

THE X-FLIES: "SASQUATCH"

by

Sarah Beach

Sarah Beach
1834 N. Harvard Blvd. #4
Los Angeles, CA 90027

323-632-1786

slbeach@scribblerworks.us

Registered WGAw

TEASER

FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST -- NIGHT

A bright full moon sails in the sky. The fingers of tree tops, claws of tree branches, try shredding it.

SHUSHING WIND, CREAKING WOOD -- THE FOREST PRIMEVAL.

SUPERSCRIPT: PACIFIC NORTHWEST FOREST

RUSTLING IN THE BUSHES, FOOTSTEP CRACKING ON A TWIG.

PAN DOWN from tree tops to a pale winding band of dirt road, seen from GROUND LEVEL THROUGH BUSHES.

The branches are parted briefly by an unseen hand, then they settle back in place.

POV creeps closer to the road.

Headlights of a stopped BEAT-UP PICKUP pour down the dirt road. TWO DARK FORMS stand by one of the headlights.

ANGRY VOICES leak through the CREAKING OF THE TREES.

ZEIGLER

Come on, Mick. What's the delay?
We know where we are -- now.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - PICKUP -- NIGHT

A Mutt and Jeff pair. MICK LESHER, short but hefty. DON ZEIGLER, tall and thin. They're in heavy jackets and jeans.

Leshner flips a map over in the headlight, glancing down the road comparing positions.

Zeigler shoots anxious glances at Leshner and then back up the road. He's restless, like he has itching powder in his shoes.

LESHER

Oh, quit complaining, Zeig. We might as well check this slope. You know Hennessy is itching to clear it.

ZEIGLER

(disgusted)
Hennessy.

BUSHES RUSTLE. A FAINT HOOT. A SNAPPING TWIG.

Zeigler jumps and shoots another anxious look at the dark trees.

Leshar sees Zeigler's anxiety and sneers.

LESHER

Don't tell me you're dumb enough to buy that old story. There's only Hermit Dermot up here.

Zeigler's eyes throw contempt at Leshar.

EXT. FOREST - NEARER TO THE TRUCK -- NIGHT

WE SEE the silhouette of the truck, the glow of the headlights through branches. The shape of a dark arm pushes down a branch for a clearer view.

Zeigler's agitated movements cast twisty shadows in the headlights. Leshar still checks the map.

Their voices carry across the distance.

ZEIGLER

You don't know everything. You're still new around here, Leshar.

LESHER

New? I've been here three years!

ZEIGLER

(laughs bitterly)

You think that's long?

The pair get back into the pickup.

INT. PICKUP -- NIGHT

Leshar tosses the map on the dashboard and starts the truck.

LESHER

Long enough to hear all the silly local lore.

Zeigler's glance asks "Silly?" Leshar catches it as the truck moves.

LESHER (CONT'D)

Oh, come on. You're not going to say you believe in--

TWO LARGE DARK SHAPES run out of the forest, into the headlights and out of them.

ZEIGLER

Look out!

WHAM! The Vehicle hits something, bouncing over it.

Leshar slams on the brakes.

LESHER

What the hell was that?

Zeigler grabs a flashlight from the floor. He throws himself out of the truck.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- NIGHT

Leshler hops out. His flashlight beam waves around as he rushes to the back of the truck.

Zeigler stands at the back of the vehicle, frozen. The flashlight beams cast eerie light upwards on the faces of the men.

LESHER

So what is it, Don?

He reaches the back of the Pickup. He aims his light where Zeigler's is. His eyes follow.

CLOSE UP ON LESHER: ASTONISHMENT, DISBELIEF.

AN ANGUISHED HOOTING NEARBY.

Zeigler whirls toward the sound.

WHOMP! A LARGE SHAPE smashes Zeigler to the ground.

Leshler SCREAMS - and the scream cuts off abruptly.

A FLASHLIGHT FLIPS THROUGH THE AIR.

CAMERA POV: RUSHING, CRASHING THROUGH MOONLIT UNDERBRUSH.

SOUND FX: BRUSH AND BRANCHES BREAKING. THE WAILING HOOTING FADES AWAY.

The flashlight lands by the indentation of tire tracks.

WHIMPERING.

INT. PICKUP -- NIGHT

Leshler yanks open the passenger door and shoves in Zeigler's body.

He races around and scrambles into the vehicle. SLAMS the door shut.

He fumbles starting the truck. He's badly bashed. Blood runs down his face.

AN ANGRY BEARDED MAN'S FACE suddenly presses against the door window for an instant. LESHER YELLS.

CRASH! The window beside Leshler is an instant spiderweb.

He YELLS again and guns the vehicle.

LONG SHOT OF THE FLASHLIGHT ON THE ROAD. A LONELY SPOT OF LIGHT IN THE DARK. PULL BACK.

The light gets smaller and smaller. Then---

THE LIGHT GOES OUT.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. MAIN INTERSECTION OF MERIWETHER -- DAY

Small buildings huddle around a crossroads. Beyond it, trees cloak mountain slopes, crowding the "civilization", trying to overrun it. Not a choice vacation spot.

SUPERSCRIPT: MERIWETHER, WASHINGTON

EXT. GAS STATION -- DAY

A new model car rolls into the Gas Station and stops. It's a sharp contrast to peeling paint and faded signs. Sunlight flashes on the window as the driver's door opens.

MULDER gets out of the driver's side and stretches. He reeks of boredom. His suit and coat are definitely out of place here.

SCULLY emerges, business-like, from the other side. She glances at Mulder. He's staring at the treeline. She gives a faint smile, shakes her head, and goes into the Gas Station.

An SUV rolls past, the DRIVER, A STUNNING WOMAN stares at Mulder. A come-hither smile.

He notices, and a smile seeps out of him.

SCULLY (O.S.)

Mulder!

He loses the smile and turns toward Scully.

She's back at her door, talking over the roof of the car.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

It's not far. He says it's a quarter mile down the road.

Mulder nods, disgruntled. He gets back in the car.

INT. RENTAL CAR -- DAY

Scully gets in. She's amused by his sullenness.

The car rolls back onto the road.

SCULLY

Mulder, what's the matter with you?
I thought you'd be overjoyed to get
a case like this from Skinner.

MULDER

Scully, you know he only gave us
this ... case as a favor to his buddy.

SCULLY

Aren't you the least bit intrigued
by the local lore Sheriff Kronsky
included in his report? Not even
tantalized by the evid--

He pounces.

MULDER

You know how easy it is to manufacture
fake evidence of that sort!

(bitterly)

Remember Big Blue's footprints?

She smothers a laugh and keeps her voice serious.

SCULLY

I thought you were the one who wanted
to believe.

He throws a hostile glance at her.

MULDER

It's a waste of our time.

She shakes her head slightly: stubborn, that's what he is.

The car stops in front of a smallish cinderblock building
with the sign "SHERIFF'S OFFICE", joined next door to the
"MERIWETHER CLINIC."

EXT. MERIWETHER SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- DAY

CAMERA POV PULLS BACK AND UP, PAST THE POWER LINE TO THE
BUILDING - WITH A LARGISH BRANCH HANGING OVER IT, DANGEROUSLY
CLOSE.

The agents get out of the car.

SCULLY

You know, I think you're put out
because you didn't choose this case.
A man is dead, Mulder.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- DAY

DEPUTY SLATER, a crusader crew-cut in his 30s, looks up,
amazed at the City Folk, when Scully and Mulder walk in.

