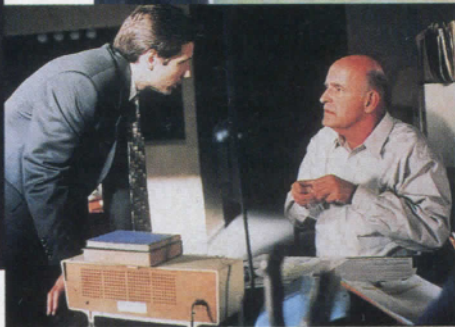


Season 3



Above, Lone Gunmen Langly, Frohike and Byers; top right, Ribisi as Oswald in "D.P.O."; right, Boyle as Bruckman.



49 The Blessing Way

WRITER: CARTER DIRECTOR: GOODWIN

Mulder (rescued and nursed back to health by Navajo healers) has *his* near-death encounter with Dad, who urges him to return to the living and complete his search for the truth. Back in Washington D.C., Scully—convinced Mulder is alive—is suspended for helping conceal the MJ files *and* discovers a computer-chip implant in the base of her neck. What could *that* mean? **Historic moments:** We meet the Well-Manicured Man (John Neville, who played the title role in *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen*)—part of the mysterious New York-based consortium that seems to be pulling all the strings. And Mulder discovers an old photo linking his father with Cancer Man and Deep Throat, among others. **Critique:** The corny dream sequence and high-flown cosmic hokey in this script keep it from earning an A. However, Skinner rocks big time and provides a knock-out finale. **B+**

50 Paper Clip

WRITER: CARTER DIRECTOR: BOWMAN

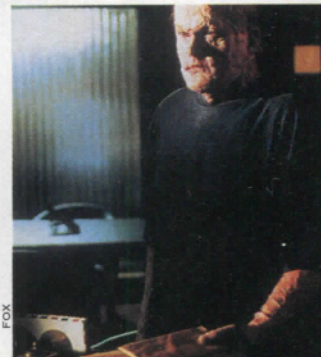
The title of the final third of this triptych refers to Operation Paper Clip (OPC), a postwar alliance formed in the wake of the Roswell discovery and seemingly bent on creating human-alien hybrids. Mulder and Scully are reunited and meet former Nazi scientist (and OPC member) Victor Klemper, who directs them to an abandoned coal mine containing the medical records and tissue samples of virtually everyone born after 1954. And Skinner, now holding the MJ tape, takes on Cancer Man in the hopes of reinstating Mulder and Scully. **Historic moments:** Scully's

sister is killed by Krycek; Scully seeks to uncover the meaning of the implant; Mulder learns why his sister was taken instead of him. **Critique:** Outstanding episode, but it exacerbates a maddening trend: Scully has literally "made contact" but will not or cannot open her mouth about it. **A-**

51 D.P.O.

WRITER: GORDON
DIRECTOR: MANNERS

A videogame geek—Darin Peter Oswald—turns out to be a lightning conduit. He uses his power to destroy his enemies, barbecue the occasional cow and impress his schoolteacher crush. **Creative casting:** *My Two Dads'* Giovanni Ribisi as the



sardonic Oswald, everyone's suburban teen nightmare. **Critique:** Not much in the way of action, but this episode's excellent photography and truly hilarious sociopathic high jinks keep you glued. **B+**

52 Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose

WRITER: DARIN MORGAN DIRECTOR: NUTTER

A serial killer is preying on the fortune-tellers of St Paul, Minnesota. When one of the bodies is discovered by insurance salesman Clyde Bruckman, Mulder and Scully are introduced to a true, if reluctant, prognosticator who tells them more than they want to know. **Creative casting:** Peter Boyle, as the beleaguered Bruckman, delivers the series' most hilarious performance. (For more on Boyle, see the Darin Morgan story on page 68.) **Critique:** Boyle gets lots of help from another superlative, laugh-a-minute script (for which Morgan won an Emmy). Nicely captures one of the overarching themes of the show: fate and humanity's isolation. **A+**

53 The List

WRITER/DIRECTOR: CARTER

An executed murderer makes an electric-chair vow of reincarnation and revenge, promising five deaths



