

THE X-FILES

"Never Again"

Written by

Glen Morgan & James Wong

Directed by

Robert Bowman

Episode #4X13

Story No. 4677

November 27, 1996 (White)

"Never Again"

CAST LIST

Agent Fox Mulder
Agent Dana Scully

Judge
Ed Jerse
Vsevlod Pudovkin
Ms. Hadden
Mrs. Shima-Tsuno
Kaye Schilling
Hannah
Store Owner
Svo
Detective Gouveia
Detective Moten

"Never Again"

SET LIST

EXTERIORS:

TATTOO PALOUR
VIETNAM VETERAN'S MEMEORIAL
THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE
PHILADELPHIA STREET

INTERIORS:

FAMILY LAW COURTROOM
HARD EIGHT LOUNGE
ED JERSE'S APARTMENT
 /BATHROOM
 /BEDROOM

FULLER & SIEGEL
MULDER'S OFFICE
KAYE SHILLING'S APARTMENT
FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY
SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY
SCULLY'S CAR
RUSSIAN MARKET
TATTOO PARLOUR
SCULLY'S HOTEL ROOM
THE JUNGLE ROOM
BASEMENT
TATTOO YOU

TEASER

1 INT. FAMILY LAW COURTROOM - DAY

OVER BLACK:

JUDGE (V.O.)

If there are no further motions,
the Superior Court of the State
of Pennsylvania declares case
number BD 237 348...

FADE UP:

A gavel, having been sitting on CAMERA, causing the BLACK FRAME,
RISES. As it begins to fall, again about to cover CAMERA...

JUDGE (V.O.)

...closed.

On the LOUD sickening WHACK...

CUT TO:

ED JERSE

completely fucked. Although handsome in a nice suit and slightly
loosened tie, early thirties, his slumped posture and devastated
expression indicates Ed has just been taken to the cleaners. A
LEGEND INDICATES: PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA.

His LAWYER appears, placing some forms before Ed. After a beat,
his eyes lower to the papers.

INSERT - JUDGEMENT

"MARRIAGE OF: PETITIONER: CYNTHIA SAVALAS-JERSE.
RESPONDENT: EDWARD JERSE. JUDGEMENT: MARITAL STATUS IS TERMINATED
AND THE PARTIES ARE RESTORED TO THE STATUS OF UNMARRIED PERSONS.

ED JERSE

his eyes pathetically look up, across the small informal
courtroom...

ED'S POV - HIS EX-WIFE

one glance says it all; creep. She happily celebrates with her
male ATTORNEY, as if they've just hit the lottery.

ED JERSE

reacts with stoic hatred lined by an edge of heartbreak.
Continuing to read, he absently holds out his hand, into which
his lawyer places a pen.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

ED'S POV - JUDGEMENT

CAMERA CRUELLY SCROLLS DOWN the court orders...

X- LEGAL CUSTODY OF CHILDREN TO: PETITIONER (Cindy Savalas)

X - CHILD VISITATION TO: RESPONDENT to be supervised by
PETITIONER.

X - SPOUSAL SUPPORT TO: PETITIONER. (\$11,743.00 to be paid on
the 1st day of every month.)

X - CHILD SUPPORT TO: PETITIONER (\$7,678.00 to be paid on the
1st day of every month.)

X - PROPERTY RIGHTS TO: PETITIONER...

And on and on...

ED JERSE

CAMERA SLIGHTLY PUSHES IN as he numbly lowers the pen to paper
and manages to scribble his name. His lawyer whisks the paper
away. CAMERA HOLDS as Ed releases a deep grueling SIGH.

Then, LOUD, the opening notes and rhythm of "Tattooed Love Boys"
begin as CAMERA REMAINS on Ed's blank expression.

CUT TO:

2 INT. THE HARD EIGHT LOUNGE - NIGHT

Don't let "lounge" throw you, this is a bar. The MUSIC
CONTINUES, now SOURCE, as CAMERA MOVES ALONG THE BAR, passing
general LOW-LIFES and such, all of which are more animated than
the hammered Ed Jerse at the end of the bar.

Still in this afternoon's suit and tie, he downs another
boilermaker before struggling to light the last Lucky Strike in
the pack. Looking off to the bartender, Ed gestures to his empty
glass; "another."

THE BARTENDER

a barrel chested, bearded, East coast biker, cuts lemons in half
with a mean knife. The bartender assesses Ed's condition and
merely shakes his head, "no way, you're through."

(CONTINUED)

2 CONTINUED:

ED

initially appears pissed off, then realizes how gone he is. Ed nods, gestures for the tab and pulls out his wallet. He throws a credit card on the bar. The bartender picks it up and moves off.

Ed pauses, heartbroken, as he looks at something in his billfold. CAMERA EASES IN ON HIM as he slowly removes a wallet sized photo. On the back is scribbled a pathetic, "When they were mine. Cape May. Spring. '96."

He turns the photo over to read the back, REVEALING to CAMERA a picture of Ed, smiling, holding his two children. A girl, 5, and a boy, 2. He turns the photo over once again, staring into it angry and longingly. Ed takes a drag off his cigarette, then places the lighted tip over his image. In a moment, he is burned out of their life. Devastated, he drops the photo to the bar and looks up, impatiently, to the bartender.

THE BARTENDER

stands over the greasy credit authorization machine. Not pleased, he looks to...

ED

gestures, drunk, for the slip to sign.

THE BARTENDER

turns away from Ed, rechecking the machine before picking up the mean lemon cutting knife. The bartender looks back to Ed while slicing his no good credit card in half. With knife in hand, the bartender flashes a threatening look toward Ed, as if "now what?"

ED

the thought of starting a fight flashes, but he knows he is in no condition. With an angry sigh, he pulls out some cash and as he flips it on the bar...

CUT TO:

3 EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - NIGHT

A brilliant red neon sign fills the FRAME, "TATTOO." Rain streams before the sign creating crimson sparkles. O.S. ominous THUNDER ECHOES through the buildings of downtown Philadelphia. Silhouetted heads of people caught in the rain quickly strobe past the red neon.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

One figure, however, passes slowly. Head down, drunk, the black profile of Ed Jerse staggers past each letter of "Tattoo." Then just about to CLEAR FRAME, he pauses, considers and turns to the window.

ED

Lightning FLASHES. Thunder CRACKS as he turns to the window, blood red neon reflecting on his face.

ED'S POV - TATTOO PARLOUR WINDOW

A crowded collage of tattoo flash is displayed in the window. The usual stuff is there, Frazetta-like warriors, "F.T.W." with Harley-Davidson lettering...

ED

drunkenly browses the flash. Nothing really strikes him.

ED'S POV - TATTOO PARLOUR WINDOW

Skulls, devils, crucified Jesus, some dice, lots of flames, Hitchcock's profile, Native American feathers, vines of flowers, some dolphins...and tucked away... in a forgotten corner of the window...an old school, "Brooklyn" Joe Lieber, design...of a woman.

ED

freezes. Something more than mere interest strikes him about the design. He stares at it, sad...angry...compelled...

ED'S POV - WOMAN TATTOO

CAMERA CREEPS IN ON the Betty Page like woman, head cocked seductively over a bare shoulder. Grable hair held up with a pink polka dot ribbon. Full red lips. Long lashes, big blue eyes, one of which is closed in an alluring coy wink.

As CAMERA HOLDS on Betty, Lightning FLASHES...

ED

The lightning continues over his frozen expression. He cannot remove his eyes from the image. And now, beyond compelled, as if with no real choice in the matter, Ed moves off toward the parlour entrance.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED: (2)

THE BETTY TATTOO

appears pleased; knowing her seduction is consummated. Upon a RUMBLE of THUNDER...

CUT TO:

4 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Darkness. The apartment door, however, quickly bangs open as the inebriated Ed spills into his home. He closes the door and, unable to deal with the light switch, moves to the dim spill light by the window.

The apartment is basically empty. Cardboard boxes of stuff moved out of his home months ago. He removes his suit coat and tosses it on a lawn chair. Ed removes his tie and shirt to REVEAL a large white gauze bandage on his right arm.

Ed peels away the tape and looks at his new tattoo. The winking Betty Tattoo lies over two pieces of a heart torn in two. Above the woman is the word "NEVER." Beneath her is the word "AGAIN."

Mercifully for Ed the day is over. At this point, the emotions and booze run out of gas. He drops to one knee, battles to make it to the bedroom, but loses.

WIDER

Ed passes out on the cold hardwood floor in the pale darkness. CAMERA HOLDS FOR A BEAT in the silence, then begins to INCH toward ED, TILTING DOWN, MOVING OVER his legs, his bare back and toward the bicep of his right arm, settling on the Betty Tattoo...no longer winking. Both eyes are now open. Seductive. Mischievous.

Alive.

FADE OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

The FRAME is BLACK. The TONES beneath it are hushed and tense.
A LEGEND APPEARS: VIETNAM VETERAN'S MEMORIAL. CONSTITUTION
GARDENS. WASHINGTON, D.C. 2:35 a.m.

MULDER (V.O.)
And these "unknown
craft"...where were the majority
sighted?

The answer carries a thick Russian accent.

PUDOVKIN (V.O.)
European-Central Russia. Perm
and Yekaterinburg regions...

FADE UP:

5 EXT. VIETNAM VETERAN'S MEMORIAL - NIGHT - CLOSE - DANA SCULLY 5

Dana Scully stands before The Wall. Names of those last to die
rise behind her, barely visible on the polished black granite.