SCULLY

We're here to see Sheriff Kronsky.

SLATER

No kidding?

SCULLY

We're FBI agents Scully and Mulder.

SLATER

No kidding?

MULDER

Sheriff Kronsky is expecting us.

Scully glances at Mulder, who mouths Slater's response with the Deputy.

SLATER

No kidding?

SHERIFF KRONSKY bursts out of his office. Burly, in his late 40s, hard as the surrounding mountains. He gives Slater an irritated glance.

Scully extends her hand.

He grinds to a halt, surprised - and charmed - by her petite efficiency. He grows a genuine, warm smile for her.

HIS HUGE HAND ENVELOPS HERS.

Scully likes him: a faint smile starts.

Mulder clears his throat.

Scully falls back to business and lets go of Kronsky's hand.

SCULLY

Dana Scully. This is Special Agent Fox Mulder.

The handshake between the men is matter of fact. Mulder's grumpiness still cloaks him.

KRONSKY

Dale Kronsky.

He waves a hand toward the Deputy.

KRONSKY (CONT'D)

My deputy, Marco Slater.

MULDER

No kidding?

Scully jabs him in the ribs with her elbow.

MULDER (CONT'D)

We read your faxed report on the plane. What is it you think we can do? After all, your witness did see a man at the scene. You know the locals. We don't. As for the body, the description could fit an animal attack.

KRONSKY

(bristling)

You can't have read the report very thoroughly if you think that's all there is to this.

Mulder starts to argue, but Scully cuts him off.

SCULLY

Your report mentioned a footprint. I assume you took a cast of it? Perhaps we can start by looking at that.

Kronsky's smile reappears as he glances at her.

KRONSKY

Yes, of course. This way.

He leads them into his office, his attention all on Scully. Mulder rolls his eyes as he follows.

CLOSE UP ON PLASTER CAST OF AN ODD BARE FOOTPRINT: 18 INCHES LONG AND VERY WIDE.

INT. KRONSKY'S OFFICE -- DAY

It's not much more than a cubicle, but it is private. An Area Topographic Map covers one wall.

The trio crowds the desk, where the plaster cast lies. Kronsky doesn't mind the forced proximity to Scully.

KRONSKY

This was near the spot where Leshar said they were attacked.

Mulder stares at it, bored.

Scully frowns at it. She measures the size by the span of her hand. She traces the shape with her finger.

Mulder's interest perks up a bit.

MULDER

Did you find any other prints?

Kronsky shakes his head. He opens a drawer and takes out a large plastic evidence bag, with a crushed flashlight in it.

KRONSKY

Just this.

Skepticism returns to Mulder's face. He opens his mouth to dismiss the flashlight.

Scully cuts him off again. She gives Kronsky an apologetic smile. Kronsky warms to her again.

SCULLY

We're going to need a place to stay.

Kronsky nods. He hands Scully a large envelope.

She pulls out some autopsy photos and the report, nods. She shoves them back in while Kronsky talks.

KRONSKY

There's Ziggy's.

MULDER

Ziggy's?

KRONSKY

Yeah. Motel. Run by Don Zeigler's wife Janine.

MULDER

Ziggy's.

Mulder cocks an eye at Scully.

She finds nothing funny at all.

SCULLY

Ziggy's.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- DAY

Scully and Mulder are barely out the door. Words burst out of Mulder. Scully's looking at the autopsy photos again while he's spouting off.

MULDER

Scully, what are we doing here?
That flashlight looks like a car
rolled over it. You call that
evidence?

He storms around the car and jerks open his door.

MULDER (CONT'D)

I told you this is all a waste of our time. This is a simple accident investigation, not a Bureau case - let alone an X-File. A faked footprint that wouldn't satisfy a junior high school prankster--

Scully cuts him off, waving the autopsy photos at him.

SCULLY

Mulder, this dead man was at least as tall as you are. But the bones of his shoulders are crushed by a downward struck blow. Are you going to try and tell me a bear could do that?

EXT. WOODS AND BRUSH ACROSS THE ROAD FROM SHERIFF'S OFFICE --
CONTINUOUS

WE SEE Scully and Mulder through branches, their voices carrying across the distance.

SCULLY

Besides, Mulder, there are no claw marks on him. Is that consistent with a bear attack?

BRANCHES ARE PUSHED ASIDE.

A FAINT RUSTLING - someone's watching the agents.

MULDER

Well....

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

From Scully's side of the car, WE SEE a truck with "Hennessy Logging" on it roll slowly by. The DRIVER scopes out the agents. He's bearded... We're not sure it's the face we saw at Leshar's window, but we're not sure it's not.

Scully jams the photos and report pages back in the envelope.

SCULLY

I just want to solve this. Something killed that man.

Mulder's humor breaks out.

MULDER

Some thing, Scully? Is this a conversion?

She gives him a sour look and gets in the car.

Across the road BUSHES RUSTLE. Mulder glances over, frowns briefly, then shrugs. He gets in the car.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE -- DAY

The agents enter, glancing around. The walls look like they're tired of standing up all day. Scully grimaces at the decor.

Mulder smiles brightly across the registration desk.

Then we see her: JANINE ZEIGLER is the stunning woman who drove past the Gas Station.

MULDER

We need two rooms. I'm Agent Fox
Mulder and this is Agent Scully.
We're with the FBI.

Janine looks him up and down, ignoring Scully. She warms up to him. All woman. All sarcastic.

JANINE

Like, gosh. What brings you to this
backwoods hell-hole?

Scully's eyebrows go up at the bitterness in Janine's voice.

MULDER

We're investigating your husband's
death.

Scully's gaze shifts to Mulder, surprise at the "we".

JANINE

About time. Like, I can't get out
of this dump until that's settled.

Scully's tired of the hobnobbing.

SCULLY

Like, our rooms?

EXT. MOTEL ROOM DOORS -- DAY

Side by side doors. Scully and Mulder unlock them.

MULDER

So what are you going to do next?

Scully pauses. Cool regard.

SCULLY

What happened to "we"?

Mulder's expression goes sheepish. Scully's ticked.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

You know something, Mulder? You've been chasing aliens and monsters for so long, you're forgetting there is such a thing as murder. No conspiracies. No alien invasions. Just murder.

MULDER

Is this a murder?

SCULLY

Well, it was no animal attack. You tell me.

She turns back to her door.

EXT. THICKET NEAR THE CORNER OF THE MOTEL -- CONTINUOUS

Branches part to give us a view of the agents at their motel doors -- about 20-25 yards away. But we can hear them clearly.

MULDER

Okay, okay. I'll apply myself to it. Murder. No Bigfoot hunting or debunking.

She pauses. He notes it.

MULDER (CONT'D)

What? You actually believe that plaster cast? You?

Not if she can help it. All business again.

SCULLY

After lunch, you interview the widow. I'll talk to Leshar.

The branches settle back into place.

MEDIUM CLOSE ON MULDER AND SCULLY.

Mulder's grin escapes the sullens.

MULDER

Gee, Scully. You, like, give me all the hard jobs.

She gives him a look of mock disgust and enters her room. The door closes behind her.

He smiles at the blank panel, then goes into his room.

INT. LESHER'S HOUSE - ENTRYWAY -- DAY

A ROTUND NURSE opens the door to Scully. Envy reeks from the woman as she looks over the trim agent. She blocks the doorway.

