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## GIGER'S SPECIES

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LAUNCHING THE SCI-FI FRANCHISE

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# X-FILES:

## The award-winning hit Fox series debuts

By Douglas Eby

Essentially an extension of THE X-FILES series, rather than a takeoff, the movie will follow upon the final cliffhanger episode of the fifth season, heavily promoted and airing during May's ratings sweeps. Although story material for the movie is not being revealed by the filmmakers, the tone and style are likely to continue the tradition of the TV show, and portray "Credible, believable characters and credible, believable situations dealing with incredible and unexplainable phenomena," as Chris Carter said of the show's mission. In a recent *New York Times* piece (by James Sterngold) Carter said his personal "moral universe was being shaped when Watergate happened. It blew my world out of the water. It infused my whole thinking. I really think the world is spinning out of control. There's no work ethic any more and no real moral code. I'm trying to find images to dramatize that." He also confirmed the emotional importance of his two lead characters in that context: "They're not cynical in a very cynical age. These are two characters who are out of step. They're romantic. If they're naive, so be it." 20th Century-Fox opens X-FILES: THE MOVIE nationwide June 19.

Interviewed on the set, Carter noted that personally he may have concerns about the real government and real conspiracies, that the government is not telling everything, and that those concerns do of course play into developing the stories about the mythical and clandestine X-Files group. But the con-



Scully (Gillian Anderson) and Mulder (David Duchovny) investigate a mysterious bombing of a Dallas office building in X-FILES: THE MOVIE, opening June 19.

spiracy in the movie plot, he said, is not necessarily tied to a real life issue: "It's my conceit. It really plays as a metaphor for feelings about government and the abuse of power generally."

Producing the movie with Carter are Lata Ryan, Daniel Sackheim, and Frank Spotnitz, the script is by Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz; Rob Bowman, one of the series' finest genre stylists, and an alumnus of STAR TREK, directs; cinematography is by John S. Bartley; music is by series composer Mark Snow; production design is by Christopher Nowak; visual effects supervision is by Mat Beck; and effects by Lindala Makeup Effects, Inc., both of whom handles series' chores. Amalgamated Dynamics provides makeup assistance.

As for the craft of going from TV to feature film, Carter finds "the scope and scale is bigger, and we're getting to go places that we wouldn't get to go. But you're still shooting 35 mm, you still have the same problems, just bigger problems. The stumbling blocks are just

making sure you set out with the right scope of the story, of events, making sure you're making something worthy of the big screen. There are a couple of times when I thought THE X-FILES would make a good movie. When I'd seen an episode on a big screen at the Museum of Radio and Television, I thought 'This really translates.' But then, I also realized we'd been doing little movies for a long time for the

small screen, so it's really just taking what we do and applying big movie techniques to it." That attitude about the quality of the series has paid off in numerous awards for the show, plus Emmy, Writers Guild and Directors Guild nominations for Carter himself.

Usually, Carter noted, the TV production allows him to "find his way" to where he knows he wants to go, but with the movie being a followup to the season that has not even been shot yet, Carter said that is "just another problem to solve. I had to set my destination, fix it, and now I'm finding my way there. But it's a little more proscribed. I've had to think a little farther ahead because of the way things are set up. It's not better or worse, it's just different."

Carter stated that the story for the movie was not a matter of selecting from several potential ideas, but "owes everything to the mythology that will have been set up in, by that time, five years of mythology episodes and the conspiracy that Mulder

Finding a clue in a Texas field to an ancient, lethal alien threat and the government conspiracy that seeks to cover-up, aid and abet the otherworldly menace.



