

T H E F I L E S TM



"OUR TOWN"
Episode #2X24



THE X-FILES

"Our Town"

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Directed by
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Episode 2X24
Story #4390
April 10, 1995 White (Full)
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SCENE 9A

INT. PROCESSING PLANT - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

PANNING ACROSS A ROW OF LOCKERS

coming to a stop at a locker being opened by

PAULA GRAY

She is shaky, her face shiny with perspiration, as she pulls off her jean jacket. (She looks just like she did in the teaser -- hair down, wearing jeans and a jean jacket.)

Hanging her jacket on a hook inside the locker door, she reaches for her work coat when she's suddenly stopped by a SHOOTING PAIN IN HER HEAD, causing her to grimace in agony.

Recovering somewhat, she reaches inside the jean jacket pocket, finding a PRESCRIPTION BOTTLE -- just like the one George Kearns had in the teaser.

She spills a few pills into the palm of her hand, swallowing them. As she does, we

CUT TO:

April 10, 1995

CAST LIST

Fox Mulder
Dana Scully

George Kearns
Paula Gray
Pete Arens
Mental Patient
Doris Kearns
Jess Harold
Worker
Walter Chaco
Dr. Vance Randolph
Maid

April 10, 1995

SET LIST

EXTERIORS:

Deserted Rural Road
 /Car
 /Woods
Field
FBI Headquarters
Field
Kearns House
Chaco Chicken Processing Plant
Chaco Mansion
Rural Road
 /Highway
 /River
Court House

INTERIORS:

FBI Headquarters
 /Mulder's Office
Kearns House
Chaco Chicken Processing Plant
 /Inspection Area
Chaco Mansion
 /Veranda
 /Vestibule
County Morgue
 /Corridor
Mulder's Car
Court House
 /Corridor
 /Hall of Records

TEASER

1 EXT. DESERTED RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

1

Tree-lined, dark and deserted save for the moonlight. Two headlights poke yellow holes of light through the night, becoming visible as a CAR -- which slows, pulling off the graded earthen embankment beside the road.

A legend appears: COUNTY ROAD A7. DUDLEY, ARKANSAS.

2 INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

2

PAULA GRAY, an attractive woman in her early 20s, sits in the passenger seat beside GEORGE KEARNS, late 40s. His face is beaded with perspiration, his hair slicked back with Brylcreem.

Paula appears quite nervous, looking down into her own lap. George lays his clammy palm on her thigh, squeezes it slightly, scant assurance.

GEORGE

We don't have to be out here, you know. It's not like you're still in high school. We can go to the motel.

PAULA

I wouldn't want anyone to see us.

GEORGE

No one would see us.

She looks up at him, the faintest trace of a smile.

PAULA

It's a small town.

With that, she pushes out of the car. Leaving George watching her admiringly as she ambles off toward the dark woods -- when he is suddenly seized by a TREMOR which runs through his entire body. (Note: This is a distinctive, uncontrollable shudder.)

Angered by this intrusion of his own body, not wanting to spoil the moment, he reaches into his jacket pocket for a prescription bottle. With a quivering hand, he spills three tiny RED PILLS into his upturned palm, popping them into his mouth in one motion, grinding them into powder, as:

CAMERA RACKS to Paula in the near distance, framed by the passenger window, turning toward him from the edge of the woods.

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

2

PAULA
(beckoning)
Come on, George.

George grimaces as he forces himself to swallow the bitter powder, then exits the car.

3 EXT. CAR - NIGHT

3

George grabs a blanket from the back seat, and walks toward the trail head after her.

4 EXT. WOODS - TRAIL - MOVING

4

with Paula, who maintains a brisk gait, familiar with these woods. George is a bit breathless as he catches her, then struggles to keep up with her.

GEORGE
So what all changed your mind
anyway?

PAULA
I don't know. You were pretty
persistent, I guess.

George allows himself a smug smile.

GEORGE
Squeaky wheel gets the oil,
right?

PAULA
I guess so.

He takes her hand, at once an intimate gesture -- and a way to stop her. Clearly anxious to get started.

GEORGE
What's wrong with here? I'll
just set down the blanket and --

PAULA
Not yet.

GEORGE
Why not?

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED:

4

PAULA
Because...
(flashing a coquettish
smile)
You have to catch me first.

She pulls away from him, and runs deeper into the woods.

GEORGE
(calling after her)
Come on, now, don't make me chase
after you.

But her fast-receding footfalls leave him no choice. CAMERA
PRECEDES him down the narrowing trail, the cloying brambles
snag the blanket, scrape at his face.

GEORGE
Paula?

Strange SHADOWS from the moon give the surrounding trees an
ominous look, as if the forest itself were a malevolent force.

GEORGE
Paula! Where are you hiding?

But his only answer is the RUSTLING wind. He finds himself
suddenly alone. He swallows back the anxiety in this throat.
Disoriented, he chooses a direction, sets off quickly, tripping
OUT OF FRAME.

LOW ANGLE - GEORGE

Hits the ground with a hard THUD, knocking the wind out of him.

GEORGE
Sonuvabitch --

Struggling to get back his breath...

CAMERA RISES WITH GEORGE

pushing himself up, his face screwing up with confusion as he
sees something strange in the distance.

GEORGE'S POV - THE DISTANT WOODS

Flickers of YELLOW LIGHT -- the jiggling of distant lanterns
becomes visible through the trees.

(CONTINUED)

4 CONTINUED: (2)

4

GEORGE

George spins around in a circle. As he does, we PAN ACROSS THE WOODS -- the YELLOW LIGHTS growing closer and increasing in number, completely encircling him.

Continuing to look around him, George turns to find himself face to face with:

A TRIBAL MASK

grotesque and fearsome, its hideous carved features set in eerie relief by the whipping yellow light of a lantern.

GEORGE

is paralyzed by fear and surprise, his eyes looking up to see:

A CEREMONIAL AXE

held high by the man in the tribal mask. Its shiny steel blade reflects the firelight, as it swings down OUT OF FRAME, as we:

CUT TO BLACK

END TEASER

ACT ONE

5 EXT. FBI HEADQUARTERS - DAY

5

Legend appears to establish: J. EDGAR HOOVER BUILDING.
WASHINGTON, D.C.

6 INT. MULDER'S OFFICE - DAY - CLOSE - I.D. PHOTO

6

of George Kearns. Grim, unsmiling.

SCULLY (O.S.)
Come on, don't you see what
they're doing?

WIDER

Scully appears fairly pissed off, as Mulder coolly studies the
photograph in his hand.

SCULLY (X)
They're wasting your time with (X)
this, sending you on some kind of (X)
wild goose chase.

MULDER
Chicken.
(off Scully's look)
George Kearns was a Federal
Poultry Inspector assigned to
Dudley, Arkansas. Home of Chaco
Chicken.

SCULLY (X)
I'm not questioning the (X)
legitimacy of the case -- just
their motives in assigning it. (X)

Mulder holds her look, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Which
only serves to rile Scully even more.

SCULLY
Mulder, doesn't it bother you at
all that they're trying to
undermine our work?

MULDER
They may think they are -- but
the night Kearns disappeared, a
woman on the I-10 reported seeing
a strange fire in an adjacent
field.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

SCULLY
(skeptical)
I know, I read the report. She
claims it was some kind of
'foxfire' spirit. She probably
called Oprah right after she hung
up with the Police.

MULDER
Folktales from the Ozarks dating
back to the 19th Century describe
people being taken away by
fireballs. They're supposed to
be the spirits of massacred
Indians.

SCULLY
It's only a legend, Mulder.

MULDER
Most legends don't leave behind
twelve-foot burn marks.

Mulder hands another photograph to Scully.

CLOSE - PHOTO

a high shot of a field with a large CHARRED CIRCLE at its
center.