Scully holds up her identification.

SCULLY

FBI Special Agent Dana Scully. I called about interviewing Mr. Leshar.

NURSE

Humph.
(she steps back to
let Scully in)
Living room.

She leads the way.

INT. LESHER'S LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Scully halts in the doorway, quickly concealing a startled reaction.

The room is a picture of paranoia. All windows are bare of curtains or blinds. All the lamps are on. All the chairs are grouped in the center facing outward - except for a sofa along a wall with no windows.

Leshar, a bandage round his head and an arm in a sling, sits staring out the windows.

Scully steps around in front of him.

SCULLY

Mr. Leshar? I'm Agent Scully from the FBI. I'd like to talk to you about the attack.

He frantically tries to see around her.

LESHER

Get out of my way! I have to see!
You're blocking me!

Scully steps aside, glancing at the Nurse in the doorway.

The Nurse shrugs.

NURSE

When his view is block, he gets agitated. Really agitated.

Scully nods slowly and turns back to Leshar.

SCULLY

Mr. Leshar. What can you tell me about that evening?

Finally he glances at her, frowning, afraid.

LESHER

They're watching. All the time. Watching.

He gestures her to lean closer, so she does.

LESHER (CONT'D)

And he knows, too. He helps them.

SCULLY

He?

LESHER

Dermot. The Hermit. Up on the mountain.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE - MANAGER'S OFFICE -- DAY

A room behind the registration desk, which is visible through the open door. It's as cheaply furnished as possible.

Janine guides Mulder into the office, gesturing toward the sofa.

JANINE

(very sarcastic)

There's, like, not much to see up here, is there, Agent Mulder?

He perches on the beat-up sofa, smoothing down his tie. Janine sinks into a lounging pose at the other end of the sofa, showing off her body.

MULDER

Not unless you like trees.

Janine snorts. Mulder cocks a curious glance at her.

MULDER (CONT'D)

That was your husband's interest, wasn't it? Environmental issues? That's why he was up on the mountain that night, wasn't it?

JANINE

Like, you know, they had this big crusade. He and his pals. They're, like, all screwy about Hennessy Logging. Ziggy and Leshar and Slater and their gang.

MULDER
You didn't sympathize with the cause?

JANINE
Sympathize? We're, like, talking
about trees!

She looks Mulder over and licks her lips.

He keeps his cool.

MULDER
Is his name on the property title to
this motel?

JANINE
(bristling)
You, like, makin' me a suspect? I
was here. All day and night.

MULDER
That wasn't my question, Mrs. Zeigler.

She leans toward him.

JANINE
Call me Janine.

Scully sticks her head in the doorway.

SCULLY
There you are, Mulder. I need to
talk to you.

Janine flops back, put out.

Mulder gets up.

MULDER
We may have more questions later,
Mrs. Zeigler.

She gives him a bedroom smile.

JANINE
Janine. Yeah. Whatever.

Mulder and Scully go out, closing the door behind them.

Janine snatches up her phone and waits impatiently after she
punches a number.

JANINE (CONT'D)
It's me We, like, have to talk.

EXT. MOTEL -- DAY

As they come out of the Motel Office, Scully gives Mulder a mocking glance.

SCULLY
Like ... Janine?

He gives her a warning look.

MULDER
So what do you want me for?

Parked beside their rental car is Kronsky's Sheriff's truck. He's leaning against the front end. He pushes away from it as the FBI agents approach.

SCULLY
I want to look over the site.

Mulder halts at the driver's door of the rental as Scully heads to the passenger side.

SCULLY (CONT'D)
Sheriff Kronsky's going to show us
the way.

Kronsky's at her door, opening it for her. Over the roof of the car, Mulder gives Scully a mocking look.

KRONSKY
Call me Dale. Just follow me.

INT. RENTAL CAR -- DAY

Mulder and Scully settle in. Mulder glances at her with a world of questions he's not about to ask, except for--

MULDER
Dale? No kidding?

Now she gives him a warning glance.

The Sheriff's truck pulls away and they follow.

EXT. LESHER'S HOUSE -- DAY

The front door opens a narrow crack and Leshar slides out. He glances around anxiously.

He dashes to the car parked in front and jumps into it.

SKREECH. The car peels away from the curb, fishtailing as it speeds away.

The Nurse runs out the door and stares up the road after the disappearing car.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- DAY

Shadows lengthen across the road. The Sheriff's truck and the rental car bump along the mountain forest road. The trees crowd close.

MULDER (V.O.)

So tell me again. Why are we up here? I mean, the intellectual prowess evident in this town shouldn't be able to stump even Sheriff Kronsky's powers of deduction.

SCULLY

I want to look at the site. Leshner claimed he was being watched.

MULDER

Did you learn anything from him?

SCULLY

Not much. The experience seems to have unbalanced him.

Mulder looks questioningly at her: unbalanced?

She smiles ruefully.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

You'll be happy to know, Mulder, that I've finally encountered someone more paranoid than you. Perhaps even more paranoid than the Lone Gunmen.

MULDER

No kidding?

She looks daggers at him.

EXT. DERMOT'S MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

The daylight is beginning to fade.

The cabin is a shabby, nearly dilapidated structure. But there is a wood pile stacked along one wall.

Leshner's car pulls up near it and Leshner tumbles out. He opens the trunk and yanks out a gas can.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- DAY

The Sheriff's truck stops and the rental pulls up behind it. The agents and the Sheriff get out.

KRONSKY

It was just up ahead.

Scully nods and follows him to the spot. Mulder follows behind her.

MULDER
It's getting dark, Scully. What do you expect to find?

SCULLY
I want to see the territory. If Leshar hadn't been injured, I'd suspect him. He had opportunity.

They catch up to Kronskey.

KRONSKY
It was here that it happened.

Mulder looks around skeptically.

MULDER
Trees. Not much else.

Kronskey nods.

KRONSKY
Hennessy owns this section.

SCULLY
Sheriff--

KRONSKY
(with a warm smile)
Dale.

She returns a faint smile, conscious of Mulder's scrutiny.

SCULLY
Dale. Does the name Dermot mean anything to you?

His smile goes away.

KRONSKY
Who mentioned Dermot?

Scully's about to answer, when----

A TERRIFIED SCREAM - A DISTANCE AWAY.

They all look up the road, in the direction of the scream.

ANOTHER SCREAM, SUDDENLY CUT OFF.

KRONSKY (CONT'D)
Dana, you and your partner wait here.
I know these woods. You don't.

He throws himself into his truck and races up the road.

Dust settles around Scully and Mulder. They glance around and then look at each other.

SCULLY

So. What did Mrs. Zeigler have to say?

MULDER

The men were up here to check on the logging company's--

SCULLY

Is that Hennessy Logging?

MULDER

(nodding)

On the company's compliance with the local forest protection survey.

A beat.

SCULLY

Mulder, she can't possibly have said it that way.

They move to lean against the front end of their car.

MULDER

What do you mean. Like, you don't believe me?

Scully, uncomfortable, worms her way to her next question.

SCULLY

Did she say anything about the local Sasquatch lore?

Mulder doesn't respond. It prompts Scully to a more humorous approach.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

Mulder, I'm surprised at you. No recitation of local legends? No lecture on folklore? Didn't she even mention it?

MULDER

Actually, yes.

SCULLY

And?

MULDER

She didn't have much to say about them. Just that her husband believed the stories.