Two forms LINE THE FRAME on each side of her. One silhouette
belongs to Mulder, the other, a heavy set bearded man. Despite
the clandestine intensity of the exchange, Scully appears
disinterested, bored even. Head down, focus distant.

MULDER (O.S.)
The Molyobka Triangle.

PUDOVKIN (O.S.)
Yes! Yes. This is right! Me and
others, work...at secret
military space center...

MULDER (O.S.)
Near Plesetsk?

PUDOVKIN (O.S.)
Yes. Much like...uh...Section
Five-One.

MULDER (O.S.)
Area 51.

PUDOVKIN (O.S.)
Yes. "Area 51." On route
home...me...others...um...signs,
road signs, get turned
um..."mistake?"

(CONTINUED)

THE A-FILES NEVER AGAIN 4X15 11/27/90 (WHITE) 11.

5 CONTINUED:

MULDER (O.S.)
By mistake?

PUDOVKIN (O.S.)
Walk onto mine field by base.
Long black car...um...drive
up...no door knob...no
window...no persons drive.

With this, Scully turns away from the men, toward The Wall. Mulder and Pudovkin remain dark dimly backlit figures behind her as she appears to become troubled and fascinated by the memorial.

PUDOVKIN (O.S.)
We run. Mines...um...explode but
no sound! Nothing. Silent.

SCULLY'S POV - THE WALL

CAMERA MOVES DOWN past the names of the dead.

SCULLY

averts her eyes downward, toward the base of the wall, reacting sadly to something O.S. CAMERA FOLLOWS as she kneels down REVEALING a model of an early Seventies muscle car encircled by a small ring of dead flowers. A note attached to the car reads, "My brother, Twenty years later...I still miss you. We know what you did was right."

Scully becomes immeasurably more interested in the small memorial than Mulder and his contact. She removes one of the dead flower petals and pockets it.

CUT TO:

6 INT. FULLER & SIEGEL - DAY - EXTREMELY CLOSE - ED'S PHOTO

The tiny memorial of Ed's kids with his own image burned away sits near a coffee cup and a computer monitor displaying current stock prices. O.S., FILTERED, a PHONE RINGS...

MRS. DENUNZIO (V.O.)
Hello...

OFFICE CUBICLE

Perspiring and wired, Ed Jerse sits desperately in a white cubicle, beside other cubicles. The employee-occupants of which cannot be seen, although there is office traffic before him.

(CONTINUE)

6 CONTINUED:

ED

Hello, Mrs...

He quickly refers to a client sheet on the desk.

ED (CONT'D)

...DeNunzio. Hi, this is Ed
Jerse at Fuller and Siegel...How
are you this morning?

MRS. DENUNZIO (V.O.)

Eh...the kids, you know...

ED

(forces a laugh)

I understand. I just wanted to
call and let you in on a stock
that's going public next week...

MRS. DENUNZIO (V.O.)

It's so hard after the
holidays...

(away from the phone)

DON'T HIT HER WITH THAT!

Ed closes his eyes, wanting nothing more than to hang up, but he
needs to hang on...

MRS. DENUNZIO (V.O.)

(back into phone)

I'm sorry, what?

ED

A company in Tuscon called Cryo-
Cord has achieved amazing
advancement in the technology of
cryogenics.

MRS. DENUNZIO (O.S.)

(lost)

Uh huh...

And now, CAMERA BEGINS TO SLOWLY CREEP TOWARD ED as he dips into
a scripted pitch. Anxiety mounting. Intensity rising.
Perspiration turning to sweat.

ED

You see, Stem Cells from the
blood of an umbilical cord may
be transplanted in the treatment
of many life threatening
diseases, such as...

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (2)

CAMERA ARRIVES TO ED, EXTREMELY CLOSE. Then from nowhere and yet everywhere, a female VOICE is HEARD; and yet there is a masculine edge as well. Seductive and playful in tone it is a quality that vanished after the 1940's.

VOICE (V.O.)
(re:Mrs. Denunzio)

Loser.

Ed freezes, believing she has commented on him. After a pause...

MRS. DENUNZIO (V.O.)
Such as?

ED
(re:loser)
What?

MRS. DENUNZIO (V.O.)
Diseases such as what?

ED
Before that. What did you say?

MRS. DENUNZIO (V.O.)
I didn't say nothin'. You were talkin'.

The VOICE LAUGHS, GIGGLES, MOCKINGLY...

Believing it came from an adjacent cubicle, Ed pulls away from the phone. He absently hangs up while angrily looking over the adjacent cubicle. CAMERA ADJUSTS to REVEAL no one is there. Ed is a bit startled but disorientation serves to fuel his anger.

CAMERA FOLLOWS ED as he marches to the next adjacent cubicle finding two female co-workers; MS. HADDEN and MS. VANSSEN are discussing stock performance on the computer monitor and are startled by Ed's appearance.

ED
Say it to my face. Right to my face. Now that I'm in front of you call me a LOSER TO MY FACE!

This is above normal office tone and draws immediate attention.

HADDEN
Ed. Ed, calm down, nobody...

VOICE (V.O.)
(commanding)
Trash her desk!

- (CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED: (3)

On cue, Ed knocks Vansen's in/out box and whatever to the floor. The other employees are shocked. Some guys move to Ed and pull him back, including the boss, MRS. SHIMA-TSUNO.

Ed is as shocked by his behavior as anyone. He attempts to regain some form of composure.

SHIMA-TSUNO

Why don't you go home, Ed. We'll discuss this later.

Ed takes a deep breath, picks up Vansen's stuff and puts it on the desk. She gestures as if, "forget it."

CAMERA FOLLOWS ED as, humiliated, he returns to his desk. He grabs his suit coat, his cigarettes and the picture of his kids and EXITS FRAME. CAMERA HOLDS on the empty desk.

CUT TO:

7 INT. MULDER'S OFFICE - DAY - CLOSE - NAME PLATE

"FOX MULDER" is held in Scully's hand.

SCULLY

considers the white name on brown plastic, bothered. She looks around the X-Files office, searching, as if taking inventory. She swivels and looks at the walls behind her.

SCULLY'S POV - OFFICE WALLS

Tacked to the bulletin boards: the "I Want To Believe" poster, a New York Knicks schedule, the away games against Washington are highlighted and an autographed book jacket of From Outer Space; "To Fox Mulder, Best Wishes Jose Chung."

SCULLY

turns back to the desk and eyes a packet of opened sunflower seeds. Chewed disgusting husks are piled by the phone. She opens a lower drawer and removes a stack of magazines. The first is a NICAP journal including "The Molyobka Triangle:Russia's UFO Anomaly Zone" by Fox Mulder.

Returning the magazines, she spots something in the bottom of the drawer. A stray X-File/research folder marked: "Modern Primitives." CAMERA PUSHES IN AS SHE opens the file...

(CONTINUED

7 CONTINUED:

FILE - SLIGHT MATCHING MOVE

A Papua New Guinea woman is covered with tattoos. The pages flip falling upon charts of North American tribe tattoos, African scarification and Christian Coptic tattoos...

SCULLY

CAMERA CONTINUES TO CREEP TOWARD HER...the images reaching her on a level deeper than merely interesting phenomenon. O.S., the door OPENS. She sets the file down on the desk.

MULDER

dressed casually and carrying a duffel bag, enters. He appears a bit irritated. Dropping his bag, he moves around the office collecting some files and other research material. And although, he's talking at her, Mulder seems oblivious of Scully.

MULDER

I made a last ditch effort to get out of it, but the Bureau is holding fast to this Federal employees vacation policy. I haven't taken a day off in four years, so I either take a week now or they start not paying me for eight weeks vacation time. I don't like it, but I have to eat. Have to pay rent.

He heads toward the X-Files, fishing for a couple of folders.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Part of me believes this is just another attempt to get me out of here, but, its only one week and I know you can keep an eye on things for me.

Mulder means no malice by this, but Scully tenses from his use of words. He retrieves the folders and moves toward the desk.

MULDER (CONT'D)

So, here's some things to keep an eye on while I'm gone.

He drops the files on the desk. As he's sitting, Scully looks at him and, not whining or bitchy, just curious...

SCULLY

Why don't I have a desk?

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (2)

Mulder is a bit thrown, doesn't follow. He gestures to her and the desk as if, "you're sitting behind it."

MULDER
What do you mean?

Scully pointedly returns the name plate, facing him, to the front of the desk. He reads it, gets it. Trying to be understanding...

MULDER
I always assumed that was your area...

He gestures toward the rear of the office.

SCULLY
Back there.

He realizes it sounds bad and backpedals.

MULDER
Okay. So, we'll have them bring down another desk. There won't be any room to move... but maybe if we put them together, face to face...we can play Battleship.

Flustered and a bit embarrassed, Scully gestures to drop the subject and open the files. He studies Scully trying to figure out what is wrong.

SCULLY
What is it you want me to keep an eye on?

She looks at the folder as if to be briefed. An unresolved tension lingers as they act as if they have put it behind them.

MULDER
The contact we met last night at The Wall, who you neither listened or talked to...

She eyes him, however he quickly moves on.

MULDER (CONT'D)
...is named Vsevlod Pudovkin.
He's a Russian immigrant with a doctorate in Astronautical Engineering.
(more)

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (3)

MULDER (cont'd; CONT'D)

He and several other contacts worked at a military space center in the Republic of Karelia. They smuggled out reverse engineered reports of two alien craft which crashed and were retrieved from the Sea of Barents.