MULDER (O.S.)
State Police took this photo in
the field where the woman claimed
to have seen foxfire.

RESUME

Scully lowers the photograph, intrigued, though still
unconvinced.

SCULLY
Mulder, this could have been
caused by just about anything...
a bonfire.

MULDER
I thought so, too -- until I
remembered this...

Mulder picks up a remote control, and aims it toward a nearby
TV monitor/VCR set up, which CLICKS ON --

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

6

MULDER

It's a documentary I saw in college, about an insane asylum. I remember having nightmares for a week.

SCULLY

I didn't think anything gave you nightmares.

PATIENT'S VOICE

(filtered)

They took me away...

The Agents' attention is drawn toward:

THE TV MONITOR

A 60's black and white documentary plays, the image grainy and high contrast (like Frederick Wiseman's "Titticut Follies"). A ONE-ARMED PATIENT is talking with manic intensity to a crewcut DOCTOR in horn-rimmed glasses and white lab coat.

PATIENT

The fire demons wanted their pound of flesh -- but I'm too fast.

(a sudden laugh)

I'm too fast, you bet.

(then, suddenly serious)

But you can't let them kill you. Don't let them kill you. That's no way to get to Heaven. No, sir. No way to get to Heaven.

The image FREEZES.

MULDER (O.S.)

His name was Creighton Jones.

WIDER

Scully is visibly shaken by what they've just seen.

MULDER

He pulled off the road to take a nap on May 17, 1961. He was found three days later, so deranged by whatever he encountered that he had to be committed. State police found his car on the I-10... right in the middle of Dudley, Arkansas.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (3)

6

Scully looks from Mulder to the photograph she is still holding. CAMERA FOLLOWS her gaze to:

THE PHOTO

the charred circle presenting a new level of possibility, as we:

MATCH DISSOLVE TO:

7 EXT. FIELD - DAY - CLOSE

7

Mulder kneels down inside the burnt circle, Scully lingers at the perimeter. A legend appears: DUDLEY, ARKANSAS.

CLOSER - MULDER

picks a melted plastic fork out of the cold embers.

SCULLY (O.S.)
Mulder, what's this?

Mulder moves to Scully, who's looking at a foot-tall, three-pronged CEDAR BRANCH embedded in the earth just outside the circle. He studies it closely, intrigued...

MULDER
I think that's a witch's peg.
Staking it into the ground is
supposed to ward off evil
spirits.

ARENS (O.S.)
Can I help you folks?

The Agents look up to see:

SHERIFF PETE ARENS (40'S)

moving toward them. He's an affable man, who at the moment is more curious about their presence here than in giving them a hard time.

ARENS
I'm Sheriff Arens. I saw you
back at the turnoff...

MULDER
We're with the F.B.I.. I'm
Special Agent Mulder, this is
Agent Scully.
(shows his I.D.)
We're investigating the
disappearance of George Kearns.

(X)

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

Arens nods, bemused.

ARENS

I'm happy to help you with whatever I can, but I'm not sure how much there is to investigate.

SCULLY

Sheriff, a man is missing.

ARENS

Well, we didn't find any evidence of criminal activity... and since no body turned up, we just went ahead and filed a missing person's report.

MULDER

Why didn't you mention this witch's peg in your report?

ARENS

Because the fields around here are filled with witch's peg. A lot of these old hill people cling to their superstitions.

MULDER

(indicating)

What about this scorched area?

ARENS

Illegal trash burning. I keep handing out citations, but they keep on doing it anyway. Cheaper to pay the fine than haul it to the dump.

MULDER

Then you don't believe it's foxfire?

Arens lets out a small, involuntary laugh.

ARENS

Foxfire's nothing more than a ghost story about swamp gas.

Scully tries not to appear smug in the face of Mulder's disappointment.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

7

ARENS

Listen, I don't know what you all are thinking, but George Kearns has been passing through town since he got here six months ago.

SCULLY

How do you mean?

ARENS

He never really fit in. Not at the plant... not even in his own home. I mean, it's no big secret Kearns stepped out on his wife every chance he got.

SCULLY

Did he get many chances?

ARENS

Let's just say, George is the type of man you'd expect to go chasing some young thing out of town.

SCULLY

Is that what his wife believes happened?

Arens shrugs.

ARENS

Push comes to shove, I'm sure she does. But you're welcome to ask her yourself.

Off Arens' open invitation --

CUT TO:

8 EXT. KEARNS HOUSE - DAY

8

A modest tract home. The Agents' rental car is parked at the curb behind the Sheriff's cruiser.

9 INT. KEARNS HOUSE - DAY

9

Sheriff Arens hangs back as Scully questions DORIS KEARNS. She's a woman well into her 40's, a fading beauty stubbornly clinging to her looks. Mulder is perusing the contents of a thick file folder.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED:

9

DORIS

My husband had a character that leaves something out. I always knew that about him... I just never had the sense to do anything about it.

(then)

I guess he saved me the trouble.

SCULLY

Then you're fairly certain he left you for someone else?

DORIS

George left me a long time ago... right around the time I hit forty. Leaving town was just a formality.

SCULLY

Do you have any idea who he might be with now?

DORIS

No. And I don't care to know either.

Scully nods sympathetically.

MULDER

Mrs. Kearns, this inspection report... your husband was set to file it with the Department of Agriculture the day before he disappeared.

DORIS

I couldn't tell you anything about that.

MULDER

He never discussed his work with you?

DORIS

He never told me, and I never asked.

MULDER

He cited several major health violations. He was about to recommend that the plant be shut down.

(CONTINUED)

9 CONTINUED: (2)

9

Arens' interest is suddenly piqued. Scully's, too. Doris, however, could care less.

DORIS

I told you: I don't know a thing about what went on at the plant.

SCULLY

Do you know if he ever received any threatening calls? Anything unusual in the mail?

DORIS

Sure, there were hang-ups. But I always assumed it was one of his girlfriends.

Mulder nods, sympathetic to her plight, as he fishes a card from his jacket pocket.

MULDER

Here's my cell number... if your husband tries to contact you, or if anything else comes to mind.

She takes the card -- and off her quiet desperation, we:

CUT TO:

0 EXT. CHICKEN PROCESSING PLANT - DAY - CLOSE - TRUCK PANEL

10

bearing the Earl Scheib likeness of WALTER 'CHIC' CHACO.

WIDEN TO REVEAL

that this is only one in a long row of identical delivery trucks parked before a low-slung industrial building. A legend appears: CHACO CHICKEN PROCESSING PLANT. The Agents' car pulls to a stop behind the Sheriff's cruiser, as we:

(X)

CUT TO:

1 INT. PROCESSING PLANT - CLOSE - MOVING CHICKEN

11

headless, de-feathered, wings splayed outward as it hangs upside down from legs clasped by aluminum poles. We PULL BACK to reveal it's only one in

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED:

11

A ROW OF DOZENS OF CHICKENS

suspended by aluminum braces to a ceiling conveyor as they move across the plant floor. FEATURE A WOMAN on the line of workers, each wearing a hair net and rubber gloves as they eviscerate chickens. But this woman appears especially nervous and jumpy -- and now we recognize her as PAULA GRAY, the young woman from the teaser.

FROM ANOTHER ANGLE - JESS HAROLD (47)

The plant manager, a tall, angular man with an easy manner. CAMERA FOLLOWS HIM as he moves to meet Sheriff Arens and the Agents. They have to raise their voice over the industrial din.

ARENS

This is Jess Harold. He's the floor manager here.

(Harold)

Jess, these people are with the F.B.I.

HAROLD

You're here about George Kearns, right?

SCULLY

There's a possibility that his disappearance may involve a report he was about to file with the Department of Agriculture.

Harold nods, unsurprised, almost as if he expected them.