Scully starts to smile, but--

BRANCHES BREAKING, SOMETHING CRASHING THROUGH THE BRUSH.

Mulder and Scully move to alert stances.

SCULLY

Sheriff Kronsky? Dale?

The noise gets nearer.

MULDER

Sheriff?

No answer, but MORE NOISE OF SOMETHING SCRAMBLING THROUGH THE FOREST.

The agents pull out their guns, ready for anything. Grim.

CLOSE ON THEIR FACES.

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

CLOSE UP ON MULDER AND SCULLY, ANXIOUS.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- NIGHT

Mulder and Scully stand at the ready. Guns aimed at the same point in the brush.

NOISE OF A BODY STORMING THROUGH BRUSH.

Janine bursts out of the forest. She halts at the sight of the agents.

JANINE

What--?

A HUGE MAN, PATRICK HENNESSY, bumps into her from behind. Tall and hefty. He's the one who drove past the Sheriff's Office.

JANINE (CONT'D)

Confound you, Pat! Can't you, like, watch where you're going?

HENNESSY

What's going on here?

MULDER

FBI. Step forward slowly. Keep your hands where we can see them.

Hennesy and Janine comply, but he's still confused.

HENNESSY

FBI?

JANINE

Dense. Didn't you listen? To anything?

Scully holsters her weapon.

SCULLY

Did either of you hear a scream a few moments ago?

Janine looks her over contemptuously.

JANINE

Of course. Like, why else would I be crashing through these stupid trees?

Mulder holsters his weapon. He's about to ask a question when ---

Kronsky's truck rushes down the road and stops, kicking up dirt.

Janine waves the dirt away in disgust.

KRONSKY

Dana! I need you to come back with me! Lesher's hurt!

SCULLY

Lesher?

HENNESSY

Lesher!? On my property?

MULDER

Your property?

HENNESSY

Yeah. Mine.

Kronsky is pulling Scully to his truck.

KRONSKY

Hurry. He's bad.

HENNESSY

Where?

Kronsky looks back, puzzled to see the additional pair.

KRONSKY

Dermot's.

He opens the door for Scully.

She looks helplessly back at Mulder.

SCULLY

You question them, Mulder. I'll join you as soon as possible.

He nods.

The truck doors SLAM and the vehicle wheels away in a rush.

Mulder looks back at Janine and Hennessy skeptically.

INT. COFFEE SHOP -- NIGHT

CLOSE ON MULDER'S SKEPTICAL EXPRESSION.

He's sitting across from Hennessy and Janine.

Janine bristles defiance. Hennessy reeks macho confidence.

JANINE

So Pat and I were, like, having an affair. What of it?

MULDER

Did your husband know?

JANINE

Ziggy?

(she snorts
contemptuously)

He, like, couldn't see the forest for the trees.

Mulder smiles politely at the quip.

Scully comes in, weary. She slides onto the seat beside Mulder.

He glances at her with concern.

She straightens up and puts her professional demeanor back on. She looks Hennessy and Janine over with a hard glance.

SCULLY

I assume you two have been together for the last couple of hours?

JANINE

Of course. What's it to you?

SCULLY

You didn't go up to that cabin then?

HENNESSY

Which cabin? I've got three line cabins off that road.

SCULLY

The one this ... Dermot lives in.

JANINE

Like, why would we bother with him? Dermot the Hermit. The wildman of Meriwether.

Mulder looks interested in this.

SCULLY

So you didn't go anywhere near Dermot's cabin?

JANINE

No! Dirty shack---

Hennesy cuts her off by laying a huge paw over her hand.

HENNESSY

Are you through with us?

Mulder looks at Scully. She shrugs.

MULDER

Where were you when Don Zeigler was
killed, Mr. Hennesy?

Janine stares at Hennesy: she'd never considered the possibility he might have killed her husband.

Hennesy sees the accusation in her face. Shock jolts him.

HENNESSY

I was in my company office! I've
got witnesses.

Mulder nods, but skeptically.

MULDER

Well, we may have further questions.
Don't go too far.

Hennesy and Janine vamoose.

EXT. STREET OF MERIWETHER -- NIGHT

Mulder and Scully stroll out of the Coffee Shop. She's tired.

MULDER

So what do you think, Scully? Motive.
And he's tall enough. And Leshher's
original statement did mention a
bearded man.

She runs a hand through her hair.

SCULLY

Leshher's dead.

Mulder starts to ask a question, but Kronskey's truck pulls up beside them. The window rolls down, and Kronskey leans toward them.

KRONSKY

Dana. I'll get that rock weighed in
the morning.

She nods, slowly.

KRONSKY (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

SCULLY
 (straightening up)
 Yes. Of course. And this Dermot?

KRONSKY
 No one's seen him this evening. But
 we'll find him.

She nods and he drives off.

MULDER
 Rock? What's important about its
 weight?

SCULLY
 Leshner's chest was crushed by a rock.

They continue strolling along the dark road.

MULDER
 So. We're looking for a tall, bearded
 man. Possibly with exceptional
 strength.

SCULLY
 Who leaves 18 inch prints of a wide
 bare foot.

EXT. CALLIE'S GENERAL STORE -- CONTINUOUS

Mulder and Scully stroll toward the area of the store, with
 its bright exterior lights.

POV ACROSS THE ROAD FROM THE STORE, THROUGH BRANCHES.

A branch is pushed aside.

The door of the Store opens and a VERY TALL, BEARDED MAN,
 DERMOT, ducks through the frame. He carries a grocery bag.

Scully and Mulder stop in their tracks.

He's a least 7 feet tall. His long stride swings him past
 them. He glares at them. They turn to watch him lope up
 the street.

THE BRANCHES SETTLE BACK IN PLACE.

CLOSE ON MULDER AND SCULLY.

They look at each other speculatively.

MULDER
 He's tall.

SCULLY

(nodding)

I wonder if his feet are 18 inches long.

Together, they turn to go into the General Store.

INT. GENERAL STORE -- NIGHT

CLUMP, CLUMP OF FOOTSTEPS ON WOOD.

On shelves, almost everything a person could need - but only one of anything, it seems.

Mulder and Scully make their way up a narrow center aisle toward --

CALLIE MacGUIRE.

A round dumpling of amusement. Indefinable age. She perches on a stool behind the old cash register, reading a paperback.

She looks up as Scully and Mulder stop in front of her. She scrutinizes them. A smile breaks out.

CALLIE

You must be the Feds.

She shoots her hand out at them.

CALLIE (CONT'D)

Callie MacGuire.

Scully and Mulder exchange an amused glance.

MULDER

(to Scully)

Small town.

Scully shakes Callie's hand.

CALLIE

Darn tootin' it is. Ain't nothin' goes on I don't hear about.

Scully gives Mulder an "Oh, really?" look. She turns to Callie, all business.

SCULLY

What do you know about Mrs. Zeigler?

CALLIE

Janine? Well, you know all about her and Patrick Hennessy.

MULDER

We do?

Callie cocks a knowing eye at him.

CALLIE

You was just talking to 'em over at
the Coffee Shop.

Scully gives Mulder an amused look.

SCULLY

(to Mulder)

Very small town.

CALLIE

Yeah. Janine's still a newcomer.
Been here five years.

SCULLY

Five years? I wonder how long it
takes to become an old timer.

CALLIE

(chuckling)

You should live so long.

MULDER

And what about the man who was just
in here?