SCULLY

These "reports"...are for sale?

He looks at her, knowing she senses a scam.

MULDER

At a high price.

SCULLY

Mmm Hmm. Have you confirmed the identity of these individuals?

MULDER

That's your assignment while I'm away. Run an INS as well as a Bureau NCIC check on these individuals...

He passes a list of five names across the desk...

MULDER (CONT'D)

...all of which now reside in the Little Russia section of Philadelphia. I've arranged travel in order to administer "eye to eye" surveillance of their activities.

He hands her a plane ticket.

SCULLY

Mulder...the contact, whom, although I did not talk to, yet indeed listened to, albeit impatiently, was, at least to my memory, recanting a poorly veiled synopsis of an episode of "Rocky and Bullwinkle."

Mulder looks at her, stoic. After a very long beat...

(CONTINUE

7 CONTINUED: (4)

MULDER

"Eanie, meenie, chili beanie the spirits are about to speak?"

SCULLY

Rocky and Bullwinkle were looking for an Upsidasium mine and Boris Badenov altered the road signs causing them to walk onto a secret military base where a car with no windows or door handles picked them up and there were silent explosions from a compound called Hushaboom.

(a thought)

Although that last part might be from another episode.

MULDER

You're refusing an assignment based on the adventures of Moose and Squirrel?

She tenses, tough not shrewish.

SCULLY

"Refusing an assignment?" You make it sound like you're my superior.

MULDER

Alright. Whatever. Don't go to Philadelphia. Do what you want.

He gets up to return the files to the cabinet. Seeing the X-Files acts as a reminder...

MULDER (CONT'D)

But let me remind you, I worked hard to get these files re-opened. You were just assigned. This work is my life.

SCULLY

(unhappy)

But it's become mine.

Mulder seems to understand what is wrong. He's a little hurt by this, but tries to help out.

MULDER

You don't want it to be.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (5)

She senses his concern and her own confused, somewhat irrational, emotions and eases.

SCULLY

I've lost sight of what I want, Mulder. How can I see when we live in dark covert locations? Control of nothing. Unanswered questions. Every action recorded. I wish I could say we're going in circles but its an endless line...always two steps forward and three back...while my own life does nothing but stand still.

Mulder stands, picking up his travel gear.

MULDER

Maybe its good to get away from each other for awhile.

She doesn't respond. He heads for the door. Without looking at him...

SCULLY

Where will you be?

MULDER

Ironically, it's personal, Scully. A place I've always wanted to go. What I anticipate to be a spiritual journey. A destination in which I hope to discover something about myself.

As he heads out of the office...

MULDER (CONT'D)

Maybe you should do the same.

The door CLOSES.

CLOSE - SCULLY

turns away from the desk. The light from the desk lamp falls on her in a way that her face is half in shadow. She cocks her head to remain in this light but to look at the desk.

SCULLY'S POV - THE DESK

the plane tickets to Philadelphia await a decision.

(CONTINUE)

7 CONTINUED: (6)

7

SCULLY

looks back over the desk. She reaches out, takes Mulder's name plate, opens a drawer and drops it inside. She closes the drawer.

From her pocket, she removes the dead flower petal from The Wall and drops the petal on the spot previously occupied by Mulder's name plate.

CAMERA PUSHES IN ON SCULLY as she looks at the petal...not yet satisfied. In fact, she turns away into the darkness creating a silhouetted form which matches...

CUT TO:

8 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - CLOSE - THE BETTY TATTOO

8

has returned to a seductive wink, encircled by "NEVER AGAIN."

ED (O.S.)

Yes, Mrs. Shima-Tsuno. Sir, what
if I swore to you that it'll
never happen again...

CAMERA BEGINS TO PULL BACK, REVEALING ED in his empty modest apartment. He sits on a lawn chair behind his desk with a cheap laptop, one hand holding the phone to his ear, the other clutching his forehead. The only light is from the glowing monitor.

ED (CONT'D)

I just would like another
chance...I need another chance,
Mrs. Shima-Tsuno...

Ed looks to his computer screen.

ED (CONT'D)

(desperate)

That stock I recommended,
Virtual Gambling is
up...Mmmhuh...

(shot down)

Mmmhuh...I know...right...I
understand. Thank you for your
time. Goodbye.

He gently hangs up the phone on the floor at his feet. After a beat, he picks it up again and violently SLAMS the phone down. CAMERA BEGINS TO PUSH BACK as Ed hangs his head in his hands.

(CONTINU

8 CONTINUED:

Once the Betty tattoo and Ed are all that is in FRAME...the female voice can be HEARD. It is distant and close at the same time. It could be an internal voice, or it could be people in the other room.

BETTY (V.O.)
(mocking)
"Thank you for your time."

Ed raises his head just enough for his red tired eyes to look out over his fingertips.

BETTY (V.O.)
If you were any kinda man, you
wouda told her to kiss your
ass. But no...

Ed pulls his hands away and looks to the floor. He drops on his knees and places his ear to the hardwood.

BETTY (V.O.)
Another woman sticks it to you...

It could be coming from downstairs. Nearby along the floor is a heating duct with a deco grid. He moves to it and listens with increasing intensity and angry paranoia.

BETTY (V.O.)
Ain't that right...Eddie?

Ed begins pounding the floor as if telling a neighbor to keep it down. CAMERA begins to CRANE DOWN...

SOFT CUT TO:

9 INT. APARTMENT - BELOW ED'S - NIGHT

...CONTINUING, DOWN to REVEAL the apartment of a young professional, MS. KAYE SCHILLING, dressed in T-Shirt and sweats. It appears she's recently moved in as several larger moving boxes are in the room. Currently Kaye is tearing out a page of the Entertainment Weekly to line the bottom of her birdcage.

The POUNDING CONTINUES, O.S., above her. With the television off, Kaye looks up curiously annoyed at the POUNDING as she picks up the TV remote and turns on the television.

KAYE'S TELEVISION

The Partridge Family sings "Doesn't Somebody Want To Be Wanted."

10 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

1

CAMERA SLOWLY PUSHES IN TO ED as he HEARS the opening background vocals, O.S. Keith Partridge begins the lead...

KEITH PARTRIDGE (O.S.)
I go downtown and roam all
around/But every street I walk/I
find another dead end.

BETTY (V.O.)
Hear that?

Ed looks down at the floor believing the VOICE and now the SONG are coming from the apartment below.

KEITH PARTRIDGE (V.O.)
I'm on my own but I'm so all
alone/I need somebody/So I won't
have to pretend...

BETTY (V.O.)
It's you, Ed. It's all about you!

CAMERA INCHES INTO ED as he now pounds the floor with a different frightening intensity. Violent.

11 INT. APARTMENT - BELOW ED'S - NIGHT

Kaye laying on the couch, looks up, then spitefully turns the remote toward the TV and brings up the VOLUME.

TELEVISION

Even Danny Partridge appears to be mocking Ed.

12 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

1

Ed's insanity increases with the VOLUME. And now, through all this, a gentle KNOCK can be HEARD at Ed's door. He turns, pretty well gone, and hustles to the door.

Sweating profusely now and trembling, Ed opens the door. Standing in the hallway is a conservatively dressed African American woman HANNAH, 55 and a teenaged boy, 15, named SPENCER. Hannah has a hand bag holding a bunch of literature featuring a Bible. In her hand is a thin square newsprint publication.

HANNAH
Good evening. My name is Hannah
and this is Spencer.

(CONTINU'

12 CONTINUED:

Ed continues to listen to the taunting "messages" emitting from downstairs. His behavior is much like a street schizophrenic.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

Have you ever imagined what it would be like if all people...

ED

You hear that?

Spencer nods but Hannah does not wish to be distracted.

HANNAH

What I hear is the confusing and troubling sound of over thirteen thousand different religions...

ED

Downstairs. She's trying to drive me crazy...

HANNAH

Oh, we just talked to Ms. Schilling and I don't believe she would...

ED

Somehow...she knows what I'm thinking...I don't want to feel it...but they know, like, psychics or something or an implant thing trying to drive me crazy. They've even programmed the TV to criticize me...HEAR IT?! THERE!

Ed takes a step into the hall just for a better listen. Hannah and Spencer, however, take a step back...threatened. She nervously hands him the "Watchtower"-like magazine.

HANNAH

We'll come back some other time.

Ed looks at the magazine. The article reads..."Are you a failure?" O.S., Betty LAUGHS mockingly.

He looks up, homicidal. The two solicitors quickly move away as CAMERA MOVES IN on Ed as O.S. the song asks "Doesn't Somebody Want To Be Wanted?" He clutches the sides of his head, crumbling the magazine, desperately trying to keep it out.

(CONTINUE)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY (V.O.)
Even the Jehovah Witness-babe
won't waste her time on you. No
woman would. And you just sit
and take it. Take it like a
man...

CAMERA FINISHES ITS MOVE to ED as he looks up and marches off
toward the stairwell. The Partridge Family plays O.S.

13 INT. APARTMENT - BELOW ED'S - NIGHT - A GNARLY "ONE-ER" 1

Kaye sits on her couch while the song continues on TV. O.S., an
intense KNOCK at the door in the b.g. CAMERA BEGINS TO CREEP
toward Kaye on an axis that leads toward the door. She ignores
the KNOCK. Another knock, now more of a POUNDING.