# THE MOVIE

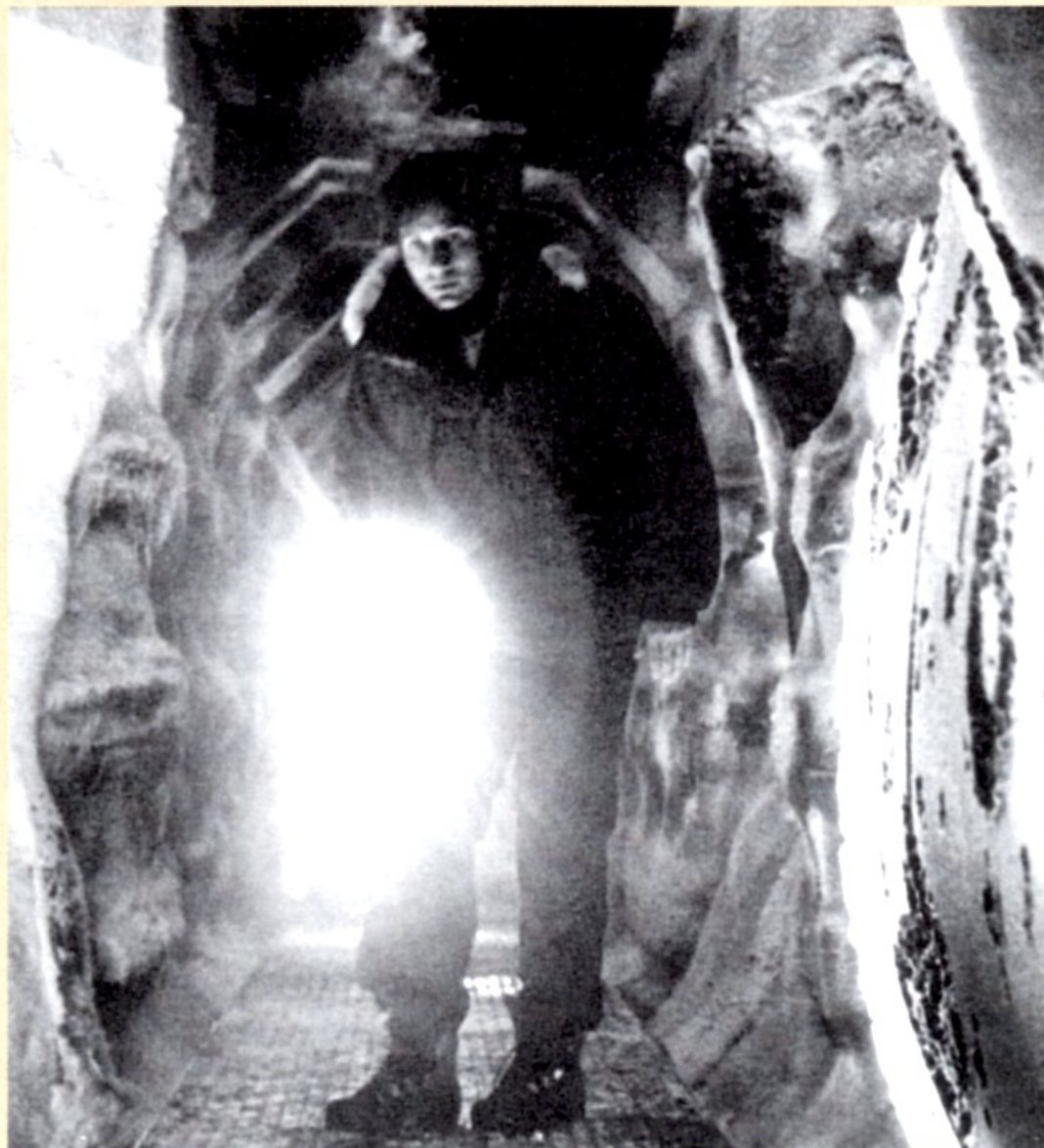
feature film, from producer **Chris Carter**.

and Scully have been trying to penetrate. So I knew that was what it was going to be about. It was just figuring out how to take all the elements I had already shown, and make them add up in a believable, scary way in what was going to be the movie. It wasn't considering plot A, B or C. I really knew what I had to do."

As with the series, Carter made story decisions based on his own reactions: "There will be things that hit us on a visceral level. I've got to every step of the way choose what I think would scare me, and hope it scares others along the way." But rather than using the physical and temporal scope of a movie to reveal things that are conveniently only alluded to in the series before the next commercial break, he noted, "The trick is not slipping or falling into the mistake of trying to satisfy a certain appetite that a big movie tries to satisfy, and not slipping into a horror convention where you show everything, 'slash 'em up, cut 'em up.' X-FILES has done well by showing a little or suggesting a lot. We have tried to keep true to that in the execution of this movie."

The rating target of the movie is PG-13, and Carter said that like with both of his TV series, "I'm not interested in blood; I'm not interested in gore, in violence per se. Although some of those things are part of telling any story like this. So I'm trying to make sure everything is done tastefully, if you will."

Carter said he did not even consider directing the movie himself: "It would have been absolute lunacy to attempt to do it in a responsible way, and the truth is Rob [Bowman] is going to do a better job than I could



Mulder seeks the answer to a long-dormant alien virus in Antarctica in a storyline from sixth season episodes and the cliff-hanger finale airing in May.

have done anyway. He's just a more seasoned director, and has experience with THE X-FILES, and is the guy I wanted doing it from the beginning. He's done 23 episodes, and he's got the ability and the desire."

Carter is reluctant to categorize the movie as a "relaunch" or "second pilot": "If you try to put a label on it, it does it a disservice. I mean, it plays as a movie, and I think the characters have reached a place, as we begin the movie, which is interesting and follows from where they began in the TV series. It's a new place from which to begin, and that's interesting in its own right."

With a degree and longtime experience in journalism, Carter points to ALL THE PRESI-

DENT'S MEN as one of his favorite movies, and one of the reasons he wanted to become a journalist, and the series, and now movie, still allows him some satisfaction that way: "You see a lot of that kind of conspiracy and political thriller kind of story-telling seeping into THE X-FILES, and that owes a lot to that kind of investigative thing that was attractive to me from a while back."

In the tradition of the series and what makes its episodes scary, Carter feels the movie "plays like a government conspiracy, and plays to our fears that we're nuts, that we're being lied to, that we're not being told the whole truth, that we're vulnerable in that what we ingest, what we consume, what we

breathe, what we take in as media consumers, may be bad for us. It really plays to a sense of unease that there may be more going on out there than we know. And that's what interests me, and the way I really believe the world works. I believe it works from selfishness, and every agency and bureaucracy has its own self-interest to perpetuate, and that we are all subject to that."

One of the producers of the original 1993 pilot for THE X-FILES was Daniel Sackheim, and Carter said one of the reasons he hired Sackheim, like others of the crew, is that they got along so well and "he's dedicated to the job. I always try to hire people that put the work above everything. So, he's one of those people, yet he can have a good time. But he's very intense, as am I. Dan's a great director in his own right, so I'd have the eyes of a director, Dan; the eyes of a less experienced director, me, and then Rob Bowman. All of us would be able to look at this with the right perspective." □

Oscar-winner Martin Landau as Kurtzweil, Mulder's father's friend in the State Department, who knows too much.