Suddenly, all Callie's good humor vanishes. She bristles
hostility.

CALLIE

My nephew's been with me all day.
Helpin'. What's he to you?

MULDER

We're just asking questions. Does
your nephew have a name?

Callie's ready to pick a fight, but Scully and Mulder just
look at her with their mildest expressions. She unbends a
little.

CALLIE

Dermot Leitner.

Mulder beams his smile at her.

MULDER

Thank you.

The agents turn and walk back out.

EXT. CALLIE'S GENERAL STORE -- NIGHT

Mulder holds the door open for Scully.

MULDER

Dermot.

Scully speculates on his courtesy with the door, but only nods.

SCULLY

The hermit.

MULDER

With a ready-made alibi.

SCULLY

For today.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MAIN INTERSECTION OF MERIWETHER -- DAY

Life, such as it is, rolls by in Meriwether. A Hennessy Logging Truck goes through the intersection.

EXT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- DAY

Scully walks in the door, alone. She's casually dressed.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- DAY

Scully sits at a table with Kronsky and Dermot, the very tall man. Dermot slumps sullen and grumpy in his chair.

DERMOT

I need a lawyer?

SCULLY

We'd just like to ask you some questions. You know that Mr. Leshar was found up at your cabin last evening?

DERMOT

Wasn't there. At Callie's all day. Helping.

Scully leans forward.

SCULLY

Mr. Leitner, something is going on around here. And your cabin--

KRONSKY

Hennessy's cabin.

Dermot stiffens at Hennessy's name. Scully notes it, her eyebrows going up.

SCULLY

The cabin you live in is right in the middle of it.

Dermot looks away from the others. He's not about to talk.

Kronsky sighs heavily. He addresses himself to Scully.

KRONSKY

This isn't getting us anywhere, Dana. Even if he knew something, he probably wouldn't talk.

Scully studies Dermot thoughtfully for a moment.

SCULLY

Where do you stand on environmental issues, Mr. Leitner? You're living in one of Hennessy's line cabins. Do you support his logging methods.

Dermot hunches away from her.

DERMOT

(mumbling)

Stripping the slopes bare. Sloppy reforestation.

SCULLY

(leaning closer)

What was that, Mr. Leitner?

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- DAY

A couple of Hennessy Logging pickups are pulled to the side of a forest road.

TWO LOGGERS have a map spread on their hood. They're trying to get Hennessy to pay attention to their comments.

Hennessy keeps checking his watch. Finally he loses his patience.

HENNESSY

Okay, okay. You guys can't do anything by yourself! I'll go check. Graham, you're in charge here.

Hennessy trudges up a foot trail.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

Neater than Dermot's cabin. Janine's SUV is parked by it.

INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

Spare - except for a bed on one side.

Janine paces back and forth, checking her watch.

INT. SHERIFF'S OFFICE -- DAY

Kronsky hands Scully a cup of coffee.

She frowns at Dermot.

SCULLY

Mr. Leitner.

DERMOT

Dermot.

SCULLY

Very well, then, Dermot. If you share the environmentalists' views on Hennessy's methods, why was Mr. Leshar trying to burn down your cabin?

Dermot flashes a startled look at her, then as quickly looks away.

She sees a weakness and leans in to take advantage of it.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

What did Mr. Leshar know, Dermot?

He holds his silence.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

(taking a chance)

Dermot ... Mr. Leshar told me ...

(almost whispering)

You're helping ... them.

A jolt of fear shoots through Dermot. He's suddenly fidgeting with panic. He looks everywhere but at Scully.

She has no idea of what she's talking about, but she pursues the line.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

He said they were watching him.

Dermot starts mumbling, more to himself than to Scully.

DERMOT

Interfering newcomer. He'd've ruined everything.

Scully and Kronsky watch him, puzzled.

SOUND OF A FRACAS AT THE OFFICE DOOR.

Deputy Slater and Callie are grappling with each other.

CALLIE
(very angry))
Let me through! They have no right!

She breaks past the Deputy and confronts Kronskey.

CALLIE (CONT'D)
You let him go! He's done nothing,
and you know it! He wouldn't hurt a
fly!

Scully stands up to face Callie.

SCULLY
We've just been asking him some
questions, Ms. MacGuire.

CALLIE
Well, you've asked enough! Either
you charge him with something, or
he's walking out of here with me
now!

Scully throws up her hands in resignation.

Callie grabs one of Dermot's hands and hauls him out of the station.

The Deputy shrugs apologetically at Kronskey.

Kronskey smiles ruefully at Scully. Then nods toward his office.

KRONSKY
You wanted to look at the cast again?

She nods. They move into Kronskey's office.

EXT. DERMOT'S MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

The agent's rental car rolls quietly up to the cabin and stops.

Mulder gets out and looks around. He's casually dressed, jeans, athletic shoes, T-shirt under his jacket.

A distance away from the car, a capped gasoline can lies on the ground. Nearby sits a sizable rock.

Mulder checks out the rock, giving it a test push. The weight of it surprises him.

He glances around the area, and starts checking every bare patch of earth, working his way slowly toward the cabin door.

He moves up to the door and knocks.

MULDER
Dermot? Mr. Leitner?

The door CREAKS inward.

Mulder glances around outside, then steps inside.

INT. KRONSKY'S OFFICE -- DAY

Scully and Kronsky huddle over th cast.

Scully peers at it through a magnifying glass.

SCULLY
There's something here.

EXT. FOREST PATH -- DAY

Hennesy trudges down the path, checking the landscape against a topographical map.

He rounds a rock wall into a dark hollow.

Below him, THREE DARK SHAPES - TWO HUGE, ONE SMALLER huddle around a bush. They are indistinct in the shadows.

HENNESSY
Hey!

A STRANGE GURGLING WHISTLE SOUNDS.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- DAY

The Hennesy Logging truck stands on the verge. The two workmen, Graham and his partner, consult the map spread out on the hood.

Their heads jerk up at the WHISTLE, and HENNESSY'S SHOUT.

They run up the path.

EXT. CLINIC -- DAY

Shade trees shelter the door. The branch brushes against the power line leading to the building.

Scully stands by the door, drinking coffee in a styrofoam cup. She frowns at the landscape.

The Hennesy Logging truck barrels up, SCREECHING to a halt, kicking up a cloud of dust.

Graham jumps out and gestures anxiously.

Scully drops the cup. Runs to the truck.

INT. DERMOT'S MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

Mulder steps into a dim atmosphere.

Shelves hold some cans. An ancient wood stove crouches in a corner. A couple of mattresses lie on the floor piled with blankets. A table stands in the center of the space with a stool.

A nail in the doorframe catches at Mulder's jacket.

He pauses to look at it, and notes a knot of hair caught on it. He lifts it off, studying it. He sniffs it, then jerks his head back. His lips curl at the smell.

He pulls out a small plastic evidence bag from a pocket and puts the hair in the bag.

He walks further into the cabin.

HIS CELL PHONE BEEPS.

He takes it out, answering absently as he looks around.

MULDER

Mulder.

SCULLY (Phone V.O.)

Mulder, where are you?

MULDER

Dermot's cabin. Why?

SCULLY (Phone V.O.)

You better get back here. There's been another death. And Mulder--

MULDER

Yeah?

SCULLY (Phone V.O.)

I found something odd on that plaster cast.

MULDER

An odd type of hair?

SCULLY (Phone V.O.)

How did you know?

(pause)

Never mind. Just get back.