Kaye waves her hand at the door as if "fuck off." CAMERA
CONTINUES TOWARD the door, finally PASSING KAYE.

Beat. Another. CAMERA CONTINUES...

BAM! The door BURSTS OPEN. Backlit by the hallway and appearing
monstrous, Ed charges inside the room. CAMERA PICKS UP SPEED as
it passes him, toward the door...

And as it passes, CAMERA catches a quick glimpse of the Betty
Tattoo, both eyes open with the frozen smile appearing sadistic.

KAYE (O.S.)
HEY! GET OUT! GET OUT!

CAMERA MAKES IT INTO THE HALL and quickly TURNS BACK toward the
door as it is SLAMMED SHUT.

14 EXT. HALLWAY - NIGHT - SAME SHOT 1

CAMERA HOLDS ON THE DOOR as Kaye's SCREAMS are quickly MUFFLED.
The VOLUME on the SONG INCREASES. O.S., furniture is knocked
OVER and SOUNDS of a struggle. But soon, there is nothing left
but the Partridge Family. CAMERA CONTINUES TO HOLD A BEAT until
it BEGINS MOVING BACKWARD...

In a shameless "Frenzy" rip off, CAMERA CONTINUES BACKWARDS
along the hall, SLOWLY PANNING across the empty hallway before
MOVING BACKWARDS down a flight of steps. CAMERA MOVES, sinking
into increasing darkness, SETTLING at the base of a dark cold
cellar, looking up the stairs.

(CONTINUED)

14 CONTINUED:

A long pause. CAMERA HOLDS until a large moving carton appears at the top of the stairs. Ed quickly moves around guiding the body laden box as it slides and bumps down the stairway...

CAMERA is on the move again as Ed slides the blood stained carton across the dark cellar. IT proceeds to a large old incinerator with a metal door large enough to squeeze a body through...with some effort. Ed opens the door REVEALING angry orange flames. Ed CLEARS FRAME.

CAMERA PANS and MOVES in a direction counter to Ed so WE don't see his actions, however, CAMERA indeed FINDS the blood stained moving carton, which appears empty...except for the TV remote at the base of the box. CAMERA HOLDS AWHILE before Ed's hand moves in and retrieves the remote.

INCINERATOR

ED ENTERS FRAME, CLOSE, cramming the torn empty box into the flames. He then tosses in the remote for good measure. Stands before the fire, sweating profusely, orange flicker reflecting on his face and in his eyes, it is finally silent.

Until...

BETTY (V.O.)

Atta boy...lover.

Ed freezes. The BETTY VOICE is now much more present, definable.

BETTY (V.O.)

From now on, I'm your right hand gal. You and me. As long as I'm with you...No one will hurt you...

Ed's focus remains locked on the fire, but his horrified realization is aimed toward his arm.

BETTY (V.O.)

Never again.

Ed is not seduced by this voice. He's horrified. CAMERA SLOWLY TILTS DOWN to his arm and holds on the Betty tattoo. Once again...innocently winking.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

15 EXT. THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAY - WIDE

Mulder's car is pulled over along a fairly mountainous road. Away from his car, he appears to be doing some weird shuffle.

MULDER

on closer inspection it is clear Mulder is trying to get a good signal for his cell phone by moving around the area.

MULDER

Damn!

He awkwardly leans his upper body and dials again. The number he is calling begins to RING...RING...

16 INT. MULDER'S OFFICE - DAY

The office is dark and vacant. CAMERA MOVES OVER THE DESK, passing the RINGING phone...

17 EXT. THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE - DAY

Through the CRACKLING STATIC, the F.B.I. VOICE MAIL SYSTEM engages. Mulder, wonders, a bit troubled, as to her whereabouts.

MULDER

Scully, Mulder...

18 INT. MULDER'S OFFICE - DAY

CAMERA CONTINUES OVER the DESK. O.S., Mulder's MESSAGE continues over the speaker phone.

MULDER (O.S.)

(continuing)

Just checking in. Hope everything's alright. Um...call me on my cell. Let me know where you're at.

With that, CAMERA REACHES the AREA on the desk last occupied by the airline tickets he assigned to Scully.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - DAY

An old greasy sign declares "Phillie's BEST Cheese Steaks. This is also reiterated in Russian. CAMERA CRANES DOWN the sign, which includes Ben Franklin sharing a cheese steak sandwich with Lenin. CAMERA ADJUSTS to REVEAL a shack grille.

CAMERA MOVES from there to INCLUDE a car parked on the cold street, away from the busy section of the commercial district. INSIDE the car is Dana Scully, watching half bored/half intent, the expression of law enforcement on a stake out.

She cocks her head indicating she sees something of interest down the street, then nonchalantly raises a pair of opera glass-size binoculars.

20 EXT. PHILADELPHIA STREET - DAY - SCULLY'S POV - BINO MATTE

A heavy set bearded man, Vsevlod Pudovkin, dressed in a fashion as if still in Russia, hustles into a small Russian market.

21 INT. SCULLY'S CAR - DAY - SCULLY

sets down the binoculars, then refers to files on the front seat.

INSERT - FILES

An INS photograph identifies "PUDOVKIN, VSEVLOD LEONID. 42. AEROSPACE ENGINEER." Background checks of five other Russians are included in the folder. Also, she appears to have run some FBI N.C.I.C reports. No crimes or incidents recorded on the men.

SCULLY

looks up from the report and starts out of the car.

CUT TO:

22 INT. RUSSIAN MARKET - DAY

This is a small general store with American goods sprinkled with items wanted by Russian immigrants. At the moment, no one is at the front counter. Scully appears in the doorway and enters.

Its quiet and apparently empty as she flashes a quick look around before moving to the shelves as if a legitimate customer.

Then, in the back of the store, O.S., PUDOVKIN can be HEARD speaking in Russian. With her eyes on the products on the shelves, Scully eases toward the rear of the store, easing a cautious look around an aisle.

(CONTINUED)

22 CONTINUED:

SCULLY'S POV - BACK ROOM

a curtain is pulled but not all the way, allowing a glimpse of Pudovkin standing before a Russian WOMAN, the store owner, and her 15 year old SON. The boy is nervously counting money, which Pudovkin takes and pockets. He appears to add a stern warning about being late with protection money before marching off.

SCULLY

eases back, her "ears" trained on Pudovkin as his O.S. FOOTSTEPS CROSS the store and exit. Scully moves toward the front window to keep a trailing eye on Pudovkin's destination.

Before her, in the window, is a Matryoshka, a Russian doll; displaying a darker message than most. The outer shell being a pretty woman, with each inner shell appearing more sad and disturbed until the smallest final figure is a skeleton.

Scully's focus is beyond the doll, but to the store owner, appearing in the b.g, it appears Scully is looking at the doll.

The Store Owner is rattled by the recent encounter with Pudovkin, and attempts to not let it show, however it does.

STORE OWNER

(thick accent)

It is Matryoshka.

Scully is puzzled at first, then once she turns realizes the woman is talking about the doll. CAMERA PUSHES IN ON SCULLY, effected by the imagery of the doll.

STORE OWNER

Tells story. What is inside girl.

Scully is compelled to consider the matryoshka's message. Rattled, she forces herself out of the moment and returns her focus out the window and down the street.

23 EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY - SCULLY'S POV

Down from the Hard Eight Lounge, Pudovkin slips inside the tattoo parlour with the recognizable neon "tattoo" sign.

24 INT. RUSSIAN MARKET - DAY - SCULLY

Scully hustles out of the store leaving the owner puzzled.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

2

The red neon sign is lit in the window. Inside, Ed Jerse appears to be pleading to a Russian tattoo artist known as COMRADE SVO. The artist listens but adamantly shakes his head, "no." Pudovkin is nowhere in sight.

Scully appears before the window, cautiously browsing the flash in the window; careful not to expose her "tail." Not seeing Pudovkin, she wanders inside.

26 INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - DAY

2

With his sleeve rolled up, pointing out the Betty Tattoo, Ed and the artist are near argument intensity.

ED

No, that's not my problem. You did good work. Very nice. Just like in the window, but...

SVO

"But" so, what!? Why you want to cover it?

Neither Ed or Comrade Svo acknowledges Scully as she enters, examining the flash on the wall. One individual, however, notes her arrival...

BETTY

CAMERA PUSHES IN on the exposed tattoo on Ed's arm. Her frozen expression appears to detect a potential threat.

SCULLY

moves by the walls, passing the tattoo designs. She is definitely there on business, however, something within her cannot help be fascinated and curious by the flash.

SCULLY'S POV - FLASH

CAMERA PANS across some Stalinist artwork, Aztec gods, a Japanese samurai, a Chinese dragon. CAMERA SETTLES on an ouroboros, a snake eats its own tail; similar to, but not the "Millennium" logo.

SCULLY

pauses on the final image.

SVO (O.S.)

Listen friend, everyone gets the tattoo they deserve.

- (CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED:

Scully continues to look at the designs, however her eyes are cautiously on the lookout for Pudovkin, possibly in the backroom.

ED (O.S.)

What if you don't cover the whole thing? Just the mouth and eyes.

SVO (O.S.)

Even if I say "yes." Too soon. Skin must heal.

ED (O.S.)

I'll pay you anything.

SVO (O.S.)

(to Scully)

Miss. Miss. You!

Scully realizes she's being addressed and turns toward the men. She approaches them and CAMERA ADJUSTS to include Ed and Svo.