HAROLD

You should know, ever since George got here, he's been trying to shut us down.

SCULLY

He cited multiple violations --

HAROLD

I know he did. Believe me, I've had to answer for every one of them.

SCULLY

Was there any merit to his claims?

HAROLD

Let me show you something.

(CONTINUED)

11 CONTINUED: (2)

11

Harold leads the way, followed by Scully and Arens. Mulder takes up the rear, CAMERA TRACKING with him past WORKERS outfitted with hairnets and rubber gloves, all engaged in the same repetitive activity. Using curved KNIVES with serrated blades to slit open the body cavities of the chickens, quickly scooping out their blood-soaked guts as they pass by.

As Mulder EXITS FRAME, we HOLD ON PAULA, who nervously watches them leave the room -- when she is suddenly seized by the same telltale TREMOR as George Kearns. A fellow worker sees that she is missing chickens, and turns to her, concerned:

WORKER

Paula, you okay?

It takes her a moment to recover, as she nods and returns to the moving line of chickens. She resumes slitting each one open, scooping out the innards -- when a sudden look of horror comes across her face.

HER POV - THE SEVERED HEAD OF GEORGE KEARNS

hangs from the aluminum brace, his dead eyes bulging in a surprised stare.

Freaking out, Paula pulls Kearns' head from the conveyor, throwing it to the floor. In a panic, she pulls off her hair net and rushes off.

The Worker watches her leave, then looks down at the floor where Paula threw the severed head. FROM HIS POV, we see the severed head is only

A CHICKEN CARCASS

just like all the others -- the vision of Kearns apparently having been only a horrifying delusion.

CUT TO:

12 INT. PROCESSING PLANT - INSPECTION AREA - A BADGE

12

like a police shield, only it reads "USDA Inspector." PULL BACK to reveal it's on the white lab coat of a FEMALE INSPECTOR (one of three) wearing a white helmet and goggles, quickly testing joints and checking inside the cavities of the chickens as they whiz by at a rate of one every two seconds.

ANOTHER ANGLE

to include Jess Harold, as he leads Arens and the Agents into this section of the plant.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

HAROLD

We've been operating for fifty years without a problem with the U.S.D.A. Until George came along.

SCULLY

So he did threaten to shut down the plant?

HAROLD

He tried. But we have three other inspectors who've consistently given us top marks. Here, see for yourself.

Harold shows Scully a clipboard with federal inspection papers on it.

HAROLD

The only problem this plant ever had was George.

SCULLY

Was he problem enough to do something about?

HAROLD

If you're suggesting some kind of unsavoriness... I guess that's possible. But you have to understand, George had a bone to pick with everyone. Even the federal government.

SCULLY

What are you talking about?

As Scully speaks, Mulder's attention is drawn to something O.S.

HAROLD

George filed a big workers compensation suit, claimed he was getting terrible headaches on the job. "Line hypnosis" was what his lawyer called it.

SCULLY

I've read about that. It's caused by high-speed repetitive activity.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

HAROLD

I'm not denying that a lot of chickens pass through here every day. But we operate well within federal guidelines.

SCULLY

What happened to his lawsuit?

HAROLD

It got dismissed. Just a few weeks before he disappeared.

A sudden O.S. GRINDING SOUND draws their attention to:

AN INDUSTRIAL MACHINE

with a four-foot circular opening at one end, and a metal chute at the other end, suspended above a METAL TROUGH. A WORKER is dumping a bucket of something into the opening.

MULDER

What's that?

HAROLD

It's a feed grinder. It chops up bone, tissue -- whatever part of the bird we can't package, we salvage as feed.

MULDER

Chickens feed on chickens?

Mulder grimaces into the trough, where the chute dispenses the ground meat.

HIS POV INTO TROUGH

Blood splatters on the inside walls as the slimy stew is spewed from the machine's stainless steel maw.

RETURN

HAROLD

It may not sound appetizing, but it's nutritious, and it helps keep costs down.

(looks at watch)

You have to excuse me now. I've got a shift change.

As Harold leaves, Scully steps aside with Mulder.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (3)

12

SCULLY

So Mulder... are you ready to
admit that they sent us on a
fool's errand?

But Mulder is not one to let go so easily.

MULDER

I don't know, Scully. I still
have a strange feeling about this
case...

SCULLY

Whether Kearns skipped town or
someone killed him... this case
could have been handled by any
agent out of the Kansas City
office.

When a STARTLED CRY spins the Agents around, and:

THEIR POV - PAULA GRAY

holds a knife to Jess Harold's throat, backing away with
paranoid terror. She is perspiring, her bloodshot eyes darting
about. And Harold is fairly panicked himself, as:

ANOTHER ANGLE

Scully exchanges a quick look with Mulder before stepping
toward Paula -- who yanks Harold back with an adrenalized
strength that defies her gender and size.

MULDER

Let him go.

Paula is dragging Harold backward, toward the feed grinder.
Scully moves carefully toward her.

SCULLY

Don't hurt him. Just tell us
what you want.

But Paula doesn't respond, just keeps moving Harold closer to
the grinder.

CLOSE - KNIFE

the curved blade presses deeper into the flesh of Harold's
neck, drawing a thin bead of blood.

CLOSE - PAULA & HAROLD

Harold flinches, squeezing his eyes shut.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (4)

12

WIDER

SCULLY
Let's stay calm... talk this
thing out.

Paula angles Harold toward the grinder, hen a sudden SHOT RINGS
OUT, and Paula is blown backward, falling away from Harold and
into the trough.

SCULLY

turns to see:

SHERIFF ARENS

still in a firing stance, his gun levelled. As he lowers his
gun.

HAROLD

touches his neck where he was wounded, as Scully and Mulder
approach.

SCULLY
Are you alright?

Still shaken, Harold manages a nod. Mulder continues past
them, to the lip of the trough.

MULDER'S POV - INTO THE TROUGH

Paula sinks into the bloody muck.

RESUME MULDER

Off his reaction, we --

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

13 INT. PROCESSING PLANT - DAY - CLOSE - PAULA'S FACE

13

expressionless in death. As a BODY BAG zips shut over it --
WIDER

Paramedics wheel out the gurney on which the corpse has been placed. Mulder and Scully are questioning a still-rattled Jess Harold, whose neck is being bandaged by the plant physician, VANCE RANDOLPH.

SCULLY

Do you have any idea what might have prompted her attack?

HAROLD

None at all.

SCULLY

No recent complaints or strange behavior?

HAROLD

Paula's always been one of our best employees. Stable, on time, well-liked. I can't even begin to imagine what might have brought this on.

Mulder notes Randolph's uncomfortable reaction to this.

MULDER

What about you, Dr. Randolph? Do you have any thoughts?

Randolph finishes dressing Harold's wound in silence. Harold picks up on the tension, absently touches his neck.

HAROLD

If you're through with me, I'll get out of your hair.

RANDOLPH

Come by tomorrow and let me take a look -- make sure it's not infected.

HAROLD

Thanks, doc.

Harold nods, moves away, as Randolph nervously screws the top back on a tube of antibiotic ointment. Mulder and Scully wait for an expectant beat, then:

(CONTINUED)

13 CONTINUED:

13

RANDOLPH

Paula came to me last week complaining of persistent headaches. She'd suddenly started feeling irritable... unable to sleep.

SCULLY

Were you able to determine the cause?

RANDOLPH

I'm just the staff physician here -- I don't usually treat anything more serious than a hand injury. So I'm a little out of my depth in psychiatric matters.

SCULLY

Then you found nothing physically wrong with her?

RANDOLPH

I sent her to County for a brain scan and an EEG -- both came back normal. So I assumed her condition was stress related.

SCULLY

Could it have been line hypnosis?

RANDOLPH

Like I said: I'm not qualified to make that diagnosis.

MULDER

But you can tell us whether George Kearns came to you with similar complaints.

Randolph exhales grudgingly.

RANDOLPH

They presented similar symptoms, yes.

SCULLY

How did you treat them?

RANDOLPH

I treated them both with pain medication. Codeine.

(X)
(X)

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

13

SCULLY
An autopsy on Paula Gray might
help clarify things.

RANDOLPH
I'm afraid I can't authorize
that. You'd have to speak to Mr.
Chaco.

MULDER
Why? You were her physician.

RANDOLPH
Yes, but Mr. Chaco was Paula
Gray's grandfather... and her
legal guardian.

As the Agents consider this, we:

CUT TO:

4 EXT. CHACO MANSION - DAY

14

A grand Southern residence with a columned facade. LAWN
SPRINKLERS spray sheets of water across the pristine grass.
The Agents' sedan pulls to a stop at the top of the long gravel
drive. Mulder and Scully emerge from the car, heading for the
front door...

5 INT. CHACO MANSION - VERANDA - DAY - WALTER CHACO

15

is at a CHICKEN COOP on the lawn, carrying a bucket toward a
feed holder. He looks to be in his late 60s and has a
patrician bearing, as if he were born to power.

MULDER & SCULLY

approach from the veranda past the MAID, who turns to leave
behind them.

MULDER
Mr. Chaco?

Chaco doesn't look at them, as he opens a spigot from the feed
holder, emptying feed into his bucket. He uses a hand trowel
to toss feed to the chickens. His speech bears the heaviness
of a man in mourning.

CHACO
Feeding these chickens helps me
clear my mind.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED:

15

CHACO (CONT'D)

They're perfect creatures, you know. We eat their meat, their eggs... sleep on pillows stuffed with their feathers. Not many people I know are as useful as these chickens.

SCULLY

We're sorry to disturb you, sir. We know this is a difficult time.

CHACO

You want to conduct an autopsy on my granddaughter.

Chaco now turns to them for the first time.

CHACO

Why? You think Paula had some kind of disease that made her act that way?

SCULLY

That's what we're hoping a post mortem will determine.

CHACO

I thought your business here was George Kearns' disappearance.

MULDER

It is. We suspect that it may be connected with what happened to your granddaughter.

CHACO

How?

MULDER

We're not sure yet. But it's possible they suffered from the same neurological disorder.

Chaco grows pensive wistful, as he throws more feed to his chickens.

CHACO

When I came home after the war, Dudley was just a patch of dirt.

(MORE)

(X)

(CONTINUED)

15 CONTINUED: (2)

15

CHACO (CONT'D)

I built that plant and put my whole family to work there. We made this town one of the biggest chicken processors in the nation. We couldn't have done it with troublemakers and layabouts.

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

SCULLY .

I assume you're referring to George Kearns.

CHACO

Men like George Kearns don't build things -- they try to tear them down.

SCULLY

Then you're aware of his recommendation that your plant be closed?

Chaco puts away the feed bucket.

CHACO

A long life is a mixed blessing. You spend your youth trying to build something for yourself, your family, your community. Only to watch it all taken away from you in your old age.

A beat. Mulder and Scully letting the moment pass. Finally, Chaco smiles cagily.

CHACO

Still, I'm not ready to die just yet.

He starts back toward the house --

CHACO

You go do that autopsy on Paula. I want to know what happened to my grand daughter.

(X)

Mulder and Scully watch Chaco climb the steps onto his veranda, as we:

CUT TO:

16 INT. COUNTY MORGUE - DAY - CLOSE - SCULLY'S EYE

16

through the bottom lens of a LIGHT MICROSCOPE.

ANOTHER ANGLE - SCULLY

lifts her head from the lens, looking surprised by what she's just seen. The corpse of Paula Gray, covered by an autopsy sheet, lies on a slab behind her -- when Mulder enters in b.g., holding a file.

SCULLY

Mulder, I think we've got something here.

As Mulder bends to look into the eyepiece:

MULDER

What am I looking at?

ECU - BRAIN TISSUE (MICROSCOPE MATTE)

pink-hued, riddled with tiny, irregular holes.

SCULLY (O.S.)

A specimen from Paula Gray's brain.

RESUME

(NOTE: "Creutzfeldt-Jacob" is pronounced KROYTS-FELT YOCK-UB.)

SCULLY

She had a rare, degenerative disorder called Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease. It's characterized by the formation of sponge-like holes in the brain tissue.

Mulder looks up from the microscope.

MULDER

Why didn't this show up in any of her tests?

SCULLY

Short of an autopsy, it's a very difficult disease to diagnosis. Outside a textbook, I've only seen infected tissue once -- and that was back in medical school.

MULDER

Could this be what caused her to attack Jess Harold?

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED:

16

SCULLY
Absolutely. Victims of
Creutzfeldt-Jacob suffer from
progressive dementia, violent
seizures...

MULDER
Is it fatal?

SCULLY
This girl would've been dead in
a matter of months.

MULDER
Except Paula Gray was no "girl."

Off Scully's curious look, Mulder opens up the file he carried
in with him.

MULDER
This is her personnel file,
Scully. See for yourself.

INSERT FILE

Mulder's finger indicates her date of birth.

MULDER (O.S.)
It says here that Paula Gray was
born in 1948.

RESUME

MULDER
Which means this woman, Chaco's
granddaughter... was 47 years
old.

Scully looks from Mulder to Paula. Even in death, she doesn't
appear to be a day past twenty-one.

SCULLY
Mulder, this has to be some kind
of mistake...

MULDER
Let's find out. Her birth
certificate should be on file at
the Seth County court house.

As Mulder starts off, leaving Scully in his wake --

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

16

MULDER
Who knows? This could turn out
to be a lot more interesting than
foxfire.

off Scully's grudging interest, we:

CUT TO:

17 EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

17

As the Agents' sedan FLASHES PAST CAMERA...

18 INT. CAR - DAY - MOVING

18

Mulder is behind the wheel, Scully beside him. Rural highway
scenery flies past the windows of their rental car.

SCULLY
The odds that Paula Gray and
George Kearns had the same
disease are practically
nonexistent. Creutzfeldt-Jacob
can be hereditary, but it's not
communicable. That two unrelated
people in the same small town
would contract it is --

MULDER
(overlapping)
A lot more likely than Paula Gray
being three years shy of her
fiftieth birthday.

Mulder's eyes have left the road to address Scully, who regards
him with lingering skepticism, and as she turns back to the
road:

SCULLY
Mulder, look out!

Mulder looks forward, as:

THEIR POV - A DELIVERY TRUCK

is in their lane, accelerating straight toward them.

MULDER

Yanks the wheel hard to avoid a head on collision.

19 EXT. RURAL ROAD - CONTINUOUS

19

The Agents' car runs off the asphalt onto a graded embankment, where it lurches to a stop, as:

ANOTHER ANGLE

The truck runs off the road and plummets headlong into a small river that runs parallel to the road.

MULDER & SCULLY

emerge from their car, and run up to the river bank, just in time to see the truck sinking, its "Chaco Chicken" logo partially obscured. We hear the SOUND OF CHICKENS inside the truck squawking and struggling to keep from drowning, as we:

CUT TO:

20 EXT. THE HIGHWAY - DAY - A FLASHING POLICE LIGHT BAR

20

PULLING BACK TO REVEAL it belongs to the cruiser of Sheriff Arens. DEPUTIES and some PARAMEDICS work the scene in the background, while a CREW tries to pull the truck out of the water.

CAMERA MOVES PAST THEM, FINDING SCULLY

hanging up her cell phone as she moves toward Mulder, who's staring down into the murky red water.

SCULLY

I just got off the phone with Dr. Randolph. He said this driver had the same symptoms as Paula Gray and George Kearns --

MULDER

You think this is a third victim of Creutzfeldt-Jacob? You just got through telling me that two cases were statistically impossible.

SCULLY

They would be...

Scully pauses, a new idea coalescing in her mind.

SCULLY

I just came up with a sick theory, Mulder.

MULDER

I'm listening...

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED:

20

SCULLY

You saw that feed grinder at the plant. What if someone put Kearns' body in there? Creutzfeldt-Jacob is a prion disease. It could've been passed onto the chickens -- and in turn to anyone who consumed them.

(NOTE: "Prion" is pronounced PREE-ON.)

MULDER

Then anyone eating chickens from Dudley would be at risk?

SCULLY

It's possible. Cattle are sometimes incinerated in England to keep them from passing mad cow disease on to people.

MULDER

Scully, chickens from Dudley are shipped all over the country. If what you're saying were true, we'd be seeing an epidemic, not just a few isolated cases.

(X)

(X)

Scully is stymied by this argument -- as Sheriff Arens approaches them.

MULDER

Sheriff, what's wrong with this water?

The Sheriff follows Mulder's gaze out to:

ANGLE - RIVER

Opaque, filthy, thick with a reddish scum.

ARENS

It's runoff from the plant.

RESUME

ARENS

Chicken litter, mostly -- blood and parts from the birds.

MULDER

Was this river searched after George Kearns disappeared?

(CONTINUED)

20 CONTINUED: (2)

20

ARENS

Are you kidding? Talk about a
needle in a haystack --

MULDER

I'd like it dragged as soon as
possible.

The Sheriff seems reluctant.

ARENS

Why would you want to do that?

MULDER

To see what's in there.

ARENS

Listen, that's a filthy job. I
don't particularly want to do it
unless I know what you expect to
find.

MULDER

Hopefully nothing.

Frustrated by Mulder's deliberate non-responsiveness but
sensing there's no point in arguing, Sheriff Arens starts off.
Scully moves toward Mulder.

SCULLY

Mulder...?

MULDER

Just a hunch, Scully. If Kearns
didn't run off... if someone
murdered him because of that
inspection report, his body has
to be somewhere.

Mulder looks out at the polluted water, as if it might hold
some buried secrets.

DISSOLVE TO:

21 EXT. THE RIVER - DAY - WATER SURFACE RIPPLING

21

Inexplicably, until we PULL BACK to see a COUNTY SEARCH TEAM
working, pulling a NET out of the water.

SHERIFF ARENS

walking fast, leading Mulder and Scully to the bank. (The
crashed truck has been completely removed from the area.)

(CONTINUED)

21 CONTINUED:

21

ARENS

They came up with it almost
immediately --

MULDER

Did they find Kearns?

ARENS

Maybe you'd better see for
yourself.

As Sheriff Arens says this, CAMERA FOLLOWS his line of vision
to:

THE NET

coming out of the river. Water rushes off the lines as its
haul is swung onto the bank, where we see its contents:

A STACK OF HUMAN BONES

Dozens of them, somewhat decayed and glistening wet -- but far
too many to account for the body of just one man. (NOTE: We
see no skulls.)

SCULLY & MULDER

reacting to this strange discovery, as we:

END ACT TWO

ACT THREE

22 INT. COUNTY MORGUE - DAY - PANNING SKELETAL REMAINS (X) 22

laid out on the floor in various stages of reassembly upon nine
RECTANGULAR PLASTIC TARPS. CAMERA FINDS:

SCULLY

working at one of the tarps, examining a FEMUR with a
magnifying glass, as Mulder enters the room.

MULDER

Sheriff Arens is outside. He
says they're still pulling bones
from the river.

SCULLY

So far, I've been able to isolate
nine distinct skeletons. This
one belonged to the late George
Kearns.

MULDER

How can you tell?

Scully picks up the bone, indicating:

SCULLY

The pin in his femur. According
to his medical file, Kearns broke
his right leg four years ago.

MULDER

And the others?

SCULLY

I'll need more sophisticated
equipment to be certain -- but I
estimate that some of these bones
are as much as twenty, thirty
years old.

Mulder surveys the skeletons.

SCULLY

All of them share one strange
detail, though --

MULDER

They all seem to have lost their
heads.

Scully gives Mulder a brief look, then:

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

22

SCULLY
Besides that...

She angles her magnifying glass toward the rounded joint of Kearns' femur.

SCULLY
The older bones show signs of decay and surface abrasion, just as you'd expect...

CLOSE ON BONE - THROUGH MAGNIFYING LENS

The rough, brownish surface give way to a shiny, rounded end.

SCULLY (O.S.)
But for some reason, all the bones -- even Kearns' -- are smooth and buffed at the ends.

RESUME

MULDER
Almost as if someone had polished them with a toothbrush.

SCULLY
It's probably erosion from the water...

MULDER
That water had no current, Scully. Besides, this level of erosion wouldn't be confined to the ends of the bones.

Scully regards Mulder expectantly, waiting for more. But Mulder is carefully studying the rounded ends of the bone, as if divining some answer...

SCULLY
Any theories?

MULDER
Maybe...

In a decisive moment, Mulder takes out his cellular phone, and punches in some numbers, as we:

CUT TO:

23 INT. COUNTY MORGUE - CORRIDOR - DAY (X) 23

Sheriff Arens is at a coffee machine, reaching for his cup, when he turns to see:

DORIS KEARNS

walking toward him, tearful and consumed with dread for the news she knows she is about to hear. Arens assumes a calming tone.

ARENS

Doris...

DORIS

Is it true, Pete? Just tell me.

ARENS

Now Doris... I want you to listen to me. It's not good news.

DORIS

They found him, didn't they?

Arens hesitates, as awkward offering condolences as he is relaying any kind of bad news.

ARENS

We brought up quite a few remains from the river this afternoon. George's were among them.

DORIS

Oh no... no...

ARENS

I'm sorry.

Sheriff Arens tries to put a comforting arm around Doris... but Doris pushes away from him, upset.

DORIS

No!

She turns and hurries out. Sheriff Arens calls after her.

ARENS

Doris!

But she continues out, ignoring him. Off Sheriff Arens' concerned look, we:

CUT TO:

23A INT. PROCESSING PLANT - INSPECTION AREA - DAY 23A

Jess Harold is talking to an INSPECTOR on the line (MOS), when he sees Dr. Randolph lingering in the b.g. Having made eye contact, Randolph starts out. Harold excuses himself, following Harold, as we:

CUT TO:

23B EXT. PROCESSING PLANT - CHICKEN HOLDING AREA - DAY 23B
CLOSE - RANDOLPH

visible through the wire mesh of a cage, CHICKENS pecking at the ground feed. Over the din of the machinery:

HAROLD (O.S.)
Why do I get the feeling you're
not here to check up on my neck?

WIDER

Randolph turns. Except for the chickens, they are alone -- though Randolph keeps glancing nervously past Harold to make sure. He speaks with the urgent, confidential tone of a conspirator.

RANDOLPH
They found bones in the river.

HAROLD
I know. I heard.

RANDOLPH
Did you also hear that Clayton
Walsh came down with the
symptoms? That makes four.

Harold listens to the news with rising concern.

RANDOLPH
It's getting worse. With every
day that goes by...

HAROLD
Someone has to tell Mr. Chaco.

RANDOLPH
He knows what's happening. He's
just not doing anything about it.

HAROLD
Maybe I should talk to him.

(CONTINUED)

23B CONTINUED:

23B

RANDOLPH
You can try...

(X)
(X)

Harold feels Randolph pushing him to act.

(X)

HAROLD
I'll talk to him. He'll listen
to me.

(X)

RANDOLPH
And if he doesn't...?