Above, using protection in "Nisei"; left, Victor Stans (Don Thompson) plays mailboy in "The Walk"; bottom left, ready for execution, there's no chance Napoleon "Neech" Manley (Badja Djola) will go gently into that good night in "The List"; below, "Oubliette".



as payment for his. When a guard is found murdered, Mulder and Scully must determine whether it's penal politics or transmigration of the soul. **Creative casting:** Ever-evil J.T. Walsh (*Sling Blade*, *The Client*) as the warden; Ken (*Dawn of the Dead*) Foree as a guard. **Critique:** Standard but well executed, if you will, and one of the show's few unsolved mysteries, as it were. **B+**

54 2Shy

WRITER: JEFFREY VLAMING DIRECTOR: NUTTER

Translator of Renaissance Italian poetry Virgil Incanto (!) is a chat-room chubby chaser whose genetic mutation requires him to literally suck the fat out of his victims. **Critique:** Incanto (Timothy Carhart) is yet another fine example of an unassuming villain (à la Eugene Tooms and Donnie Pfaster) with strange physiological predilections. Lots of yucks (and we don't mean laughs). **B-**

55 The Walk

WRITER: JOHN SHIBAN DIRECTOR: BOWMAN

Through astral projection, Leonard Trimble, a bitter, quadruple amputee Gulf War vet, is making life hell for his former superiors: After killing all their loved ones, he forces the officers to live alone with their presumed guilt. **Critique:** If you're going to repeat mind-over-matter murder *again*, at least come up with a couple of transcendent characters. **C**

56 Oubliette

WRITER: CHARLES GRANT CRAIG DIRECTOR: MANNERS

Kidnap survivor Lucy Householder (yes, Householder) simultaneously manifests the experiences of her abductor's latest victim. Mulder uses her condition as a road map for solving the crime and in the process is once again reminded of his sister's disappearance. **Critique:** Scully's in aggressive I'm-not-buying-it mode, and what should be a roller-coaster of terror isn't. Worth it for Lucy's channelling sequences. **B-**

57 Nisei

WRITERS: CARTER/GORDON/SPOTNITZ DIRECTOR: NUTTER

An alien autopsy tape puts Mulder on the trail of a salvaged alien craft, a group of Japanese doctors who appear to be experimenting on alien life-forms, and a secret railway on which these post-mortems are taking place. X advises Scully to dissuade Mulder from pursuing the train. But does he listen? **Historic moments:** Lots of excitement for Scully. She's "recognised" by a kaffeeklatsch of abduction survivors; she *finally* seeks the meaning of her extracted implant-cum-computer chip, with help from Agent Pendrell (Brendan Beiser), a semi-regular Scully luster; and she identifies one of the doctors on Mulder's tape in a flashback of her abduction, opening up the possibility it wasn't aliens who took her. **Critique:** Mulder and Scully on separate—and gripping—ground. **A**



FOX

FOX



Above, Anderson and Kevin Zegers in "Revelations"; right, Scully's rival Bambi Berenbaum (Phillips) in "War".



Above, Kelly and Benson cook up their bitches' brew in "Syzygy"; right, trouble for Skinner in "Piper Maru".



Left and top left, "Apocrypha"; below, "Pusher" psychocombustion.



58 731

WRITER: SPOTNITZ DIRECTOR: BOWMAN

Continuing where "Nisei" left off, Mulder discovers that a secret railway car contains not an extraterrestrial, but an alien-human hybrid. Moreover, the railway car has been rigged with a bomb, and he's trapped with an assassin who has been sent to kill the cargo. Meanwhile, Scully has stumbled upon a modern-day Holocaust at a West Virginia research facility, where massive graves are filled with what appear to be the same kind of hybrid Mulder has discovered. **Critique:** Strangely tension-free, and another one of those episodes where Scully's bullheaded allegiance to provable fact makes you want to slap her. **B**

59 Revelations

WRITER: KIM NEWTON DIRECTOR: NUTTER

Scully plays guardian angel—and scrutinises her own lapsed Catholicism—while protecting a boy, "chosen by God", who is being pursued by a serial killer of supposed stigmatics. **Historic moment:**