SVO

You like this? On his arm?

Ed keeps his eyes downward, humiliated and tense, but if one wasn't aware of his problem, he wouldn't appear psychotic. In fact, he is somewhat handsome.

Scully notes the Betty tattoo as she approaches.

SCULLY'S POV - BETTY TATTOO

CAMERA EASES IN ON Ed's right arm.

WIDER

Scully cocks her head to see the tat "rightside up." Her eyes move to the bearer of the image and hangs on his face...a beat longer than usual.

SCULLY

The color, the red on the lips, is extraordinary.

Svo taps Ed on the knee and stands as if Scully's comment closes the case.

SVO

See, pretty girl...

Svo gestures with his hands toward Ed as if to finish the statement, "she likes it, why change it."

- (CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (2)

SCULLY

I've never seen a color so
vibrant on a tattoo. Why is it
so different?

Svo moves to Scully if only to attempt to close the discussion
with Ed.

SVO

Something I find na narakh.

As Svo CLEARS FRAME, MOVING to Scully, CAMERA PUSHES IN on Ed as
he looks up at the woman...

ED'S POV - SCULLY

CAMERA EASES ON Scully, not in a manner to imply she is the next
victim, however to imply attraction.

SCULLY

Meaning?

ED

still tense, however, subtly attracted to Scully. After a beat,
CAMERA TILTS DOWN to Betty.

SCULLY AND SVO

Svo nods, unashamed. He holds out his hand.

SVO

In prison. Tattoos are way
prisoners talk...without
talking. "Thieves Music." See...

He indicates several small markings on his hand and fingers.

SVO (CONT'D)

This, my name; "Svo." This what
I do to go to prison.

SCULLY

Which was..?

SVO

(smiles)

Don't remember.

Scully nods, as if "okay, I won't push it."

(CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (3)

ED

remains locked on Scully.

BETTY (V.O.)

(icy)

Thought I was your girl.

Ed is rattled. His initial reflex is to take his eyes off of Scully. After a beat to think about it, he defiantly looks back to Dana. The tone of Betty's voice is intense...dangerous.

BETTY (V.O.)

Lover...this is a very bad thing.

Ed battles to keep his eyes on Dana.

SCULLY AND SVO

The Russian pushes up his sleeve, REVEALING several crude, black, tattoos. One is of a broken heart before an eight pointed star, no color.

SVO

This tells others I
am...uh...district boss. "Don't
fool with me." This...

He indicates a cartoonish figure behind bars with a saying enclosed in a banner above the cell.

SVO (CONT'D)

"He who has not been deprived of
freedom does not know its value."

The saying gently resonates with Scully. She takes a second look at the tattoo.

SVO (CONT'D)

(re:Ed)

I tell him. "Everyone gets
tattoo they deserve." Beautiful.
Cheap. Thought over. Impulse.
Tattoo reflects on body what
lies in person's soul.

ED AND BETTY

Ed continues to watch Scully.

BETTY (V.O.)

You'd break my heart over a
cheap redhead?

- (CONTINUED)

26 CONTINUED: (6)

ED

Uh...there's a real crummy bar
up the street. Good for when
you're down.

She nods, understands that feeling.

ED (CONT'D)

I was kinda down last week.
And...

He gestures toward his arm.

SCULLY

So, it wasn't so much
"impulsive" as it was "hammered."

Ed laughs. His eyes meeting hers. There is a slight spark
causing Scully to blush. She subtly looks away toward the back.

ED

Have you, uh, seen much of
Philadelphia?

Scully shakes her head.

ED

There are a couple a nice places
to eat by the river...if you're
interested.

Trying to hide the motion, Ed reaches for the bicep of his right
arm and rubs it as if in pain. She's more interested than she
realizes. At the moment, however, Scully feels her purpose here
is business.

SCULLY

I'd like that...it's just, I'm
leaving later tonight.

Ed nods, disappointed but understanding. He reaches for a card
in his wallet and hands it to her.

ED

If you're ever in town again...
Oh, wait!

He removes a pen and scribbles on the card.

ED

That's my home number. I work
there, mainly. I mean...if you
care to call.

- (CONTINUE)

26 CONTINUED: (7)

She eyes him and smiles, a little buzzed from the moment. Ed returns the smile, holds his arm and walks out of the shop.

CAMERA PUSHES IN AS SCULLY LOOKS TO THE CARD...

CUT TO:

27 INT. SCULLY'S HOTEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING - CLOSE - CARD

Scully holds Ed's business card.

SCULLY (O.S.)
Yes, Director Skinner...

WIDER

Scully holds a beat on the memory of today's exchange. She is presently on the phone in mid report. The digital clock in her room reads 5:23 p.m., but it is already dark outside. The NCIC files and some notes on Pudovkin are spread out on the bed.

SCULLY (CONT'D)
I spoke with Special Agent
Jeffreys at the Philadelphia
office. I gave him my reports
and they're taking it up from
here...

A BEEP on the phone.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
I have an emergency phone call
to Dana Scully from Fox Mulder.

SCULLY
Yes, Operator. I'll be back
tonight, Director Skinner.

A CLICK. A pause, before Mulder comes on the line.

MULDER (V.O.)
Scully?

SCULLY
Mulder, what's wrong?

MULDER (V.O.)
Nothing's wrong. I'm just at
this special place and
I...wanted to share it with you.

28 INT. THE JUNGLE ROOM - GRACELAND - DAY - (INTERCUT)

Mulder stands away from a tour group outside of Elvis' Tahitian/Hawaiian shag covered retreat.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Elvis bought all the furniture
in just thirty minutes!

29 INT. SCULLY'S HOTEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Unfair, Scully bristles, believing she is being checked up on.

SCULLY

How did you know where I was?

MULDER

I tried where we always stay in Philadelphia. I'm not a special agent for nothin'. How's the case going?

SCULLY

I've handed it off to the Philadelphia bureau.

Back at Graceland, now Mulder bristles.

MULDER

The station in Philadelphia doesn't know or care about the X Files.

SCULLY

Mulder, there is no X-File. Your contact is connected to the vorovskoi mir. Extortion. Credit fraud. Cons. Nothing but a moshchenniki. [swindler]

MULDER

How do you know?

SCULLY

What do you mean how do I know?! You assigned me the background check.

MULDER

Just hold off 'til I get back.

SCULLY

Don't you believe I'm capable?

(CONTINUED)

29 CONTINUED:

MULDER
Scully, of course I do. You know
I do. It's just that in this
case...

SCULLY
No, not just this case. All of
them.

MULDER
What's the agent's name in
Philadelphia?

SCULLY
It's over. Done. Pudovkin is out
of our hands. Mulder, look I've
got to go.

MULDER
(facetious)
What, you got a date or
something?

Scully hesitates. There is a long pause. Near the jungle room,
Mulder reacts...uncomfortable.

MULDER
You're joking, right?

Hearing Mulder's...tone...Scully's eyes turn toward Ed's card.

SCULLY
Mulder...I've got everything
under control. I'll talk to you
later.

She hangs up. An element of her feels at last avenged for the
"Not now" treatment while he sat with Bambi. Another side
however, feels quite unsure about herself...but willing to
explore the uncertainty. As she looks to the card...

CUT TO:

30 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - WIDE

The only light in the room is the red glow from a cigarette tip.
CAMERA MOVES SLOWLY AROUND Ed Jerse in a T-Shirt and jeans.

BETTY (V.O.)
Isn't it better this way, baby?
Me and you...alone.
(more)

- (CONTINUED)

30 CONTINUED:

BETTY (cont'd; V.O.)
Women are so petty. Jealous.
Controlling. That bitch today
would have been just like all
the others.

A silent pause...then, in the darkness. The PHONE RING!
leans over and picks it up.

ED
Hello.

SCULLY (V.O.)
Hi, Ed Jerse please.

ED
This is him.

SCULLY (V.O.)
Hi, this is Dana...we met at the
tattoo place today.

Ed sits up in his chair.

31 INT. SCULLY'S HOTEL ROOM - EARLY EVENING - (INTERCUT)
Scully is nervous, paces as she talks...

ED (V.O.)
Hi!

SCULLY
(nervous laugh)
There's something I though I'd
never say.

ED
Glad you did.

SCULLY
Look, um, my flight was
cancelled and I'm in town for
one more night...is it too late
to take you up on dinner?

ED
No...no...not at all. One thing,
my car is...in the shop. We'll
have to meet.

SCULLY
I can pick you up.

32 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - BETTY

the tattoo sits on Ed's arm.

ED (O.S.)

That would be great. The address
is on the card I gave you.

SCULLY (V.O.)

An hour?

ED (O.S.)

Look forward to it. Bye.

Ed leans INTO FRAME to hang up the phone, so now Betty and Ed
are INCLUDED in FRAME.

BETTY (V.O.)

Go ahead...treat yourself. This
girl is a real doll. But beauty
is only skin deep, baby. I go
much deeper.

Ed takes a drag from his cigarette, exhales.

BETTY (V.O.)

"Never Again." You've never been
true to me. But I'll make you be
true...I'll make you mine...

Ed looks to the tattoo, angrily, crazed. He takes the cigarette
and slowly lowers it toward his arm.

WIDER

The ash connect to the flesh. There are no screams from Betty.
And no sounds from Ed, other than the burning of his own skin.
As he waits for Scully...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

33 INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

The first floor hallway of Ed Jerse's apartment building appears vacant as CAMERA HOLDS on the entrance. O.S., however, a gentle KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK is HEARD on a door.