BANG! The door slams open. A HUGE DARK SHAPE blocks the doorway.

CLOSE UP ON MULDER - SURPRISE.

INT. CLINIC -- DAY

CLOSE UP ON SCULLY - CONCERN.

She nearly shouts into her phone.

SCULLY
Mulder? Mulder!

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. DERMOT'S MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

CLOSE ON MULDER'S SURPRISED EXPRESSION.

SCULLY (Phone V.O.)
Mulder! What's going on?

A faint smile appears on his face. He raises the phone to his face again.

MULDER
I'll call you back, Scully.

He hangs up.

INT. CLINIC -- DAY

Scully stands with her back to a gurney, with a body on it. On the far side, Kronskey stares grimly down at the body.

Scully glares at the phone in her hand.

SCULLY
Why does he do that?

She jams her phone into her pocket, then turns to face the puzzled Kronskey.

KRONSKY
Dana. What sort of thing could make injuries like this?

She scowls at the body.

SCULLY
I want to talk to Dermot again.

INT. DERMOT'S MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

Mulder steps back into the shadows in the cabin.

Dermot stoops coming through the door. The tall, tall man carries an armful of wood.

DERMOT
Who're you? Whatcha want here?

Mulder pulls out his ID and holds it up. He has the weird experience of having to look way up to Dermot's face.

MULDER
FBI. Fox Mulder.

Dermot moves toward the stove and drops the wood in a box beside it.

DERMOT
Already talked to FBI. Go away.

Mulder doesn't budge. He pockets his ID.

MULDER
Tell me about your visitor.

Dermot whirls back, startled. Then he shuts it away.

DERMOT
Don't get visitors.

MULDER
Why do you live up here? Alone?

DERMOT
Used to it.

He pulls a can of baked beans off the shelf.

MULDER
Five years for manslaughter. Two in solitary.

Dermot drops the can.

MULDER (CONT'D)
I checked up on you.

Dermot picks up the can.

DERMOT
You chargin' me with something?

MULDER
Tell me about your visitor. The big hairy one.

EXT. MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

THE CABIN IS SEEN FROM A DISTANCE, THROUGH BUSHES.

Janine's SUV is still parked by the line cabin. Her face shows through the dusty window. She peers outside, grim. She turns away.

THE SEPARATED BRANCHES SETTLE BACK IN PLACE.

INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

Janine turns away from the window.

A table is pushed against the wall under the window. Janine's purse lies on the quilt-covered bed.

Janine paces back and forth. She checks her watch.

JANINE

Idiot!

She snatches her purse off the bed. She SLAMS out the door.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- DAY

Janine's SUV careens down the bumpy road. Swerving.

INT. JANINE'S SUV -- DAY

She's furious, glaring straight ahead.

The SUV rounds a curve.

TWO TALL, HUGE HAIRY HUMANOIDS RUN ACROSS THE ROAD. WE'RE NOT SURE WHAT WE SAW.

BLEEH! She leans on the horn.

WHAM! A SMALLER SHAPE hits the front of the car. She stomps on the brakes.

JANINE

Oh my God! What was that?

She twists frantically about.

She sees something to one side and SCREAMS.

CLOSE ON THE DOOR WINDOW - THE LOCK POSTS DROP. CHUNK.

SOMETHING DARK SWINGS TOWARD THE WINDOW.

SCREAMING, Janine throws herself down across the passenger seat, covering her head.

SKEESH!

THE SIDE WINDOW TURNS TO SPIDERWEBS ENTIRELY

SKEESH!

THE WINDSHIELD DOES THE SAME.

INT. KRONSKY'S TRUCK -- DAY

The truck bounces up the mountain forest road.

Kronsky and Scully are arguing.

KRONSKY

But Dana! I've never seen injuries like these. First Zeigler, now Hennessy. What other explanation is there?

SCULLY

Have you been stuck in this mountain community so long that you've bought into the local Sasquatch legend, Dale? Just because we haven't yet determined the method doesn't mean a man couldn't have done it.

KRONSKY

What about that footprint, then?

The round a bend and are almost upon Janine's SUV.

SCULLY

Look out!

The truck brakes! The vehicles are nose to nose.

KRONSKY

What in heaven's name?

They both get out.

EXT. MOUNTAIN FOREST ROAD -- DAY

FROM THE BACK END OF THE SUV WE SEE ALL THE WINDOWS FINELY FRACTURED.

Scully walks carefully along her side to the driver's door.

Kronsky stalks up the far side of the SUV, looking into the trees on both sides of the dirt road.

KRONSKY

This is Janine's SUV.

Scully tries to peer into the vehicle. But the fractures prevent her from seeing anything.

SCULLY

Mrs. Zeigler?

Scully tapes on the window. The chips fall away, inside and out.

SCREAMING FROM INSIDE SUDDENLY BURSTS OUT.

EXT. DERMOT'S MOUNTAIN CABIN -- DAY

SEEN AT A DISTANCE, THROUGH THE TREES --

The door opens and Dermot ducks coming out. Mulder follows.

DERMOT

Already talked to that Scully woman.

Mulder gestures for him to get in the car.

MULDER

Well, now you can talk to us both.

POV pulls further and further back into the woods.

EXT. FOREST -- DAY

POV - running through woods, branches whipping past.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- DAY

Scully coaxes Janine out of the SUV.

Janine's in hysterics, sobbing.

JANINE

Huge ... dark ... hit ... something.

Kronsky comes up to Scully.

KRONSKY

I'm going to have to back the truck
up.

Scully nods.

SCULLY

She says she hit something.

He crouches down to look under the SUV.

VERUMPH, A CAR ENGINE SOUND APPROACHES.

Scully pulls out her gun. She aims up the road.

The rental car comes into view and rolls to a stop.

The driver's door opens and Mulder stands up.

He looks at the SUV and the truck and then at Scully.

She puts her gun away.

MULDER

Is this the Meriwether traffic jam?

From behind and below her, Kronsky speaks.

KRONSKY (O.S.)

Dana? You need to see this.

FROM THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE STATION WAGON, GROUND LEVEL.

Scully's and Kronsky's faces peer at a spot between the front wheels.

KRONSKY (CONT'D)

I ask you. What the hell is that?

CLOSE ON SCULLY'S FROWN.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE ON SCULLY'S PUZZLED EXPRESSION.

MULDER (O.S.)

Well, Scully? What is it?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL--

INT. CLINIC -- NIGHT

A dark hairy lump looms in the foreground. The plaster footprint cast sits to one side, by a microscope.

Scully leans over the lump of the small body. She gingerly moves parts of the form apart.

SCULLY

Whatever it is, it stinks to high heaven.

Mulder leans in close beside her. He's bubbling, happy.

MULDER

Scully, many reports describe a very strong odor, unlike known wildlife. A sour penetrating smell.

SCULLY

(absently)

Reports, Mulder?

She starts to reach for a scalpel. Then she registers his tone, and glances at him.

He's watching her expectantly. His "gotcha" smile apparent.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

Mulder, no! You promised!

MULDER

Come on, Scully, you---

MASTER SHOT

Kronsky comes in the door. Dermot sits in a corner.

KRONSKY

Janine finally settled down. Callie's at the motel with her. But it's dark out there. The trees are really creaking. Wind's starting up.

Dermot starts fidgeting.

DERMOT

(mumbling)

Shouldn't have brought it here.

Mulder whirls on him.

MULDER

Shouldn't have brought what, Mr. Leitner?

DERMOT

Just leave them alone!

Mulder stares at him with a faint satisfied smile before turning back to Scully.

MULDER

Well, Scully. What do you make of this?

She's straightening out the specimen.

SCULLY

Bipedal. Mammalian. Binocular vision. Primate formation.

She lifts an arm.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

Opposable thumbs. Broad foot, callused. Seemingly a juvenile specimen--

Dermot shuffles his feet restlessly. Scully, Mulder and Kronskey all look at him.

THE OVERHEAD LIGHTS FLICKER.

Scully looks the question at Kronskey. He nods.

KRONSKY

I'll check.

He heads out the door.

Dermot gets more agitated. Mulder crosses to him, resting a hand on Dermot's shoulder. He's trying to be comforting but Dermot shakes him off.

DERMOT
They're coming.

MULDER
Who's that, Dermot?

KRONSKY (O.S.)
(from outside)
Hey!

A GUNSHOT.

THE LIGHTS FLICKER AND GO OUT.

Moonlight pours in, blue, through the high windows.

Both Scully and Mulder pull out their weapons.

BAMM! The door FLIES open.

A HUGE DARK SHAPE IS FRAMED BY MOONLIGHT.

Scully aims at it. She's closest.

SCULLY
Freeze! FBI!

WHOMP!

Scully goes flying across the room

THUMP!

She hits a wall and slides down to the floor.

SCULLY'S POV: Dark shapes, blurry, backlit by blue light,
all running together.

MULDER
Scully! Scully!

FADE TO BLACK:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

UNSTEADY FLASHLIGHT BEAMS WOBBLING ACROSS THE DARK.

The beams find Scully's face.

MULDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Scully. Scully. Are you all right?

INT. CLINIC -- NIGHT

In the dimness, Mulder kneels down to help her sit up. He feels the back of her head with one hand.

SCULLY
Aow.

She leans forward. Her hand gingerly goes over the back of her head.

SCULLY (CONT'D)
Did someone get the number of that bus?

Mulder lets out a relieved smile. He helps her to her feet.

MULDER
You okay?

She glares at him: Okay? You're kidding, right?

He hands her a second flashlight.

She flashes it into the corner where Dermot sat -- it's empty.

SCULLY
Mulder.

He's flashed his light at the corner where the specimen and cast were. The specimen is gone. The cast is in fragments and dust on the floor.

MULDER
Scully.

They look at the other's point of interest. They look at each other.

MULDER (CONT'D)
Kronsky.

Scully is out the door before Mulder.

EXT. CLINIC -- NIGHT

Scully's flashlight beam sweeps the area. It discovers--
Deputy Slater bent over the body of Kronsky.
He looks up, very shaken.

SLATER

He's dead.

Scully takes it like a blow, then swallows it. She turns away.

Her light hits the branch lying on the fallen power line. She shines the light up at the tree. She frowns at the break.

Mulder's light sweeps around.

MULDER

The Sheriff's truck is gone.

SLATER

Dermot. He came running out after
... after ... them.

Mulder and Scully exchange glances and dash to their car.

EXT. HIGHWAY -- NIGHT

The car races along the highway.

Mulder and Scully argue - of course. Her voice is biting, angry.

SCULLY (V.O.)

Mulder, what you're saying just
doesn't make sense!

MULDER (V.O.)

Scully, I have evidence that the
Sasquatch has been in Dermot's cabin.

SCULLY (V.O.)

(impatient)

If you mean that knot of hair you
were talking about, that's hardly
convincing!

INT. RENTAL CAR -- NIGHT

Mulder casts a skeptical glance at her.

MULDER

It would be enough for Tonto.

She glares at him.

MULDER (CONT'D)

But according to your hypothesis
Dermot did it.

SCULLY

Well... I may not have substantiated
it yet, but he's the most likely--

MULDER

Then who broke into the clinic?

She throws up her hand.

SCULLY

But what you're saying ... It's
outrageous, Mulder.

MULDER

Outrageous, Scully? Is it any more
outrageous or unlikely than an octopus
or camel or manatee?

She stares out her window, her face away from him.

SCULLY

Manatees don't get out of their rivers
and crush people.

MULDER

No. But suppose they did?

CLOSE ON SCULLY -- SHE'S TRYING NOT TO CRY.

Mulder glances at her, realizing what's up.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Dana ... I'm sorry. You liked him,
didn't you?

She takes in a deep breath, and puts away her grief. Her
face becomes a business mask when she looks back at Mulder.

SCULLY

Mulder, you're asking me to believe
that a large animal, sought for
decades -- sought systematically for
decades -- has evaded capture. Not
one single specimen, Mulder.

He grins at her.

MULDER

Who said we were talking about an
animal?

She opens her mouth to argue, then changes her mind.

SCULLY

No. I'm not going to dignify that.

EXT. FOREST ROAD -- NIGHT

The rental car turns onto the dirt road, kicking up dirt.

The headlights pick up settling dust as their car races forward.

SCULLY (V.O.)

Dermot's not far ahead.

INT. RENTAL CAR -- NIGHT

MULDER

Scully, the fossil record has given us many examples of different hominids. You don't deny the existence of Australopithecus? Or Neanderthal? Or Homo erectus?

She shakes her head, reluctantly.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Then why not a Meh-Te, a Yeti, a Sasquatch?

She'll die protesting, no matter what she's seen.

SCULLY

But Mulder, there are fossil records and remains of Neanderthal and Homo erectus. No one's found anything reliable to support the assertion that the Sasquatch actually exists.

MULDER

What about the specimen you were looking at?

SCULLY

I'd barely begun my examination. There's no way now I could reach any kind of conclusion about it. It was badly mangled. It could have been an ape, or ...

MULDER

Or what?

SCULLY

Or a child suffering from an extreme case of hirsutism.

Ahead of the car they can now see the taillights of the truck through the dirt cloud it kicks up.

MULDER

What if it were a juvenile? What if these creatures are wily enough to avoid humans? If they have an intelligence higher than animals, they might be attached to their young, might bury their dead, might be able to reason things out.

SCULLY

Well... it wouldn't take much to be more intelligent than most of the citizens of Meriwether.

The truck ahead pulls over.

EXT. DERMOT'S MOUNTAIN CABIN -- NIGHT

Dermot scrambles out of the truck. He starts to run toward his cabin.

The rental car skids to a halt and both doors fly open.

The agents aim their guns from behind their doors.

SCULLY

Freeze, Dermot! FBI!

He freezes, puts his hands up and turns slowly.

DERMOT

Interfering outsiders. Don't know nothing.

Mulder holsters his gun, and moves away from the car toward Dermot.

MULDER

What don't we know, Dermot? That the Sasquatch came down to the town to get the body of their young?

Shock washes over Dermot's face, and his hands start lowering.

MULDER (CONT'D)

That you're been protecting them for years?

EXT. FOREST, OVERLOOKING DERMOT'S CABIN -- NIGHT

Through branches WE SEE Mulder and Dermot standing in the bright truck headlights.

Scully puts her gun away. She gets a flashlight from the car and closes her door.

SCULLY

What do you mean, Mulder?

THE BRANCHES ARE MOVED APART.

Mulder gestures at Dermot.

MULDER

Dermot. His manslaughter conviction.

He turns back to Dermot.

Dermot slowly backs up toward his cabin, toward the wood pile.