Despite her ever-present cross, Scully has never addressed her faith until now, which presents a nice paradox for her science-driven character. **Creative casting:** The usually monstrous Michael Berryman (*The Hills Have Eyes*) as Owen Jarvis, the boy's saintly and "incorruptible" protector. **Critique:** Strangely, this script's inventiveness derives from its choice of the most mainstream paranormality of all—Christianity. Bonus points for the always welcome Scully/Mulder role reversal (she believes in the face of his disbelief). **B+**

60 War of the Coprophages

WRITER: DARIN MORGAN

DIRECTOR: MANNERS

Cockroaches appear to be over-running a Massachusetts town in this homage to 1950s horror classics such as *The Blob*, replete with cheesily ominous soundtrack and a crazed local populace. **Creative casting:** Bobbie Phillips (whose credits include *Murder One*) as Bambi Berenbaum, the bodacious entomologist who elicits moon eyes from Mulder and subsequent eye rolling from Scully. (Personal aside: Phillips has since been booed at an *X-Files* convention because her character was seen to have come between Mulder and Scully.) **Critique:** Irreverent camp that's infested with laughs (and creepy-crawlies) but throws credibility out the window. **A-**



▲ The (faked) South American setting may be exotic in "Teso dos Bichos", but the archaeological story still falls flat.

61 Syzygy

WRITER: CARTER DIRECTOR: BOWMAN

Heathers has got nothing on teen hell-raisers Margi and Terri, who gleefully eliminate their high school foes one by one. Then again, the entire town of Comity seems to be exhibiting bizarre behaviour—including a vodka-swilling Mulder and a cigarette-smoking Scully. The cause? An extremely rare planetary alignment resulting in a geological vortex, a "cosmic G-spot". Fine. Whatever. **Creative casting:** Wendy Benson and Lisa Robin Kelly as the not-so-clueless teens with the "hate him, hate him, wouldn't want to date him" mantra. **Critique:** Another uproarious send-up, this time of teen venom, B-movie paranoia, and our agents' painfully restrained rapport. Also includes one of Mulder's and Scully's funniest exchanges. Scully: "Why do you always have to drive? Because you're the guy? Because you're the big, macho man?" Mulder: "No, I was just never sure your little feet could reach the pedals." **A**

62 Grotesque

WRITER: GORDON DIRECTOR: MANNERS

FBI legend and long-time Mulder foe Bill Patterson inexplicably enlists Mulder's help in catching a murderous gargoyle prone to mutilating its victims' faces. **Critique:** Ponderous, oblique and featuring one of Mulder's always annoying, easy-way-out soliloquy summations. Will turn you to stone. **D**

63 Piper Maru

WRITERS: SPOTNITZ/CARTER DIRECTOR: BOWMAN

A French salvage ship, the *Piper Maru* (named after Anderson's daughter born 18 months earlier), ar-

rives in San Diego with its crew dying of radiation burns, which tips Mulder off to possible alien contact. Indeed, this introduces us to a whole new extraterrestrial life force—one that enters and leaves humans as an oily film. Mulder travels to Hong Kong in search of—what else?—the truth and encounters the now renegade Krycek, still in possession of the MJ file. **Historic moment:** Skinner gets shot for his persistent investigation of Scully's sister's death.

Critique: A tough and sentimental Scully and action-packed detective work by Mulder enhance an already crackling scenario. **A**

64 Apocrypha

WRITERS: SPOTNITZ/CARTER DIRECTOR: MANNERS

In this conclusion to "Piper Maru", we learn the twisted history and subsequent cover-up of the oily alien and its downed craft. Mulder escorts Krycek back to the US to retrieve the MJ file—only Krycek isn't exactly himself. **Historic moments:** In a flashback to 1953, we see a young Cancer Man and Mulder Snr, already knee-deep in "plausible deniability"; Mulder comes face to face with the Well-Manicured Man; the Lone Gunmen on ice (as in skates). **Critique:** Some interesting progressions in the grand theme, but worth it just for the awesome missile-site finale. **A**

65 Pusher

WRITER: VINCE GILLIGAN DIRECTOR: BOWMAN

Pusher, a self-styled American ninja, has the ability to cloud the minds of his victims and wreak psychokinetic mayhem. **Historic moment:** Pusher to Skinner: "Take a walk, Mel Cooley." (Cooley was the bald boss on *The Dick Van Dyke Show*.) This just before the assistant director is beaten up—by a girl.



Above, Darin Morgan strikes again with "Jose Chung", a perfect vehicle for Reilly (at right); left, Mulder gets the official "Wetwired" story; bottom left, Thinnies in "Cumi".

Critique: Much inscrutable warmth between Mulder and Scully parallels some inscrutable detective work. But the climactic mental tug-of-war between Mulder and Pusher makes up for any lapses in logic. **B+**

66 Teso Dos Bichos

WRITER: SHIBAN DIRECTOR: MANNERS

Archaeologists in the Ecuadorean highlands (of Vancouver!) unearth the remains of an Amaru—a shaman—thus unleashing its vengeful jaguar spirit. When the Amaru's urn is moved to a Boston museum, the deadly cat is out of the bag. **Critique:** *¡No es bueno!* **C**

67 Hell Money

WRITER: VLAMING DIRECTOR: TUCKER GATES

A clandestine Chinese racket is preying upon recent immigrants to the US through a grotesque raffle, which in turn is a vehicle to supply a black market with human body parts. Bingo was never like this.

Creative casting: B.D. Wong (*M. Butterfly*) as a cop whose loyalties are questioned by Mulder and Scully.

Critique: Gorgeously shot—particularly the lush, smoky gaming sequences. Ironically, the twisted grotesquery of this story makes you think it *must* be based on a true story. (Not so, says Carter.) **A-**

68 José Chung's 'From Outer Space'

WRITER: DARIN MORGAN DIRECTOR: BOWMAN

Told in flashback via an interview with Scully by "non-fiction science-fiction" novelist Jose Chung, this is a character-by-character (or should we say caricature-by-caricature) recounting of an alien visitation. **Creative casting:** The adorably flaky Charles

Nelson Reilly as Chung; if that weren't enough, professional wrestling's Jesse "The Body" Ventura appears as a Man in Black. **Critique:** A series so bleepin' ripe for parody brilliantly turns the tables on itself. Two (of many) guffaw-worthy moments: Mulder's squeal and the smoking alien. **A**

69 Avatar

WRITER: GORDON STORY: DUCHOVNY/GORDON

DIRECTOR: JAMES CHARLESTON

From the ridiculous to, well, the ridiculous. Cancer Man and Co seek to discredit Skinner and frame him for murder by exploiting a nightmare that has haunted him since Vietnam—the vision of a haglike, murderous succubus. **Critique:** Did somebody say suck? The clench-toothed Skinner deserves more air time, but not this sort of stuff. **D+**

70 Quagmire

WRITER: NEWTON DIRECTOR: MANNERS

"Scully, do you think you could ever cannibalise someone?" This is Mulder's idea of small talk when stranded with his partner on a rock while in search of a legendary prehistoric lake monster—that's Mulder's theory on what's killing locals, anyway. Scully, well, you know... **Creative casting:** The dope-smoking kid of "Coprophages" turns up again with a whole new way to get high. **Critique:** Notable only for Mulder and Scully's *Moby Dick* digression. But, hey, the show kinda *had* to tackle Loch Ness. **C**

71 Wetwired

WRITER: MAT BECK DIRECTOR: BOWMAN

A TV signal turns people's anxieties into psychosis, and Scully discovers the dangers of couch potatodom.

Historic moment: X and Cancer Man make their relationship known? **Critique:** Been there, done that (see "Blood"), but Anderson gives good unhinged. **B**

72 Talitha Cumi

WRITER: CARTER STORY: DUCHOVNY/CARTER

DIRECTOR: GOODWIN

The Project. The Process. Colonisation. These cryptic terms are thrown around in this season-ender. What do we really learn? There's a renegade alien clone, Jeremiah Smith, challenging "the greater purpose" represented by Cancer Man; Smith is being stalked by the Bounty Hunter. Plus a visit from Cancer Man to Mulder's mother reveals an unexplained relationship between them. **Critique:** Another provocative cliff-hanger, and a tour de force Cancer Man-Smith confrontation. "That is really a summation of my feelings about science," says Carter. "That it has definitely usurped religion and can explain everything now. [Cancer Man's] speech was greatly inspired by 'The Grand Inquisitor' chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*, where the Inquisitor imprisons Christ and won't let him speak." **A-**