Scully appears in the entrance and walks into the building, dressed much more informal than business attire. She's dressed for a date. A bit anxious, she moves toward the stairway, heading toward the second floor.

CAMERA ADJUSTS to include Hannah and Spencer, the Jehovah Witnesses knocking softly on Kaye Schilling's apartment door.

HANNAH

Ms. Schilling? Hello?

Scully notes Hannah's puzzled expression flashed at Spencer who shrugs. Scully heads upstairs.

34 INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - NIGHT

Scully approaches Ed's apartment. She pauses before the door and takes a short, deep nervous sigh...then knocks.

ED (O.S.)

Just a second!

CAMERA CREEPS SLOWLY TOWARD her, tense, until the door finally opens. Ed appears, handsome in a dress shirt and an undone tie around his neck.

ED

Hi!

SCULLY

I'm a little early.

There's that first unspoken beat, in which both "sides" approve of how the other appears for the evening and relief that the first hurdle has been passed.

ED

No, no, come on in. I'll be ready in a second.

Scully enters the apartment. The door closes, CAMERA HOLDS, CREEPING BACK...a teasing foreshadow...

35 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The lone desk lamp makes the room sexy if you don't know Ed's secret; eerie otherwise. Ed works on his tie as Scully takes in the apartment. Basically a desk, laptop and some lawn chairs.

ED

At least we can forego the "what a nice place you have" formalities.

SCULLY

No, I like it...early American K-Mart beach and patio.

Ed forces a laugh.

ED

Truth is, I...um...separated from my wife a year ago and took this place as a sort of halfway house and so I never bothered to...fix it up.

Scully gently responds as if "it's not a problem."

ED (CONT'D)

Divorce became final last week.

(beat)

Well! There's a great first topic of conversation, huh?!

The admission eases her and to further do so, she makes an admission of her own.

SCULLY

Ed...I don't go out very often.

(beat)

The last time I went on a date was to see "Schindler's List" and the characters in the movie had a much better time.

Ed smiles as he eases. There is an instant chemistry and a beat in which both are excited about the evening.

SCULLY

Oh my God, Ed...

She gestures toward his right bicep. The shirt is stained with a couple streaks of blood. A Betty reminder. Ed is a bit freaked and embarrassed. He starts off toward the other room

ED

Oh...its...just the damn tattoo.

- (CONTINUED)

THE X-FILES "Never Again" 4X13 11/27/90 (11/28/90) 35.

35 CONTINUED:

SCULLY
(calling out)
I'm a doctor, do you want me to
take a look?

36 INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

In the bathroom adjoining the bedroom, Ed hurriedly removes his shirt, working to keep a calm tone in his voice.

ED
Nah, it's okay. It's been
nothin' but...trouble.

Beneath the scars of cigarette burns, blood streaks from the eyes of the Betty tattoo. Ed quickly pulls out a patch of gauze to cover her.

37 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Scully browses the room, moving to the desk, killing nervous energy and time. She checks out the laptop. Behind it, on the desk, wall, is Ed's burned photo of he and his kids. She picks it up, feeling immediate understanding and sympathy. Her expression turns down.

ED (O.S.)
I hope you like this place. I
made reservations...

Ed appears, in a new shirt and tie. Seeing Scully looking at the photo, he stops. Embarrassed. She turns to him.

SCULLY
Ed...the crummy bar, where you
go when you're feeling down...
(beat)
Take me there.

CUT TO:

38 INT. HARD EIGHT LOUNGE - NIGHT

CAMERA IS MOVING on the first snare drum snap of X's "The Have Nots." Mainly the patrons are punk-lite, but with a mixture of some bikers and plain old boozers. CAMERA FINDS Scully and Ed in a back booth. In nice Yuppie-ish clothes, they are against the norm here, which is oddly romantic and sexy.

(CONTINUE)

38 CONTINUED:

Both are relaxed and slumped in the booth, buzzed, but not drunk. Ed works the olive from his martini as Scully drinks from something other than a wine glass.

A girl, just 21, passes their booth. Half of her hair is died black, the other is bleached blond; red leather jacket, pierced eyebrow. Scully looks up and watches her move along.

SCULLY

You believe I used to look just like that girl...once?

Ed checks out the girl and laughs, incredulous.

ED

No.

Scully laughs at the thought of it, but nods her head adamantly. (She's been drinking and is relaxed around Ed, so she's not as formal in her speech.)

SCULLY

Minus the pierced eyebrow.

(beat)

I dropped out of med school, just to piss off my Dad and went through a thing where I colored half my hair, wore beat up clothes and just listened to The Clash all the time.

Ed gestures to her as if, "so how are you like this?" She understands and shrugs. She considers and simply shrugs back.

SCULLY

Doesn't everybody go through that?

ED

You're askin' the wrong guy. I was married and pushin' Mutual Funds when I was twenty.

(drinks)

You said you were a doctor, so you must of went back.

She nods, uncomfortable a bit with the mis-information, but feels now is not the time to tell her real occupation.

SCULLY

I've always gone around in this...I don't know, circle.

(more)

- (CONTINUED)

SCULLY (cont'd)

A figure comes into my life,
authoritative...controlling.
And...part of me likes it. Needs
it, even. I want their approval.
But then...after awhile, every
few years...

She gestures as if "I lose it or go against them." Ed doesn't quite follow and with a questioning expression, repeats the gesture. Scully laughs.

SCULLY

Well, let's see...my father was
a Navy captain and he ran a
tight ship. I worshipped...
(catches herself)
worship...the sea he sailed on.
But around thirteen, or so, I
went through a thing where I
would sneak out of the house to
smoke my mom's cigarettes...just
because he'd kill me if I got
caught. I'd gag on 'em, but,
man, what a rush.

Ed smiles, listens, enjoying watching her.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

And then, you know, when you
become a teenager, the church
Father keeps closer tabs on you.
I didn't have a thought about
sex until he told me not to.

Ed raises a polite but flirtatious eyebrow. She grins, not minding.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

And you know, along the
way...there are other...

She considers what to call Mulder and what slips out is...

SCULLY

Fathers.

ED

It's good to lose control every
once in awhile.

With a troubled afterthought.

(CONTINUED)

38 CONTINUED: (3)

ED

As long as you got it in
control. Sounds a little like
your time has come around again

The answer is yes, however, she shrugs.

SCULLY

Kind of like that ouroboros.

ED

(teasing)

Exactly.

SCULLY

At the tattoo place. On the wall
The snake eating its own tail.
An ouroboros is an early
Christian symbol. The snake is
symbolic of divine life, the
circle embraces all cyclic
systems. Unity, multiplicity,
the return to unity; evolution,
involution...birth, death.

Ed's comment is to jokingly slide her drink away from her and
look inside. She laughs, embarrassed.

ED

I don't know. Whatever I got out
of that is...sounds like you're
just going to keep repeating
what you do. Good or bad. I want
things more like a straight line
and I don't want to ever go
backward. That's why I got...the
tattoo I deserve.

He takes a drink...his tone turning darker.

ED (CONT'D)

It marked a moment...a
feeling...a memorial of
something I never want to have
happen again. I don't know,
like...

He shrugs, downs his drink.

ED (CONT'D)

Like something left at The Wall,
or something.

(CONTIN

38 CONTINUED: (4)

He shrugs, flustered, while she looks at him; aroused by the coincidence of his metaphor. She slides toward him.

SCULLY

I want to see it.

He is uncomfortable by the reminder, but plays it to her as if hard to get.

ED

You know, Dana, just because I marked the moment, wanting to go forward...doesn't mean it worked.

His admission makes her feel closer. She slides closer, the heat building as she grabs his wrist...sort of playful...sort of more.

ED

Come on, no, it's all scabbed up and stuff.

She starts rolling up his sleeve. He grabs her arm, forceful...however, to her, this more a turn on...than not.

ED

If your so curious...get your own.

CAMERA EASES IN ON HER, as Ed holds her wrist. Both the notion and the physicality are arousing.

CUT TO:

39 INT. TATTOO PARLOUR - NIGHT

An amorphous EMPTY FRAME into which appears Scully's bare ankle. Svo's hand, covered with his prison tattoos, softly applies shaving cream and begins shaving the ankle clean.

SCULLY

excited by the rebellious act. Her eyes turn up sensuously toward...

ED

his eyes move from her ankle to meet her eyes.

(CONTINUE

39 CONTINUED:

ANKLE - CLOSE

alcohol is rubbed on Scully's ankle.

SLIGHT TIME CUT:

A STENCIL

of the ouroboros is picked up off a table and moved to Scully's ankle. Svo begins to trace the design with a purplish ink.

A DRAWER

is opened REVEALING individually wrapped packages of needles.

EXTREMELY CLOSE - NEEDLE PACKAGE

The paper is torn away exposing a single needle. Dangerous but somehow erotic...

INK HOLDERS

small Dixie cup size containers hold black and red ink. Svo's hand ENTERS FRAME with a small exotic container of a clear fluid. He adds a couple drops to the red and begins to mix it into the ink.

INK GUN

awaits on the table. Svo's hands ENTER FRAME as he places latex gloves over them.

CLOSE - NEEDLE

moving rapidly, BUZZING, CAMERA FOLLOWS AS it moves to the purple-ink snake eating its own tail around Scully's ankle. As the needle is about to touch the skin...

