr. Duchovny. He was looking for aliens on the planet Earth and he was trying to do his job as efficiently as possible.

Frank Spotnitz:

David and Chris's thinking was that it was time to advance, to go forward, and to be bold about it and not shy away from, you know, this too belonged to the show, and obviously it seemed to have been the right decision.

##### Time Line April 9, 1995 – Anasazi Top secret Defense Department files on extraterrestrial life lead Mulder to the New Mexico desert where he discovers a buried railroad boxcar full of alien corpses.

[Mulder: Not what I ever expected.   
Scully: What do you mean?   
Mulder: I'm in a box car buried inside a quarry. There are bodies everywhere.   
Scully: Bodies?   
Mulder: Stacked floor to ceiling.   
Scully: What happened to them?   
Mulder: I don't know.]

Chris Carter:

I had taken a trip at the end of season one, I was very tired and my summer vacation, as it were, was to Sedona, Arizona. I would see a lot of literature about the Anasazi, which is an Indian culture that just completely disappeared, and that was a culture that had created images that looked like they were extraterrestrial images.

[CSM: Nothing vanishes without a trace. Burn it!]

Chris Carter:

But David was very instrumental in, I think, shaping the mythology. He was involved in the story for Anasazi as well, which is the end of season two, which was a big cliff-hanger for us because it looks like Mulder is dead, and it brought a lot of interest to the show - how can you do this, how can you kill the lead character, will you kill the lead character, you've killed such an important character at the end of season one, you're not going to do this to us again are you? So I think it heightened the interest in the show, and David was instrumental in coming up with that idea.

David Duchovny  
'Agent Fox Mulder'

Realizing that I could write, you know, always thinking of myself as a writer and then putting my money where my mouth was and writing, and realizing that that's an alternative for me in my life, and it's something I want to pursue which is invaluable to me and such a great opportunity and a gift to have been able to do it on the show and then directing the same.

Chris Carter:

At the end of each episode, I was asked by the person who watched over us at the network if I could tie up each episode each week with a bow, in a sense, that I could explain the paranormal phenomena, that I could tell people that this was real and this was why it was real and it was just a crazy idea. And I kept saying: the interesting part about this for me was going to be telling stories where you left people wondering at the end, with the possibility that it could be real, but never ever stating that this is in fact the truth.

##### Time Line Circa June 1995 – Paper Clip Mulder and Scully's search for information about a secret government project dating back to World War II leads them to an underground facility containing files on hundreds of U.S. citizens.

[Scully: That's your sister's file.   
Mulder: Yeah.   
Scully: What are you looking for?   
Mulder: I don't know.   
He peels off the label.   
Mulder: Have a look at this, Scully. This file was originally mine.   
Scully: I don't understand.]

John Shiban  
Executive Producer/Writer

In 'Paper Clip', we really begin to realize the extent of the government conspiracy, and the cataloguing of all of us. This is where Chris first introduced the idea of genetic material being taken through inoculations. What's great about that idea is that it touches on something that everybody's done, everybody's been forced to do since we were children, get inoculated for something or other, for smallpox in this case, and to turn that into something scary is brilliant, I think, because that really means you can't trust anyone.

Paul Rabwin  
Producer

The first time you ever really saw a spaceship on the show, how do you do it? Do you want to do it in your face or do you want to be a little more coy about it? And this dark mass starts appearing behind the building and Mulder looks up and sees this dark mass, and suddenly the brightness of it is so overwhelming that you can't distinguish it that way - it's like, it was so dark you can't see it, and then suddenly it's so bright that you can't see it. And I thought that was absolutely brilliant, it was really the first time our mythology started to take on that kind of a science-fiction feel.

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[Mulder: I don't think this is ordinary diesel oil, Scully, I think it's a medium. A medium being used by some kind of alien creature that uses it to body-jump.]

[Max falling from the aircraft. Soldiers opening fire. Plane flying over car. X carrying Mulder over his should. Train exploding. Oil leaking from Krycek's face. Mulder being chased by men on horseback. Oil creeping up child's face. Mulder under wire mesh. Alien Bounty Hunter. Oil in someone's eye. Mulder leaping onto train. Man holding gun at Skinner. Krycek's arm being cut off. Oil well head exploding. Man standing in light from spacecraft. Max levitating from his seat towards hole in fuselage. Primitive man in cave. CSM lying shot on the floor, pulling towards him the photograph of young Mulder and Samantha. Alien bodies lying on gurneys. Krycek with oil in his eyes.]