MULDER (CONT'D)

You went to prison for them, didn't you, Dermot?

THE BRANCHES SETTLE BACK IN PLACE.

EXT. DERMOT'S MOUNTAIN CABIN -- CONTINUOUS

SOUND OF RUSTLING BRANCHES.

Dermot looks at the forest area panicked, still backing toward his wood pile.

Mulder and Scully look around to where Dermot's gazing, then back at each other.

Scully moves across the cleared area toward the forest edge. Her flashlight beam sweeps over the tree fringe.

MULDER

What's the matter, Dermot?

DERMOT

Leave them alone. Not a circus act.

Scully starts back toward the men.

Mulder glances at her.

Dermot picks up a length of wood from his pile.

MULDER

(to Scully)

Anything?

She shakes her head. Then she sees Dermot swinging the wood at Mulder.

SCULLY

Mulder! Look out!

WHACK! Dermot hits Mulder from behind.

Mulder crashes to the earth.

Dermot rushes uphill. Scully runs toward him.

Dermot plows into her and she goes sprawling. Her flashlight flies through the air.

DISSOLVE TO:

CLOSE ON A LONG PIECE OF WOOD ON THE GROUND. PAN ACROSS TO A HAND.

The fingers move, digging into the earth a bit.

PAN UP the arm to the shoulder.

A GROAN.

Mulder pushes himself up into a sitting position.

MULDER'S POV: Scully walks toward him, brushing dirt and pine needles off herself.

SCULLY (CONT'D)
You okay, Mulder?

He massages the back of his head.

MULDER
This is not a fun night.

He looks up at her.

MULDER (CONT'D)
What did he hit me with?

She glances at the piece of wood.

SCULLY
Wood. Looks like pine. You're lucky
it was a softwood.

He gives her a pained look: Soft?

She gives him a hand up to his feet.

SCULLY (CONT'D)
So what now, Kemo Sabe?

EXT. MOUNTAINSIDE WOODS -- NIGHT

Scully and Mulder make their way uphill through the woods. Their flashlight beams splashing on the tall dark trunks.

Mulder leads the way up the path. He checks branches of bushes for breakage.

SCULLY

Mulder, what do you hope to achieve by all this? Proving the Sasquatch exist?

He pauses to look back at her.

MULDER

Wouldn't that be enough?

She gives him a skeptical look.

SCULLY

And what about these deaths here in Meriwether? Dermot Leitner--

MULDER

Is protecting them. The Sasquatch.

In disgust she pushes past him.

MULDER (CONT'D)

It makes sense, Scully. If Zeigler and Leshner ran over one of the young of the Sasquatch ... well, it isn't unreasonable for them to attack the men.

SCULLY

And the other deaths?

MULDER

Well, if they've been watching, then---

A SCREAM ECHOES THROUGH THE WOODS.

Scully and Mulder look at each other and then take off up the mountainside toward the sound.

They run through the forest.

BOULDERS COME BOUNCING DOWN THE PATH TOWARD THEM.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Scully! Look out!

The agents dodge the rocks.

EXT. ROCKY SLOPE -- NIGHT

Mulder and Scully come out of the woods to a rocky area. Moonlight makes long shadows.

Half in a pool of darkness, Dermot lies on the ground.

Scully rushes to him. She finds that he's pinned to the ground by a boulder.

SCULLY

Mulder. Help me get this off him.

Dermot stirs and turns his head toward her. His eyes have a hard time focusing.

DERMOT

Didn't understand ... they thought
....

SCULLY

Sssh. I'm a doctor. We'll--

DERMOT

Over. Gone.

He coughs. Mulder pauses, leaning in to listen to Dermot.

DERMOT (CONT'D)

Were my friends. ... But they thought
... thought ... I told you ... Gone.

MULDER

Who? Who's gone, Dermot?

Scully puts a hand on Mulder's shoulder. She shakes her head.

Mulder reaches over to touch the wounded man.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Dermot?

He realizes that Dermot is dead. He stands up.

Scully closes Dermot's eyes.

Mulder starts looking around the area. He sweeps his beam over the rock faces.

Scully stands up, dusting off her hands.

SCULLY

It's over, Mulder.

MULDER

They're around here somewhere, Scully.

She shakes her head, tired.

SCULLY

Mulder.

MULDER

These rocks didn't fall of their own accord. They killed him, Scully.

She looks up at the sky as if to ask for divine help.

SCULLY

Mulder, Dermot Leitner was the most likely suspect in these deaths. He had a criminal record--

Mulder's walking close to the high rock face.

MULDER

Manslaughter.

SCULLY

Whatever. But with his death we've lost our last suspect.

MULDER

Except for the Sasquatch.

SCULLY

We have no evidence to support that assumption.

He finds a crack in the rock face and peers in.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

Mulder, are you listening to me?

He looks back at her, excitement in his eyes.

MULDER

A cave, Scully. Come on.

He starts to edge his way in.

INT. CAVE -- NIGHT

The entrance widens inside. Moonlight surrounds the silhouettes in the wedge entrance.

Mulder steps into the wider area. He swings his light about. Scully joins him.

SCULLY

Phew! What a smell!

She covers her nose with the end of her sleeve.

SCULLY (CONT'D)

Some animal died here.

Mulder moves deeper in, keyed up.

MULDER

Unless it's our big, hairy friend.

Scully looks around, weary. She's had more than enough.

SCULLY

Mulder

MULDER

They're here, Scully. They were here.

She watches him, her expression flat. He taps his nose.

MULDER (CONT'D)

This doesn't lie.

SCULLY

(smiling faintly)

But, by itself, what good is it?
What kind of evidence is an odor?
Mulder, I couldn't tell you what
sort of a source this smell comes
from, let alone put it in a field
report as evidence of any sort.

He circles around the space. Slowly his expression falls.
He ends back in the center.

Scully watches him, a little bit sorry for him.

MULDER

Nothing.

She waits.

MULDER (CONT'D)

They're gone.

SCULLY

If they were ever here.

He pulls himself together. Like it doesn't matter to him.

MULDER

Okay. Let's go.

She weaves a bit from exhaustion. He sees it, and becomes more decisive.

MULDER (CONT'D)

Come on, Scully. Let's go.

He heads out ahead of her.

She turns. And her flashlight slips out of her hand. It rolls away.

Mulder slips out of the cave.

MULDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Scully? You coming?

SCULLY

I'll be there in a minute. I dropped
my flashlight.

She bends down to pick up the flashlight.

CLOSE ON THE GROUND AS THE FLASHLIGHT BEAM HITS A SINGLE
LEAF LYING ON THE GROUND.

CLOSE ON SCULLY, FROWNING.

She picks up the leaf. Then she sees something else on the
ground.

A PARTIAL BARE FOOTPRINT SHAPED LIKE THE PLASTER CAST: IT'S
BEEN PARTLY SWEEPED AWAY.

MULDER (O.S.)

Scully? Are you okay?

She looks around the place again.

A SOFT BRUSHING SOUND.

Scully frowns: is it branches or something else?

MULDER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Scully?

She shakes her head. She lets the leaf drop.

SCULLY

Coming.

As she walks away, the leaf falls on the footprint.

MULDER (O.S.)

What kept you?

SCULLY (O.S.)

Just tired, I guess.

A DARK HAIRY HAND AND ARM REACHES OUT AND PICKS UP THE LEAF.

SCULLY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Let's go.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END