SCULLY

her eyes are locked on Ed's. She winces at the pain, which is actually exciting, arousing...

ED

smiles, knowing the feeling.

CLOSE - SCULLY'S ANKLE

the black outline of the snake is placed beneath her flesh.

(CONTINUED)

39 CONTINUED: (2)

EXTREMELY CLOSE - SCULLY'S EYES

downward, watching the artist...until they turn back to Ed. This is foreplay.

ED'S EYES

do not match hers, they remain locked on her leg. As the needle BUZZES, O.S.

SCULLY'S ANKLE

Svo's hand blocks the FRAME as he holds a piece of gauze to dab away the small trace of blood. As his hand CLEARS FRAME, the form of the snake is REVEALED, the eyes appearing wild and sinful.

CUT TO:

40 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The room is dark, nearly black. The front door cracks open and light from the hallway lines into the room. Ed turns on his desk lamp. Scully keeps her coat on, preparing to say just goodnight, although the sexual tension is thick.

ED

Does it feel alright?

Scully kneels down and lifts her pant leg.

SCULLY

You know, it doesn't hurt, and this has to be in my head...but if feels...tight...as if the snake were squeezing my ankle.

Ed kneels down to look at it. He gently places a hand on Scully's shin and peeks beneath the bandage.

ED

It looks alright.

CLOSE - ED'S HAND

near Scully's ankle, a small trickle of blood rolls out from his sleeve.

SCULLY (O.S.)

Oh my God, Ed...

(CONTINUE)

40 CONTINUED:

WIDER

Both remain crouched as Ed removes his coat. Blood trickles down his sleeve. It's not as bad as it looks.

SCULLY

Here let me...

ED

It's okay. It's okay. They said
it could happen...

Doctor-like, she helps pull his shirt off. A couple thin streaks of blood rolls down his arm from the Betty tattoo. Scully holds his bicep as she takes a look...

NOW, CAMERA WHISKS INTO THE TATTOO...

BETTY (V.O.)

GET HER HANDS OFF ME!

ED & SCULLY

POPPING BACK OUT, Ed reacts on reflex grabbing Scully's arm with force. She doesn't pull away.

BETTY (V.O.)

LET GO OF HER!

He guides her toward the wall, pinning Scully. Her breaths quicken. Her eyes locked on his.

BETTY (V.O.)

KISS HER AND SHE'S DEAD.

Ed immediately moves into Scully, holding her arms against the wall. She meets his lips. The kiss is intense and passionate, fueled by what they know of one another.

Scully pulls away as Ed runs his lips down her neck. She throws her head back, pulling his shirt all the way off his back, digging her nails into his back.

Ed lifts Scully, her legs wrapped around his back. He drops to his knees on the floor. She responds, primal as he pulls her coat from her back. Scully's legs straddling the man on his knees.

BETTY (V.O.)

Get it now...lover.

Each utterance from the voice increases Ed's passion, which in turn amps hers.

- (CONTINUED)

THE A-FILES never again 11/27/50 (11/27/50)

40 CONTINUED: (2)

BETTY (V.O.)
Get it while it lasts.

DOWN ON THE FLOOR, CAMERA BEGINS TO MOVE PAST THEM, toward the open door, just as Ed lowers Scully to the floor between her.

BETTY (V.O.)
'Cause it ain't gonna be around
much...anymore.

CAMERA CONTINUES...OUT THE DOOR and INTO THE HALL, looking back TOWARD Ed's apartment. It HOLDS. After a beat...the door SLAMS! O.S., INSIDE INTENSE MOVEMENTS, not dissimilar in SOUND to Ms. Schilling's attack.

AFTER A MOMENT, CAMERA MOVES backward and adjusts to look down the stairs at Ms. Schilling's apartment.

CAMERA HOLDS...AFTER a tense pause, two Washington D.C. PATROLMEN enter the building and move toward Kaye Schilling's apartment. They KNOCK. No response.

They KNOCK again. And while awaiting a response that will never come...

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

41 INT. MULDER'S OFFICE - DAY

The basement office is dark, although a red digital clock reads 9:12 a.m. O.S., keys ENTER a lock and the doorknob turns. The door opens revealing Mulder's form against the hallway light.

He moves to the desk and turns on the lamp. Mulder is dressed in T-Shirt and jeans. He just bailed on his trip and came straight to the office. Mulder looks about for any evidence of Scully's recent presence. Finding none, he moves to the computer and calls up the phone index. He checks a number and dials.

DESK CLERK (V.O.)
Adams Inn.

MULDER
Dana Scully.

There's an excruciating pause.

DESK CLERK (V.O.)
There's no answer.

Mulder hangs up. Not totally...but there's a similar air to the moment you know your "ex" has been out on a date and hasn't come home. As he looks around, considering how he feels about this...Mulder spots something at the head of the desk.

FLOWER PETAL

CAMERA CREEPS toward the quite brown and rolled up flower still on the spot usually reserved for his name plate.

CUT TO:

42 INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Scully is in bed asleep. An ,O.S., authoritative KNOCK on the door awakens her. She sits up, wearing one of Ed's T-shirts. He is not in bed.

43 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - DAY - CLOSE - DOOR

opens, REVEALING two Philadelphia detectives, MOTEN (Mow-tin) and GOUVEIA. (Go-vey-ah) They display their identification.

(CONTINUED)

GOUVEIA

Good morning, I'm Detective Gouveia. This is Detective Moten. May we speak with Edward Jerse?

Even in T-shirt and casual pants, Scully returns to her professional tone.

SCULLY

He's not in. I don't know where he went.

GOUVEIA

Were you here night before last?

Scully shakes her head "no." The officers take a judgemental beat on the woman. She reads it and tenses, irritated.

SCULLY

Is there something I can help you with? I'm with the Bureau.

The two officers take a dubious beat causing Scully to pick up her coat off the chair. The detectives enter, having a look around. As Scully displays her badge, their posture changes.

MOTEN

The resident downstairs, Kaye Schilling was reported missing. Some blood was found in her apartment, not hers...that had some abnormalities.

SCULLY

Such as?

The detectives appear hesitant.

SCULLY

Detectives, I have a medical forensics background. And I assure you any information divulged will be held in strictest confidence.

GOUVEIA

A preliminary toxicology report found this substance in the blood stains. The blood type is A. Her's was O.

Scully looks at the detective's note pad.

43 CONTINUED: (2)

INSERT - NOTE PAD

2C15 H15 N2 CON-(C2H5)2/C8 H7N

RETURN

Scully appears unnerved, a tad scared. She gestures for the detectives' pen.

SCULLY

May I?

The detective hands it over. Scully copies the compound on another sheet from the note pad and rips it off.

MOTEN

Look, here's our card. We would appreciate Mr. Jerse giving us a call when he returns. And if he doesn't...we will.

Scully is rattled but nods, assuredly as the detectives exit. She closes the door and turns toward the laptop on the desk, absently returning her badge to her coat pocket.

At the computer, Scully finds a note.

INSERT - ED'S NOTE

"Dana, went to get coffee and breakfast. Didn't want to wake you. You looked so beautiful. XO, Ed."

SCULLY

sighs, emotions colliding. She checks the computer desktop.

INSERT - DESKTOP

The cursor moves to the internet and CLICKS.

SCULLY

CAMERA INCHES IN as the modem SCREECHES.

CLOSE - COAT POCKET

her FBI identification slides from the pocket, half in/half out.

SCULLY

hurriedly types a URL.

(CONTINU

THE A-FILES "Never Again" 4X15 11/27/98 (white) 51.

43 CONTINUED: (3)

INSERT- MONITOR

HTTP://fbi.lab.rl.fns.gov/forensics/chem.

SCULLY

CAMERA PUSHES IN SLIGHTLY while she waits, nervous. She refers to the note pad sheet of paper while typing the compound. As she looks at the computer screen, her complexion pales...

EXTREMELY CLOSE - MONITOR

A SERIES OF CUTS, just words, however pieced together relays a horrifying diagnosis.

--Ergot

--parasitic fungus (*Claviceps Purpurea*)

--rye and related grasses.

SCULLY

recalling Svo's secret to deep color, she looks down.

SCULLY'S TATTOO

The eyes of the snake are bright fiery red.

SCULLY

returns to the screen for more information.

MONITOR

--Psychotomimetic Drug. (LSD-25)

--Hallucinogenic ergotism.

-- Choreomania. Auditory. Psychotic.

SCULLY

scared, feels her ankle while considering her next move. She then picks up the nearby phone and dials. The PHONE RINGS.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Federal Bureau of Investigation.

SCULLY
Agent Fox Mulder, please.

(CONTINUE)

43 CONTINUED: (4)

She's put on hold. Then, CAMERA INCHES TOWARD her as she appears to reconsider this act. Not with shame, nor with pride...just questioning. As she brings her arm down, returning the receiver to the cradle...

44 INT. MULDER'S OFFICE - DAY

Mulder is at his desk. The phone RINGS, but ceases after one tone. He looks at the phone...considering if it was her.

45 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Scully is deep in urgent thought, her hand still on the phone.

FRONT DOOR

Ed enters, carrying coffee and bagels. He looks toward the desk.

ED'S POV - SCULLY

just catches her hand moving away from the phone.

ED

notes this.

ED
Good morning.

WIDER

Scully turns to him, serious and scared. He reads it immediately.

ED
What's wrong?

SCULLY
Sit down.

He moves to the chair and removes her coat, looking for a place to put it. She grabs, then tosses it on the floor.