(X)
(X)

Randolph lets this possibility hang in the air, as we:

(X)

CUT TO:

24 INT. COUNTY MORGUE - NIGHT - CLOSE - FAX MACHINE

24

grinds out a transmission.

WIDER

Mulder tears off the faxed page, studying it as Scully enters with a bucket of fried chicken. The skeletons are still there in b.g.

MULDER

I had Danny run a check on all
missing persons last seen within
a 200-mile radius of Dudley.

Mulder shows Scully the faxed page --

CLOSE - MAP

A detail of Seth County. A cluster of black dots surround the town, concentrated around Dudley.

MULDER (O.S.)

In the past 50 years, 87 people
have disappeared near here --

WIDER

MULDER

Judging from the forensic
evidence, I'd say the same person
or persons was responsible.

Scully concurs with a curt nod.

SCULLY

It may be the work of some kind
of cult...

Mulder plucks a drumstick from the chicken bucket.

MULDER

Scully, I think some of the good
citizens of Dudley are eating
more than just chicken.

Mulder bites into the crispy chicken leg. It takes Scully a moment to process Mulder's implication -- as she follows Mulder's look to the neat row of headless skeletons spread out before them.

SCULLY

You think these people were
eaten...?

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED:

24

MULDER

These bones were polished at the ends, suggesting they were boiled in a pot. Anthropologists used similar evidence to prove cannibalism among the Anasazi tribe of New Mexico.

Scully suddenly feels queasy.

SCULLY

Then Paula Gray may have contracted Creutzfeldt-Jacob from eating George Kearns...?

MULDER

That may also begin to explain her youthful appearance.

Which catches Scully completely off-guard.

SCULLY

Mulder, what are you talking about?

MULDER

Certain cannibal rituals are enacted with the belief that they can prolong life.

SCULLY

Cannibalism is one thing, but increasing longevity by consuming human flesh --

MULDER

Think about it, Scully. From vampirism to Catholicism, whether literally or symbolically, the reward for eating flesh is eternal life. I don't claim to know how it works -- but both of us saw Paula Gray.

(X)
(X)
(X)

SCULLY

Mulder, we never confirmed the date of birth in her personnel file.

MULDER

Then county records should tell us just how old she really was. And whether anyone else in Dudley might be lying about their age.

(CONTINUED)

24 CONTINUED: (2)

24

Mulder tosses his gnawed chicken bone into a nearby trash container, then exits -- leaving Scully blown away by this theory. As she hastens to catch up, exiting the room:

CLOSE - SKELETONS

(X)

They lie side by side in silent testimony, as we:

CUT TO:

25 INT. CHACO MANSION - VESTIBULE - NIGHT

25

Chaco is locking the door to a tall armoire, carved in a primitive design suggestive of the South Pacific. He appears deeply troubled, as:

HAROLD (O.S.)

People are getting scared, Mr.
Chaco --

WIDEN TO INCLUDE

Jess Harold, the floor manager, whose own face reflects concern.

HAROLD

They don't know what to make of
things.

CHACO

They're losing their faith is
what it sounds like.

(X)

(X)

HAROLD

It's getting harder to hold onto
with all that's going on. Three
more have gotten sick since
yesterday.

(X)

(X)

Chaco wheels around angrily --

CHACO

(flashing)

I lost my granddaughter in this,
Jess, so don't tell me what we're
up against. I said I'd handle
it.

HAROLD

I know you did.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED:

25

The tension between these men is interrupted by a sudden KNOCK at the front door. Chaco moves past Harold, when the Maid appears from another door.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (2)

25

CHACO
(to the Maid)
I've got it.

The Maid nods obsequiously, leaving Chaco to open the door.

DORIS KEARNS

desperate, anxious, and afraid as she enters.

CHACO
Doris?

DORIS
I can't do this anymore, Mr.
Chaco. I can't keep lying.

CHACO
It's all right. Jess told me
what happened. You have nothing
to worry about.

DORIS
They're going to think I did it.

CHACO
They'll think no such thing.

DORIS
But I did. I helped...

CHACO
He was no good, Doris. He had no
values. He didn't fit in here.

DORIS
He was my husband --

CHACO
There was a price to pay, Doris.
You knew that from the beginning.

There is a dangerous edge, a warning in Chaco's voice.

DORIS
He kept straying with those other
women... when all I ever wanted
was for him to look at me the way
he used to. To touch me like I
wasn't some used up thing...

(X)

Harold eyes Chaco, communicating his apprehension about her
behavior. But Chaco remains unperturbed, the stern, but
patient father.

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (3)

25

CHACO

You're one of us now, Doris. And
we're going to take care of you.

DORIS

But those F.B.I. agents --

CHACO

(overlaps)

This town was not built in a
day... and it's not about to
fall in a day. Now I want you to
go home and get some rest.
You've got a funeral to go to.

Doris nods, calmed somewhat by his assurance.

CHACO

This whole thing will blow over
soon enough, and you'll wonder
what all the fuss was about.

Doris manages a thin smile. She starts out, stopping at the
door.

DORIS

I'm sorry...

CHACO

That's all right. We all
understand. Good night.

As Doris exits, Chaco turns to meet Harold's steely gaze.

CHACO

She'll be fine.

HAROLD

She's unstable.

CHACO

She's one of us now. Part of our
town.

HAROLD

If we don't do something about
her, there won't be any town left
to speak of.

CHACO

No. Once we start turning on
ourselves, we're no better than
the animals.

(X)

(X)

(CONTINUED)

25 CONTINUED: (4)

25

But Harold remains silent.

(X)

CHACO
It's the F.B.I. we should be
worrying about. They're the real
problem.

(X)

(X)

(X)

Off Harold's lingering uncertainty, we:

CUT TO:

26 EXT. COURT HOUSE - NIGHT (STOCK)

26

A legend appears to establish: SETH COUNTY COURT HOUSE.

27 INT. COURT HOUSE - CORRIDOR - CLOSE - LOCK

27

A pick-lock gun is jammed into the lock, manipulating internal mechanism until it CLICKS open.

MULDER

as he retracts the device, and opens the door, entering the room, Scully right behind him. As the door closes, we see stencilled on the frosted glass pane: "HALL OF RECORDS. BIRTH REGISTRATION."

28 INT. HALL OF RECORDS - NIGHT

28

Mulder tries the light switch, but it doesn't work. So the Agents SNICK on their flashlights, the twin beams leading them into the darkness.

THEIR POV - A CHARRED ROOM

The beams rake past walls and file cabinets blackened by a fire. Open file drawers show nothing but pages turned to ashes.

MULDER & SCULLY

reacting to this. Scully sniffs the smoky air.

SCULLY
It smells like a recent fire.

THE DOOR

A SILHOUETTE glides across the frosted glass.

(CONTINUED)

28 CONTINUED:

28

SILHOUETTE'S POV

through the crack in the door, Mulder and Scully can be seen looking around. The somber silence is broken by Mulder's CHIRPING cell phone.

MULDER

Mulder.

INTERCUT WITH:

29 INT. KEARNS HOUSE - NIGHT - DORIS KEARNS

29

Nervous, talking anxiously into the receiver.

DORIS

It's Doris Kearns. I'm in my house. I need to speak with you right away.

MULDER

Are you all right?

DORIS

I'm afraid for my life. I'm afraid he'll kill me.

MULDER

Who?

Doris can't speak for a long moment. Then:

DORIS

Mr. Chaco...

30 INT. COURTHOUSE - NIGHT

30

Mulder nods to himself as the final piece falls in place.

MULDER

Just stay where you are, Mrs. Kearns. Lock your doors, and don't let anyone in until Agent Scully gets there.

Mulder disconnects.

(X)

SCULLY

Where are you going?

MULDER

To take Chaco into custody.

(CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

30

Off which --

CUT TO:

31 INT. KEARNS HOUSE - NIGHT

31

Doris Kearns lets go of the phone, then moves quickly to lock her front door when the LIGHTS GO OUT.

Terrified, Doris steels herself, then fumbles down the darkened corridor, CAMERA PRECEDING her as she whispers frantic prayers to herself. She pushes through a door, then stops dead in her tracks.

THE MAN IN THE TRIBAL MASK

standing right in front of her.

DORIS

Her cry for help dies in her throat, as she backs away.

DORIS
No... please...

THE TRIBAL MAN

moves relentlessly forward, toward camera, until he BLACKS OUT FRAME, and we:

END ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

32 EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT 32

Headlight beams reach into the night as Scully's car WIPES FRAME, and:

33 INT. SCULLY'S CAR - NIGHT - SCULLY 33

looking out the windshield, concerned by what she sees.

HER POV

The Kearns house is completely dark, looming closer as Scully's car glides up the driveway.

RESUME

Scully kills the engine.

34 EXT. KEARNS HOUSE - NIGHT 34

The trees RUSTLE in the night wind -- the same ominous sound we heard the night George Kearns was murdered -- as Scully cautiously approaches the front door. KNOCKS.

SCULLY

Mrs. Kearns? It's Agent Scully.

But no one comes. Scully tries the knob. Finds it locked. Then, drawing her gun, she moves around the house toward the back, as we:

CUT TO:

35 INT. KEARNS HOUSE - BACK DOOR - A FLASHLIGHT BEAM 35

shines from the outside in through the wide-open door. The flashlight beam is followed by the silhouetted figure of Scully, who enters -- as the trees continue to WHOOSH outside, their limbs banging and scraping against the windows.

SCULLY'S POV

The flashlight beam illuminates parts of an empty room. Scully advances forward slowly, her gun levelled as she carefully calls out:

SCULLY

Mrs. Kearns?

Suddenly, a LOUD BANG. Startled, Scully spins around to see:

(CONTINUED)

35 CONTINUED:

35

THE BACK DOOR

now slammed shut by the wind, which continues HOWLING. Scully scans the area near the door with her flashlight beam, until she is satisfied that no one is there. As she resumes her search, we:

CUT TO:

36 INT. CHACO MANSION - VESTIBULE - NIGHT

36

The Maid crosses purposefully toward the front door, the softer lighting in the room suggesting late evening. As she reaches the entrance:

THE DOOR OPENS

to reveal Mulder standing in the doorway.

MULDER
Is Mr. Chaco in?

MAID
I'll see if he's still awake.

As she heads back inside the house, Mulder steps into the vestibule, his attention drawn to something o.c.

HIS POV - SEVERAL OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

hang on the far wall, beside a MIRROR above a glass DISPLAY CASE.

MULDER

Intrigued, he moves into the room. As he approaches the photographs...

CLOSE - PHOTO

A World War II-era shot of a young Walter Chaco, a Navy lieutenant posing in a rumpled uniform with unsmiling NATIVES, who wear loincloths and carry long bamboo poles. They wear necklaces made of HUMAN TEETH.

MULDER

Realization sinking in, looks down at the glass DISPLAY CASE.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED:

36

MULDER'S POV

A typewritten museum-style marker identifies the artifacts as coming from the "Jalee Tribe, New Guinea, 1944." CAMERA STUDIES the display case, moving past war decorations... to find a sharp, primitive tool carved from bone, ending on an old, brownish HUMAN SKULL, a necklace of decayed chicken FEATHERS serving as its collar. (X) (X)

MULDER'S REFLECTION IN THE MIRROR

reacting to the discovery of this bizarre missing piece in the puzzle. As he does, Mulder sees something in the mirror.

CAMERA RACKS TO THE ARMOIRE

Which we saw Chaco locking earlier.

THE ARMOIRE

Mulder steps INTO FRAME, studying its eerie contours -- when the Maid approaches in b.g.

MAID

I'm sorry, but Mr. Chaco is
unable to see you now.

Mulder turns to confront the Maid, who appears quite apprehensive.

MULDER

What's in here?

MAID

I wouldn't know.

MULDER

Can you open it for me?

MAID

I don't have the key.

Mulder tries to open one of the doors, but they're locked.

MAID

What do you think you're doing?

Mulder ignores her, his eyes searching the room, settling quickly on a CAST IRON PRIMITIVE STATUE. He grabs it, using it as a hammer to smash repeatedly against the lock -- until the wood splinters, and Mulder opens the doors.

(CONTINUED)

36 CONTINUED: (2)

36

ANGLE - INSIDE THE CHEST - ROWS OF HUMAN HEADS

Like trophies on shelves, decayed leathery FLESH clinging to the sunken features of their faces, crude Frankenstein-sized STITCHES sewing up their mouths and eyes.

MULDER

feeling the impact of this discovery, wheels around to confront the Maid -- but she is no longer there. As we:

CUT TO:

37 INT. KEARNS HOUSE - NIGHT

37
(X)

Scully is in the darkened living room, still searching, when her cell phone CHIRPS.

SCULLY

Scully --

MULDER

(filtered)

Scully, it's me.

INTERCUT WITH:

38 INT. CHACO MANSION - VESTIBULE - NIGHT

38

Mulder is on his cell phone, the disembodied heads visible in the still-open cabinet.

MULDER

I've searched the house. Chaco's not here.

SCULLY

Neither is Doris Kearns.

As Scully talks, from the darkness we see the figure of:

38A WALTER CHACO

38A

approach from behind her, wielding a rod.

39 INT. CHACO MANSION - VESTIBULE - MULDER

39

Mulder continues pace.

MULDER

Chaco must have taken her.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED:

39

But there is no response at the other end of the line.

40 INT. KEARNS HOUSE - CLOSE - CELL PHONE

40

on the ground, Mulder's muted voice issues from the earpiece.

MULDER
(filtered)
Scully? Are you there?

CAMERA FINDS SCULLY

crumpled on the floor, her dropped flashlight shining askew
across her unconscious face.

41 INT. CHACO MANSION - VESTIBULE - MULDER

41

Mulder voice rises, pitched with worry.

MULDER
Scully?!

When he notices something out the window.

HIS POV - THROUGH WINDOW (SPX)

A bright YELLOW-ORANGE GLOW rises over the distant treetops.

RESUME MULDER

as he disconnects, and races out the front door.

ANGLE - INSIDE ARMOIRE

CAMERA PANS the silent faces keeping their vigil, as we:

DISSOLVE TO: (X)

42 EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT

42

MATCHING MOVEMENT from previous scene, PANNING an impassive row
of faces. A hellish firelight reflected in the eyes. They are (X)
lined up in a fashion reminiscent of the processing plant -- (X)
dutifully, solmenly waiting. (X)

CAMERA SETTLES on the TOWNSPERSON at the end of the line. As (X)
he raises a paper plate, a soup ladle ENTERS FRAME from f.g., (X)
doling out a portion of a brown, meat-filled stew. (X)

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED:

42

REVERSE - VANCE RANDOLPH (X)

is the server assigned to this grim task, as: (X)

CAMERA CRANES UP TO REVEAL (X)

Randolph is one of four acolytes serving the group around the bonfire, which blazes twenty-feet high, glowing embers and smoke drifting upward. (X)
(X)
(X)

ANGLE - TOWNSFOLK (X)

Those who've already been served gather in clusters, eating their food and talking low among themselves. Their voices are inaudible over the raging bonfire behind them, its heat rippling the black sky. Over this, an angry voice rises O.S., prompting them to look up -- (X)
(X)
(X)
(X)
(X)

CHACO (O.S.) (X)
What have you done here?! (X)

ANGLE - CHACO

pushes through the crowd, his presence silencing them. He is ushering Scully roughly before him, her hands tied and mouth taped. He is holding a gun. (X)
(X)
(X)

CHACO (X)
I warned you! I said not to touch her!

A few Townspeople look away guiltily from his accusing glare, though most stare at him impassively. Chaco is perspiring, nervous -- (X)
(X)

CHACO (X)
Who's behind this?

But even as he asks the question, Chaco finds Jess Harold stepping toward him with cold defiance. A tight line connects their eyes. (X)
(X)

CHACO (X)
Why didn't you listen to me? The outsiders were the ones to deal with... not one of our own. (X)
(X)
(X)

HAROLD
We'll deal with them all.

Chaco releases Scully as he reprimands the townspeople:

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (2)

42

CHACO

Look at yourselves! Look at what
you've become! This isn't faith
anymore -- it's just fear.
You've turned this an
abomination!

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

But the Townspeople remain unmoved by his plea. Only now does
Chaco feel the magnitude of his betrayal.

HAROLD

You brought in the outsider who
made us sick.

CHACO

Once we turn on ourselves, it's
over. How much longer before
it's any one of us? Any one of
you?

HAROLD

That's not your problem anymore,
Mr. Chaco.

The EXECUTIONER appears behind Jess Harold, emerging from the
shadows.

CHACO

knows the meaning of this. He raises his gun, though the
gesture seems somehow pathetic. His hand quivers slightly, his
voice parched and hollow.

CHACO

No...

As he backs away, several LOCALS grab him roughly.

SCULLY

Another LOCAL holds her, as:

HAROLD

steps up to Chaco, takes the gun from his hand.

CHACO

(quiet, earnest)

Kill me... and you kill us all.

After a considered beat, Harold nods to the others, who drag
Chaco toward the pillory. The teeming group follows, forming
around:

(CONTINUED)

42 CONTINUED: (3)

42

THE PILLORY

(X)

A strange-looking version of the aluminum brace that hold (X)
chickens at the plant. The locals force Chaco's head into the (X)
contraption, which closes decisively, as we: (X)

CUT TO:

43 INT. MULDER'S CAR - NIGHT 43

Mulder jams on the accelerator, and:

43A EXT. ROAD - NIGHT 43A

As Mulder's car WIPES FRAME, CAMERA PIVOTS -- following the car as it nears the brightening firelight.

CUT TO:

44 EXT. THE FIELD - NIGHT - SCULLY 44

Her screams muffled, as she is dragged toward the same pillory in which Chaco was just executed. As her head is pushed into place, and the brace brought down -- (X)

HAROLD

watches, the angry bonfire reflected in his eyes. Behind him, several men drag Chaco's headless body toward the dark woods.

THE TOWNSPEOPLE (X)

watch with rising bloodlust. (X)

SCULLY (X)

struggles helplessly in the pillory. Two legs step INTO FRAME in front of her. (X)
(X)

THE MASKED EXECUTIONER (X)

finishes wiping BLOOD from the blade of his axe with a coarse cloth. (X)
(X)

HAROLD (X)

Harold nods his tacit command to the Executioner -- (X)

SCULLY
looks up at the man about to kill her. (X)

LOW ANGLE - HER POV

As the Executioner raises his axe, preparing to swing -- two SHOTS RING OUT, and: (X)

WIDER ANGLE

The Executioner pitches forward to the ground. Dead.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED:

44

NEW ANGLE TO REVEAL MULDER

as the one who's fired. As he continues his relentless, (X)
adrenalized approach toward Scully, his gun levelled -- (X)

THE TOWNSPEOPLE

start to flee in all directions, disappearing into the woods. (X)

SCULLY (X)

sees Mulder, her eyes welling with gratitude and relief. (X)

MULDER (X)

Swinging his gun in tight arcs, he clears a path for himself (X)
through the stampeding crowd. (X)

HAROLD (X)

Amid the chaos, Harold aims the gun he wrested from Chaco at (X)
Mulder -- who does not see him. But Harold can't get a clear (X)
line, as the fleeing Townspeople repeatedly eclipse them. (X)

HAROLD'S POV - OVER THE BARREL (X)

For the briefest moment, Mulder stands in a clear line of fire. (X)

THE TRIGGER (X)

Harold's finger tightens around it, when: (X)

WIDER (X)

The gun is knocked from his hands by a fleeing WOMAN. (X)

LOW ANGLE - THE GUN (X)

falls to the ground. Harold drops INTO FRAME, scrabbling to (X)
retrieve the gun. He finally manages to grasp its handle, when (X)
he is struck in the head by an errant knee, and sent sprawling
to the ground. Mercilessly unaware, the stampeding hoard (X)
tramples him underfoot. (X)

AT THE PILLORY (X)

Mulder releases Scully, who pulls the tape from her mouth. (X)
Then goes straight to the body of the dead Executioner. (X)

CLOSE - SHERIFF ARENS

his lifeless face.

(CONTINUED)

44 CONTINUED: (2)

44

MULDER & SCULLY

exchange a significant look. Then, looking out into the woods, (X)
they see: (X)

LANTERN LIGHTS

(X)

jiggling as they're carried by the retreating Townspeople into (X)
the trees, an echo of the "foxfire"-like image we saw in the (X)
teaser.

As Mulder and Scully look down at: (X)

JESS HAROLD

his still body half-buried in the mud, we go to:

HIGH ANGLE - THE BONFIRE

(X)

continues to rage, throwing angry sparks into the night sky, (X)
dwarfing the solitary figures of Mulder and Scully. (X)

DISSOLVE TO:

45 EXT. PROCESSING PLANT - DAY

45

As police cruisers and ND sedans screech to a halt in the
parking lot of the Chaco Chicken processing plant, where other
squad cars are already parked at odd angles.

SCULLY'S VOICE

(X)

Pending a thorough review, the
Chaco processing plant has been
closed by the U.S.D.A.

(X)

(X)

(X)

46 INT. PROCESSING PLANT - DAY - THE CHICKEN CONVEYOR

46

jerking to a stop, the NOISE of the plant coming to an abrupt
halt.

(CONTINUED)

46 CONTINUED:

46

WIDER

State and federal authorities fan out quickly onto the plant floor, herding out PLANT WORKERS, who take off their gear as they're led outside.

Long lines of POLICE TAPE, reading "Restricted Access - Do Not Cross," are unspooled, blocking entry to the processing lines.

SCULLY'S VOICE

Though it remains unknown how many citizens participated in ritual activity -- twenty-seven have become fatally ill with Creutzfeldt-Jacob Disease.

(X)
(X)

CAMERA FINDS A WORKER

Dumping the last of several industrial-sized plastic containers into the feed tube.

(NOTE: "Jale" is pronounced Jow-lay.)

SCULLY'S VOICE

What is known is that a transport plane carrying Walter Chaco was shot down in 1944 over New Guinea. Chaco was the only survivor of that crash. According to Naval records, he spent six months with the Jale, a tribe whose cannibalistic practices have been long-suspected though never proven.

The Worker picks up a bucket filled with freshly ground feed. FOLLOW HIM as he moves outside to:

47 EXT. PROCESSING PLANT - DAY - A CHICKEN HOLDING AREA

47

where he uses a hand trowel to scoop out the raw feed. He stops, reacting to something strange in his bucket. The Worker removes a WISP OF GRAY HUMAN HAIR, throwing it to the ground. Then resumes feeding the chickens.

SCULLY'S VOICE

Naval records also show that Walter "Chic" Chaco was born in 1902 -- making him 93 years old at the time of his death. As of this date, his remains still have not been found.

(CONTINUED)

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47 CONTINUED:

47

CAMERA FINDS THE CHICKENS

hungrily pecking away at the bloody flesh. On this image:

FADE TO BLACK

THE END