COAT

the FBI I.D. wallet, badge not exposed, slips out of the pocket and into plain sight.

RETURN

Scully pulls up a chair and sits.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED:

SCULLY

Some detectives were here.

Ed maintains his demeanor, flashing a puzzled expression.

SCULLY

The woman who lives below you is reported missing. Blood was found in the apartment.

(tense sigh)

I believe, circumstantially, it may be yours.

ED

I was helping her move in and I cut myself.

SCULLY

You'll have to tell that to the detectives. What I'm also afraid of...and this concerns both of us, is that an ergot alkaloid was found in the blood. That's why I believe it was yours.

Ed tries to follow, sensing more to come.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

Ergot is a parasite that lives off of rye and related grasses. Svo said he used rye somehow in his ink. If this is true, we may be subject to hallucinogenic ergotism. Aural, visual...dangerous... hallucinations and behavior.

CAMERA EASES IN ON ED. He looks to Scully, a woman, a person he can trust. He begins to break down, sweating...

SCULLY (CONT'D)

Easy, Ed...we'll have to go to the hospital and be tested.

ED

I don't...need that, Dana.

SCULLY

I believe it may be why I thought the snake was squeezing my ankle.

Ed shakes his head.

(CONTINUED)

45 CONTINUED: (2)

SCULLY

We need to know.

ED

I do know. I'm telling you, it's not some chemical. Its such a relief to be able to tell someone...I hear it...in my head... only deeper. It's not a chemical. She talks to me...

This should be delivered with a maintained intensity with the focus and sincerity of a delusional schizophrenic. Scully tenses as she listens, careful not to give away her mounting anxiety.

ED (CONT'D)

She hates women. My wife, my boss, all of 'em. She's so jealous, Dana. She didn't want me to have you. She tells me to do things... I don't want to, but...she controls me...but I believe you made her go away...so we don't have to go...

SCULLY

Ed...we're going to get help. Wait here. Alright? We'll go together.

Ed eases, not committing to agreement but not fighting it.

Scully heads toward the bedroom, picking up her coat. The wallet drops out and she retrieves it, returning it to her pocket.

CAMERA CREEPS IN ON ED, an unsettling calm before...

BETTY (V.O.)

Who did she call?

Ed closes his eyes as if that could keep out the voice.

BETTY (V.O.)

Who did she call...Eddie?

He slowly turns toward the phone.

46 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Scully puts on her shirt, not bothering to tuck it in.

47 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Ed picks up the phone.

48 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Scully hurriedly puts on her shoe.

49 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - DAY - CLOSE - "RE-DIAL" BUTTON
is pressed.

ED

listens to the RINGING.

50 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Scully puts on the other shoe.

51 INT. ED JERSE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The PHONE, O.S., RINGS.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Ed freezes.

BETTY (V.O.)
Dana Scully, please.

ED
Dana Scully, please.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
One moment...

Ed slowly hangs up the phone.

SCULLY

hustles into the room, putting on her coat.

SCULLY
Alright, let's go down...

Suddenly, Ed APPEARS IN FRAME and grabs her! Violently driving her into the wall, while holding her in a head lock.

(CONTINUE)

51 CONTINUED:

BETTY (V.O.)
NEVER AGAIN!

ED (V.O.)
NEVER AGAIN!

Scully bites the restraining arm. His grip is loosened and she breaks free. He makes a quick move to block the front door. Scully darts away down the hall.

52 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Scully races into the bathroom, locks the door and quickly opens the drawers searching for a weapon, finding a pair of scissors.

BAM! The door SMASHES open! Wood splinters fly. Scully turns. Defending herself, she cuts his forearm.

Ed recoils as she pushes him aside, racing out the door. As she passes, however, he swipes at her and connects to the back of her head.

53 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Scully loses consciousness. Her limp body falls to the floor.

54 INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Homicidal, Ed storms into the bedroom and begins pulling the sheets off of the bed.

BETTY (V.O.)
Another woman in my bed! BURN
the sheets, lover. BURN HER!

55 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Scully lies on the floor. A sheet is thrown over her. As Ed rolls her into the sheet, CAMERA PUSHES INTO SCULLY catching a glimpse of the fact the scissors are tucked into the sheets.

CUT TO:

56 INT. BASEMENT - DAY

A reprise of the ANGLE in which Ed brought Ms. Schilling into the basement. Ed is cautious and more hurried than the earlier murder. He lowers the body onto the stairs, dragging it down the steps into the basement.

With effort, dripping with sweat and bleeding from the tattoo, Ed drags the body toward the incinerator. He opens the door.

INCINERATOR

Flames whip past the charred skull of his earlier victim.

THE BODY IN THE SHEETS

moves, slowly, then increases the struggle to get free.

ED

turns, sees...

BETTY (V.O.)

Come on, baby...do it for me.

As Ed makes a move toward Scully, the sheets tear away, ripping, as Scully drives upward in one motion, stabbing him in the bicep, near the Betty tattoo. Ed recoils toward the incinerator.

Scully scuttles back against the wall, dizzy...

SCULLY

ED, THIS ISN'T YOU...GET
CONTROL...TAKE CONTROL!

ED

CAMERA SWIFTLY PUSHES IN AS he is frozen by Scully's orders. To combat her...

BETTY (V.O.)

Go on, Eddie...it's good to lose
control once in awhile.

The CAMERA MOVE COMPLETES as Ed struggles to regain control of himself. He SCREAMS, gathering the strength to THRUST his right arm all the way into the incinerator.

SCULLY

reacts, horrified and is immediately on her feet, racing toward Ed. She tries to pull him away, but with his left hand pushes her back. He continues to SCREAM.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

INCINERATOR

The Betty tattoo burns in the flames. (Oh, please BS&P!)

WIDER

Finally, the pain is great and Ed collapses to the floor, unconscious. His arm is charred, scalding burns tearing the skin, all the way through the epidermis. The Betty tattoo has been burned away.

Shocked, Scully is momentarily frozen by the events. Her breaths are deep and horrified. CAMERA MOVES ACROSS HER FACE, DOWN along her body and STOPS on her permanent memorial...the snake, eating its own tail. A cycle about to begin anew...

DISSOLVE TO:

57 INT. MULDER'S OFFICE - DAY

CAMERA IS LOW ON THE FLOOR of an EMPTY FRAME. After a beat, Scully's shoes ENTER and hold in the office threshold. CAMERA CRANES UP to REVEAL SCULLY taking in the office. Her face displays remnants of facial lacerations and contusions, about a week old.

Mulder appears behind her, continuing into the office.

MULDER

Welcome back. You look a lot better than you did in the hospital. Nice tat, by the way.

She eyes him reacting to the chilly reception.

WIDER

Mulder moves to the X-Files and pulls a couple cases.

MULDER

And congratulations! Second time you've personally made an X-File.

She enters the room. As he sits behind the desk and opens a file, referring to it.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Ed Jerse is in custody at the St. John's Burn center in Philadelphia.

(more)

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED:

MULDER (cont'd; CONT'D)

Traces of ergot were detected in his blood, as in yours, but not to a degree that should create Hallucinogenic ergotism. He'll undergo psychiatric evaluation after recovering from burn trauma.

Scully moves to the desk and sits before it, as usual.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Comrade Svo's been shut down and is under investigation for connections with, my friend, Pudovkin. File closed.

(beat)

Shame too, I was going to have an "NY" tattooed on my ass to commemorate the Yankees World Series victory. Better late than never.

Scully doesn't react to him, rather she eyes the long dead flower petal, now besides the returned "Fox Mulder" name plate.

Mulder sighs, knowing he's come down too hard. In fact, this is not how he wanted to welcome her back. But he is troubled by her actions. At this point, it feels the best thing is to return to work. He opens another file.

MULDER

So...the field office in Dallas is receiving reports of an image of a missing child appearing on a blank billboard outside of Arlington...

He stops, eyes toward the file. She continues to look at the flower petal. He appears flustered, unable to ask or wondering if this is the right time. Finally, he seems to blurt, softly...

MULDER

All this over a desk?

He looks to her, but she doesn't look back. As she takes the petal back into her hand, the only explanation she cares to give at the moment is...

SCULLY

It's my life, Mulder.

(CONTINUED)

57 CONTINUED: (2)

MULDER

But it's...

Returning his focus to the file, he cannot complete the sentence. She looks up to him and after a beat, he looks up to her. He doesn't have to finish the thought for her to know what he was going to say.

WIDER

With only the desk lamp on, the two agents look to one another. If it were ever going to happen, it would be now. As they maintain the silence...

DISSOLVE TO:

58 INT. TATTOO YOU - DAY - WALL OF FLASH

THROUGH THE DISSOLVE, CAMERA MOVES ACROSS tattoo designs mounted on a wall. A LEGEND APPEARS: "EL CAJON, CALIFORNIA." A Young MAN, 21, ENTERS FRAME looking for an image to place under his skin. O.S., a female VOICE offers a suggestion...

VOICE (O.S.)

Are you man enough for this one?

The young man turns around, looking for the source of the voice. Across the room, a FEMALE TATTOO ARTIST works on a customer. Assuming she spoke, he moves in for a closer look at the design in question.

CAMERA MOVES WITH HIM to discover, amongst all the current popular flash, a design that will, unfortunately, never fall out of fashion...

As the frozen Betty tattoo FILLS FRAME, seductively winking INTO CAMERA...

FADE OUT: