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X-FILES: THE MOVIE

David Duchovny and
Gillian Anderson
on their jump to
big screen horror

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Volume 30 Number 2





In the feature film, Mulder and Scully's battle to expose a government conspiracy to cover up an alien invasion, leads the FBI duo to the deserts of Texas (below) and the icy Arctic (above) where they barely outrun an avalanche.



X-FILES: THE MOVIE

Chris Carter transforms his successful series into a big-screen blockbuster.

Filmed with a level of secrecy befitting the conspiracy portrayed in the TV show, the feature-film version of THE X-FILES stars series regulars Gillian Anderson and David Duchovny, along with such recurring faces as Mitch Pileggi, John Neville, and William B. Davis. Newcomers to the world of X include Martin Landau, Blythe Danner, and Terry O'Quinn. Series director Rob Bowman, working from a script by Chris Carter and Frank Spotnitz, helms the film, which opens June 19.

Given the intense fan interest in the series, Carter knew that people would be looking for any pieces of information about the movie, but he never worried that keeping a lid on the project would cast him in the role of the Cigarette Smoking Man: "It would be like a competitive sport, and there would be spies and moles, so you have to develop a counter-intelligence attitude. We've had a couple of situations. There's a picture running right now in

by
DOUGLAS EBY



A government decontamination team moves in to cover up all traces of the alien presence.



Mulder (David Duchovny) meets the Well-Manicured Man (John Neville), one of the kingpins in the conspiracy plot that continues from the show to the movie.

one of the tabloids where someone snuck on, or near, one of our locations and was taking pictures from a window. We tried to block him out—or her—and we were unsuccessful. I don't want to become like a rabid dog about this, but I do want to preserve the element of surprise, and I think everyone who is a fan of THE X-FILES understands that. But I don't want it to become my primary goal, to make sure no one knows what this story is, to the detriment of everything else. The internet now is a gigantic publishing organ, so any time anybody gets something, they can go on the net and everyone can know, presumably."

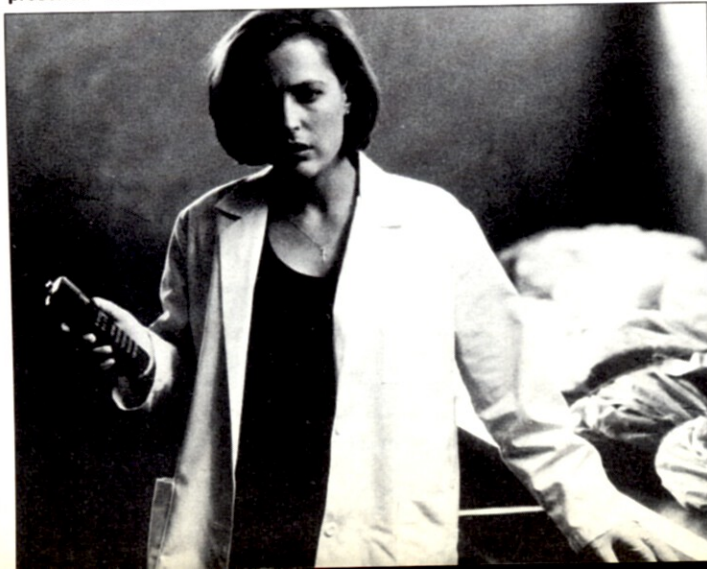
Although the film will be released in June, Carter sees no reason to match the action level of a typical summer movie: "I want it to be true to THE X-FILES, so the elements in it are elements I would use in any X-FILES story, and they aren't bigger just to be bigger or more elaborate just to be more elaborate. I think they have integrity to what we set out to do."

Referring to the more extensive effects in the movie as compared to the show, Carter pointed out, "they take long to do, so even if you wanted to do one, maybe you could afford the elements of it, but you couldn't afford the time it takes to put all those elements together—the refinement process—because you're on such a strict deadline. Here, we have the length of time to do these bigger effects, and they're just more costly on the big screen."

As a writer and co-producer of the movie (with Carter), Frank Spotnitz noted that writing for the series is usually done in a four-act structure, but the movie uses a seven-act structure. The biggest difference between the film and the series, however, is "explaining the movie to new audiences that had never seen the TV show," he said, "while making it work for long-time viewers—paying off five years of having followed the continuing story line faithfully with big revelations, and at the same time making it all understandable to those who had never seen it before."

Spotnitz, who is also co-executive producer of the series, found that development of the script was not as difficult as he thought it would be: "From the beginning, Chris knew where he wanted to end, and this movie is in a sense an ending, but it's also a new beginning for the characters. It's kind of a pi-

Scully (Gillian Anderson)'s medical expertise helps her uncover the alien presence—a virus that has remained dormant in arctic ice for a thousand years.



COVER UP

"There were spies and moles, so you had to develop a counter-intelligence attitude," said Carter of keeping the film secret. "I want to preserve the element of surprise."

lot again. It relaunches everything. It's like a new phase in the lives of THE X-FILES characters. He always had that in his mind, and it's helped us a great deal. We actually came up with the story over a seven- or eight-day period in Hawaii, over Christmas, while we were breaking during the TV story. I think it took us about two days of just talking, all day and night, about where we'd been and what we were going to say and how we were going to get to the place Chris had always imagined we were going to get to. And then it was about five days of actually doing the work, figuring out the sub-actions of the story. We knew what the cliffhanger [episode] would be, but had not written it yet."

The movie does have a beginning, middle, and end, so "even if you've never seen THE X-FILES it will pretty much make sense," Spotnitz said, "but if you have seen it before, things will resonate for you. Part of Chris' strategy from the beginning was, 'Here's where I want to begin and here's where I want to end; I'm not going to force myself to adhere to signposts along the way. Let's pick up found objects as we go, things that are in the newspaper,

things that we can add on.' A lot of the characters from the series are in the film, and a lot of things are going to become clearer about who they are: the abduction of Mulder's sister; the role Mulder's father played in the conspiracy. All the big questions, the obvious questions, that any long-time viewer would know, will be answered in some way."

Spotnitz is mindful that summer action movies have become, in his words "roller coaster rides, and there is a certain amount of pressure to bend to that. We really resisted that. I think people who know the show will think [the movie] is true to the spirit of the show. There's some action stuff, but we try and keep it in the realm of possibility. As fantastic as some of the images are, they will all hopefully be seen as real. I think it will be quite a change from other summer fare out there."

The important elements of the show have been retained, according to Spotnitz, but one key ingredient—an almost constant level of tension—was impractical to sustain for feature length. Spotnitz explained: "It's really more a political thriller, and if we went back to look at movies made in the '70s, like PARALLAX VIEW and ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN, it's more that kind of thing, where you're unraveling the conspiracy and you don't know who to trust and there are unseen forces, and you keep that tension going."

The move from small to big screen has not been a radical shift: "We've tried to do the TV show like mini-movies every week, and to have the extra half-hour or 45 minutes, whatever it turns out to be, was liberating. And we have no grounds for complaint about the

X-FILES

CANCER MAN

Reports of his death were greatly exaggerated.

By Douglas Eby

Even after playing the Cigarette-Smoking Man for five seasons, William B. Davis is not bored with the role: "It doesn't get tiring at all. I wish there was more of it to do. And it's getting more involved. This season, we begin to see other sides of the character—that there is some humanity deeply buried, or deeply repressed perhaps, inside there somewhere. And we're discovering a relationship with Samantha. Maybe. So it's going to get more and more interesting."

Like the multitude of enthusiastic followers of the series, Davis is caught up in the intriguing storylines but doesn't have an inside track on their evolution: "We know very little more than you do," he said. "We're kind of like fans with it, like, 'What's going to happen next?' or trying to guess what the connections are. Once in a while, we will have discussions with [the writers and producers], but on the whole they're kind of working away, and we don't see them very much because we're shooting in Vancouver and they do the writing in LA."

In addition to his recurring role in THE X-FILES, Davis has acted in numerous TV projects (SLIDERS, OUTER LIMITS, MACGYVER, OMEN 4, and NIGHTMARE CAFE) and films (MATINEE, THE DEAD ZONE). Working on THE X-FILES MOVIE in Los Angeles was one of the few projects he's done outside Vancouver. The former Artistic Director of the National Theatre School and of the Vancouver Playhouse Acting School, he owns The William Davis Centre For Actors' Study in Vancouver, where he regularly leads classes. "Teaching is very important to me—teaching and directing," Davis said. "It's mostly theatre that I've directed, although there are some film things we're working on now."

In a recent episode of the series, his character was apparently killed off, leading to various responses by fans, including messages posted on internet forums: "...cancer man can't die as long as he's in your heart. Truly a cool villain," and



The apparent death of the Cigarette Smoking Man (William B. Davis) in the series turned out to be a red herring.

"Please say Cancer man isn't dead. I mean, I hate the guy...you just want to smack him in the head, but killing off CSM now is like if Darth Vader croaked off in the second Star Wars movie." Asked at the time if he really met his demise, Davis hedged: "Well, perhaps. It was somewhat ambiguous, as THE X-FILES is always ambiguous. But I'm in the film, and the film post-dates that event. Of course, I'm not allowed to tell you what the film is, so it could be I'm in a flashback in the film, or in another dimension. (The mystery about the character's presence in the film was dissipated when he reappeared in the series, alive and well.)"

In CFQ 28:3, Davis mentioned he likes to make the case at X-FILES conventions that his character is "the real hero of the show and Mulder is the villain." Forced to acknowledge the episode in which Cancer Man set bees on schoolchildren, he admitted, "That wasn't such a nice thing. But

mostly I kill people who somehow deserve it. Actually, I don't kill them; I arrange it. And I do still have a lot of fun with trying to convince fans that Mulder is the bad guy and I'm the good guy. But it's also that as an actor, that's the only way I can work; I have to believe somehow in what I'm doing. There was a time I could believe it was in the best interests of humanity, what I was doing, but as I get more information, maybe I'm not so sure of that case. But it still has to be something I have to do. It may be that I go along a track that if I could wind my life back thirty years, I wish I hadn't gone on, but now that I'm on it, I can't go any other direction than what I'm doing."

The Cigarette Smoking Man is a complex and layered character, and Davis pointed out, "Nobody thinks they're a bad guy or a villain. I'm sure Hitler didn't think he was the villain. It does seem to be true that most actors find the villain characters are the most interesting to play. Sometimes it's because there's more complexity in the character, and some of the good guys or heroes are somewhat narrowly defined. But it also allows us to work with our darker sides as performers, as artists, and in some ways that's truer. We're not always this pleasant persona we put up to the public. People meet me sometimes and say, 'You're so different from your character. You must be a wonderful actor.' And sometimes I say, 'Yes, but which is the performance?'" Davis laughed.

The entry to the apartment complex where Davis stayed in Los Angeles proclaims it to be a no-smoking zone, but he said his suite "had ashtrays all over the place. It was quite offensive, actually, because I don't smoke." This is somewhat of a surprise, coming from an actor who plays a character called the Cigarette-Smoking Man, but Davis hasn't smoked for about twenty years, and the cigarettes used on the show are herbal, "So there's no danger of re-hooking my habit," he said.

As an actor, Davis has some favorite episodes: "In 'Paper Clip,' Skinner really had the upper hand over me, but in 'Me-

mento Mori' I have the key to Scully's cancer, so I have Skinner just about begging me to help him. And maybe I will, and maybe I won't," the actor laughed. "So that's fun. My personal favorite episode to do was actually in the end of the third season, called 'Talitha Cumi.' There was an alien named Jeremiah Smith [Roy Thinnes] who was working miracles, and I imprison him and we have these debates. And I also have a really nice scene with Mrs. Mulder and another scene where Mulder waves his gun at me, which he does regularly."

Following the series like any enthusiast, Davis said he's "pretty faithful" in his viewing: "I'm beginning to wish I'd taped them, although I suppose I could get copies. Although I've seen pretty much every episode in the last two seasons, I don't remember them the way fans do. Many of them have seen episodes several times, and they know all the details." Davis said he does access the internet "from time to time" but was especially interested after the episode wherein his character was "killed": "I better have a look to see what the fans are saying about that," Davis recalled thinking at the time. "I was kind of relieved to see that most of them thought I was still alive. That seems to be the reaction from the serious fans, that they think there is something going on here, and I'm not really dead. The less-regular viewer, who's less familiar with the ins and outs of the show, a lot of them think I really am dead. People come

Actor Davis likes to claim his character is actually the hero of THE X-FILES, but the position grows more untenable with each new plot revelation.

CIGARETTE SMOKING ACTOR?

"Actually, I don't smoke," proclaimed Davis, who quit twenty years ago. The cigarettes used on the show are herbal, "so there's no chance of re-hooking my habit."



The Cancer Man presides over the conspiracy—which hopes to save the lives of its members in exchange for collaborating with the alien enemy.

up to me and say, 'I'm really sorry they killed you off. I like your character a lot.'

Noting that a lot of scripts come his way with characters as dark as the Cigarette Smoking Man, Davis said, "In a way, I'm really looking for the other side now. People forget and don't even think of me as the kindly grandfathers I used to play. But that's what I used to do" (for instance, in the TV movie CIRCUMSTANCES UNKNOWN, about four years ago).

Davis was in the X-FILES pilot, so he has been involved with the show since 1992. When he has time away from the series for other projects, he noted that he's drawn to do "people shows, as opposed to action shows, perhaps. And that's what engages me about THE X-FILES: although it has lots of action in it, there's a whole people element, which is certainly what is absorbing for the actors. Sometimes I'll see scripts that are pretty hardcore action, kind of tough FBI guys, and those I find less interesting than more kind of personal things with a human range to them."

Regarding the media and internet speculation about THE X-FILES production moving to Los Angeles (where the writers are already), Davis said, "To the best of my knowledge, and it's fairly close to the source, a decision has not been made. They may be leaning in a certain direction, but I don't know. I have very mixed feelings

about it. On a personal level, it's kind of six of one, half a dozen of the other: my home is in Vancouver, so it would mean traveling to do the show, which is a negative; I guess, on a professional level, it would get me [to LA] more and connected more, so that would be a gain. I understand David and Gillian's concerns, but on the other hand I feel quite strongly for the Vancouver crew. Not only are they good, they've committed so much to the show." He pointed out that with discussions about production location "suggests it will shoot somewhere, and there will be a sixth season. That would be my prediction."

Although he can't reveal specific story elements about the upcoming movie, Davis said one of the things about the Cigarette Smoking Man that people already may notice is that "he will be less sure of himself, in more difficulty, not always in control of things the way he likes to be. It's not so much he has any change in conscience. It's more in terms of the interplay of power, I think. There could be conscience in there, too. I'm not being evasive; it's just that it's a matter of interpretation."

For the most part he hasn't seen the film, but Davis said, "As we did it, I saw a couple of shots that were particularly spectacular. After we'd spent eight hours doing a shot, they did show it to us. I will say, my entrance is spectacular—many an actor's dream," he added with a laugh. Regarding Chris Carter's comment on the challenge introducing characters like the Cigarette Smoking Man to new viewers, without having to go through a lot of back history familiar to fans, Davis had this to say: "I think they did it with my character. I think they did a very good job, actually. I think the film will work for both the neophyte—the person new to the whole storyline—and to those who are looking at all the nuances."

Noting the series doesn't take his time like it does for Duchovny and Anderson, Davis continues to teach acting and look for other projects. One of the potential scripts for a film outside the X-FILES universe that he's currently considering has a "fascinating scientific twist" that intrigues him. And he says, "I do get interested in this whole question of where people blur the line between science and fiction, and come to some kind of expectations of reality that we really have no evidence for, but some think we do." Sounds like a fitting concept for THE X-FILES. □

studio for doing either the TV show or the movie. They've been tremendously supportive. They seem to trust us and think we know what we're doing, and I think the fact the show has performed well has earned that trust. I think the only issue is that we don't have the budget that a typical blockbuster would have, but you know, I think we're all happy with what we've been given to do."

Responding to the rumors about the continuation of the series, possibly with major cast changes, Spotnitz said that, while developing the screenplay, he "assumed that was it, that the TV show would end with season five, and the movie would perhaps launch a series of movies or whatever, but now I'm hearing some of those rumors, too, and I don't know what David's or Gillian's or Chris' status is with the show."

Anticipating the growing buzz about a film with such a huge fan following, Spotnitz said, "I think the biggest concern is the expectations the audience will have, but we all feel pretty confident we've accomplished what we set out to accomplish. We told the story we wanted until it really has a sense of inevitability about it. You feel like this would have to be the story of an X-FILES movie; this would have to be the plot for Mulder and Scully in this story. It just feels right. So I feel pretty good, and optimistic that it will be well-received. And, because it is so different from everything else that is out there, I'm curious to see what the general public's reaction will be, people who aren't X-FILES fans."

Shooting the film in Los Angeles was a different experience for Spotnitz, compared to filming the series in Vancouver. "Normally we only go up to prep the show, and we're there for a day or two filming; then we get the dailies sent down on a fiber optic line. So it's been strange to be able to come to the set, to see David and Gillian every day, to come at night or weekends. And the pace is radically different on the TV series; we'll shoot seven or eight pages of script a day, and here we're shooting two, two and a half."

Carefully avoiding specifics



Above: Duchovny and Anderson play their familiar roles in the big-screen incarnation of the show, which allows for a wider scope and more elaborate production values. Below: Exploring a secret installation that plays a part in the conspiracy.



RE-BIRTH OF THE X-FILES

“This movie is in a sense an ending, but it’s also a new beginning for the characters,” said co-writer Frank Spotnitz. “It’s like a pilot again. It relaunches everything.”

about the story, he said the movie is “about the strength of two people, and one person making a difference against large historical forces. Also, there is a new theme tag line, like ‘the truth is out there,’ and it will figure prominently, but I can’t give it away yet. But ‘the truth is out there’ is still the great idea of the show.”

Although he has directed 23 episodes of the series, Rob Bowman did not direct the fifth season cliffhanger that leads into the movie. (Bob Goodwin directs all the season openers and finales.) One of the main challenges of the movie, said Bowman (who directed the 1993 feature AIRBORNE), is “to execute on the same level every moment of every day that we do on the TV show. But with a little more time, we can do a few more takes and get a few more shots and fill the sequences out more than I have time on the show. And the reason to shoot it on the big screen with the anamorphic aspect ratio—to Chris and me that’s a difference between television and movies: the screen and the power of the larger image. We can do wide shots in the movie that I can’t do in the show, because people are too small.”

Like the others involved, Bowman is concerned with transferring the quality of the series: “The potential stumbling blocks are abandoning some of the things we use to tell the TV show—which is in a minimalist fashion. I think the die-hard X-FILES fan has become accustomed to filling in the blanks for us, and they enjoy that interactive part of the show. If we give them everything, they’re going to feel like, when we first got the opportunity to go big, we abandoned everything that got us here. I think that’s a

charm of the show; it’s a way of telling stories that makes the show interesting.”

Calling his visual style “minimalist and restrained,” Bowman said, “I try to use it also for the movie, and tried to gage my style musically, and think of it as an orchestrated piece, where there are loud spots and soft spots, and horns and strings—as a musical composition, but with a restraint as sort of the operating method.”

The budget for the movie, he said, is “probably somewhere north of sixty [million dollars], and a regular episode of the series is around two.” But, he did not want to “get sucked into a big-budget Hollywood version of how to make a movie—a blow-everything-up thing. We also want to make it appeal to people who haven’t seen the show. That’s a very important part of the character introduction, bringing back people who are established but introducing them to the non-fan in a way that is clear. Let’s say, for instance, CSM [Cigarette-Smoking Man]: how do you introduce him into a scenario? Well, for the fan, all he’s got to do is step into the door; they know who he is. But the non-fan, they just see a guy with a cigarette. So we have to find ways to introduce familiar characters in a very clear, effective, and impactful way to the non-fan.”

One way of doing that is to use the size or nature of a character’s entourage, said Bowman: “That sometimes gives you the importance of the person the entourage is surrounding. What I tried to do with CSM was measure all the entrances in the movie of all the important characters, and then make his seem more mysterious, more important. And it’s without dialogue; it’s all image. It’s all in a way that says ‘Whoever comes out of that heli-

A trip to an ice field reveals the source of the alien virus that has lain dormant until coming into contact with humans—and now it’s spreading.

X-FILES

X-PANDING FILES

Producer Lata Ryan on stretching the budget to fill the wide screen.

According to executive producer Lata Ryan (*JURASSIC PARK*), working with effects is “one of those kind of love and hate relationships, where you like to do a movie that doesn’t have any visual effects, but then there’s something really exciting about doing a movie with effects. With this movie, when we started out, it wasn’t that big of an effects movie. It was more physical effects, and we had helicopters, trains, spaceships, and that kind of stuff.”

But as the project developed, the filmmakers’ level of interest in using effects grew, Ryan noted: “As it unfolded, and as the beauty of some of our sets came out, and as the possibility of what [effects supervisor] Mat [Beck] could do in CGI, all of a sudden we’re going ‘Damn it. What we could do with this spaceship!’ With the pre-viz that Mat had done, I learned a big lesson, and I became a big supporter of doing as much as we could do because, first the physical set was so beautiful, and then what Mat had designed as the extension was so beautiful, you want to take advantage of it. But then came the problem of money: how to pay for all that.”

Ryan affirmed that a spacecraft is a prominent element in the story, but that anyone will “have to go see the movie” to learn the

specifics. The craft was realized as a combination of practical set, with an interior, and CGI.

Comparing the working methods of *THE X-FILES MOVIE* with *JURASSIC PARK*, Ryan recalled she was very involved in her earlier film: “We had a year and a half for research and development on *JURASSIC PARK*, which is something I am always so proud of. It’s what made that movie what it was. We spent over a million dollars on research and pre-visualization. It was money that was so well spent.”

In contrast, she says, that kind of research was something *X-FILES* lacked: “It did not have that up-front research. For *JURASSIC PARK*, we did conceptual paintings and drawings and miniature pieces, just to visualize everything for Spielberg. There was ten weeks to prepare this movie, so there wasn’t time [for all that preparation]. But I did turn the director onto storyboarding, and we had two storyboard artists for all of preproduction, and almost half of the movie. And he really got turned on to it; he saw how important it is, whether it was for visual effects, or just for action sequences. Obviously, with the lack of preparation time on this movie, whatever was visualized on storyboards really helped. You never really go exactly by the storyboards, but it’s such a good frame.”

The film version features more elaborate sets, some of which will be enhanced with CGI.



Scully detects the alien virus, seen in the series as a living, oozing black liquid that infects its victims.

Although the film had limited prep time, there was some compensation from having developed out of a TV show, Ryan noted: “That’s how Mat Beck got involved, because Chris Carter felt very comfortable with him from the TV show. We had maybe four [effects] houses bid on this project, but when it came down to it, I think it was that really comfortable relationship Chris Carter has with Mat Beck. Also what worked out really well was that Mat had just worked on *VOLCANO*, and had a very successful relationship with *VIFX*, and they’re part of Fox.”

She admits she hasn’t been a fan of the series, and that the movie is mainly one person’s vision: “Chris Carter really is our guru. He is the creative force on this project, along with Frank Spotnitz. And as far as I was concerned, Chris and Frank were *THE X-FILES*. And lots of times, not being a complete *X-FILES* aficionado, I would ask a question, and the traditional answer would be, ‘Now you’re trying to have logic, Lata. Forget it.’”

Even though the film may be the personal creative vision of Carter, this is still a major studio project, with a need to balance the artistic and financial sides. “You have to bounce creative off of money,” said Ryan. “You hate to do it, but that’s what you have to do.” She added that the film has been “a fantastic experience. One thing that stands out is meeting and working with Chris Carter. I can’t say enough good things about him, as far as being hands-on. Here’s a man who created the TV series, and is still involved with it on a daily basis, and when we started the film he was very busy doing the finale for the series. The minute that was over, he was back down here, and with us every single day, and part of all the decisions. And very often that doesn’t happen. But he was very hands-on, very professional, and you always want to do your best work for those kind of people.”

Doug Eby

X-FILES

MARTIN LANDAU

The ex-IMF actor keeps his new mission a secret.

His character is listed in the official X-FILES MOVIE production notes as simply "Mr. Farber." Actor Martin Landau said that, like others working on the film, he is "really not supposed to talk too much about it. So anything I tell you is going to be too much. He's a very secretive, interesting character. He does a lot of things, and you don't know whether he's real or not real, true or not true, and it's a really complicated role. I really can't do it justice."

Further emphasizing his agreement to not reveal anything substantive about the story, Landau did say that his character's name



In the X-FILES film, Landau (Oscar winner for ED WOOD) plays a mysterious character who reveals details of the government conspiracy to Agent Mulder.

group of people, that the government hired to do whatever they had to do. The first thing on the tapes was 'The secretary will disavow any knowledge of your existence,' so if we got caught, we were on our own because we couldn't reveal we were, in fact, working for the government. What I guess THE X-FILES suggests is that there are machinations going on that no one is aware about. But it doesn't profess to be a factual show."

One of the aspects of the series that has inspired so much fan response is the amount of research. Landau agreed: "There's an inordinate amount of scientific knowledge in the show, and I think all the science is accurate, down to

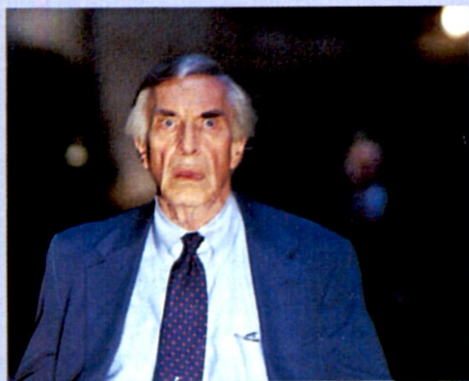
the last detail. I think, however, what you'd call the fictional part of it doesn't profess to be scientific, necessarily, but is still built on science, and I think that's what is very rich about the show and something I appreciate about the show."

Asked about what working on this film has meant to him in terms of his career as an actor, Landau commented, "It was an interesting character. And the writing was good. I work a little bit with John Neville, but most of my stuff is with David Duchovny, and there's an interesting relationship between our two characters. And I enjoyed it. That's all I can say."

Like others involved with THE X-FILES, Landau appreciates Carter: "He's great. A good guy, a bright guy, a good writer and wonderful imagination. I would say he's the backbone of the series in terms of its style and texture and content. His brother's a physicist, I believe. I think one of the best in the country, which is why [Carter] is very keen on making it scientifically accurate."

Affirming Chris Carter's mission to make THE X-FILES MOVIE work on its own, for audiences who have never seen the series, Landau said, "It will be satisfying on that level, but it will be particularly gratifying if you are a fan of the show. It will be more, if you know what I'm saying. From a production point of view, from a writing point of view, from every point of view. But it works on its own, is what I feel, even if you'd never seen an X-FILES show. And there are people who haven't, even though its shown around the world."

Doug Eby



"it isn't even an accurate name. I'm really sworn to secrecy. So I really can't discuss it. I don't think anyone should anticipate anything when they see the movie. And I think Chris Carter is absolutely correct— why spill the beans, and why even talk about it?" According to some fan and media speculation (such as in the *National Enquirer*), Landau's "Mr. Farber" may really be Dr. Al Kurtzweil, a friend of Mulder's father from the State Department, and described in a casting call as "60 to 70—Authoritative, intelligent"—but, on the other hand, the Internet Movie Database lists Armin Mueller-Stahl for the role of Kurtzweil.

Landau said he had followed THE X-FILES before joining the production: "I don't watch a whole lot of television, but I do like the series, and as a matter of fact, I had seen it a number of times, but Chris had also sent me a bunch of current tapes, and I watched them just before I

started work, just to kind of get myself into that mode."

About the theme of governmental cover-up in X-FILES, and any possible comparison with his role in MISSION IMPOSSIBLE, Landau noted that the 1960s TV series "was long before anyone even knew about that sort of thing. Now, I think everyone is aware of certain kinds of things that some of the 'alphabet soup' does do. But, again, I think MISSION IMPOSSIBLE at the time was a different kind of show, a very special show in its day. But a different era, a different time. The ideal mission was getting in and getting out without anyone knowing you were there. It wasn't a show about action or violence; it was a show about a complicated kind of mind game. I don't even draw an analogy between the two shows. This is a much different thing. Ours was largely an entertainment show, which insisted on the audience's participation. Most of the time in television in those days, you could leave the set for fifteen or twenty minutes and come back, and still be ahead of what was going on. But if you missed much of MISSION, even a couple of minutes of it, you were in deep water, because things went on that were intricate; it was almost like lattice work—everything was connected to everything else. And then there were the little surprises, the moments where things didn't go smoothly, and we had to kind of function off the seat of our pants."

Landau added that X-FILES "is a different picture. And MISSION was a private organization, actually; it wasn't a government organization. Impossible Missions Force was a for-hire

copter is somebody. So pay attention.' Then it's up to me to stage it, and his behavior will tell the non-fan that this is someone to pay attention to. What they have to learn is how much of a threat he is to our principal characters. The non-fan won't know that, so we'll have to tell them in the movie. Sometimes we did it with dialogue, sometimes with visuals."

With so much history from the series, he noted, "The emotion of the movie is something you have to distill down. The size of this mythology is enormous, and I'm sure next year it's not going to get any smaller. But what drives it? The core moment is that Mulder's sister is abducted. Let's say my sister is abducted. My father is somehow involved with that; my mother seems to know, but she's not telling me anything. I as a young man am engaged by witnessing this event. Now for the rest of my life, like child abuse, like a traumatic event, it changes your life. It's changed Mulder's life. He is in pursuit of finding out how it is he can undo what has been done: 'Where is my sister? Let me find her.' And therefore it is universal in theme. And to pursue this, he needs a partner, especially a person who is so whimsical and deals in non-facts and goes on a sense of wonder. This is a person who was ostracized by peers. This partner is agent Scully, and although her mission initially was to spy on him, at the core of it is their relationship, which is the fuel for this whole story. So, while I'm dealing with the epic size of the tale, I'm always thinking about the relationship between Mulder and Scully, and what it is that Mulder needs to complete his journey. It's a love story."

In addition to the core characters from the series, the movie introduces some new people, which presented some challenges for Bowman. "The trick," he said, "is that with casting a feature, the studio needs to have names to sell the movie to the public. The modus operandi so far to date on THE X-FILES has been to cast non-stars, so they are the characters and not movie stars doing a role. As soon as you have to do a feature, people say they

CHARACTER CONSISTENCY

"It's the same character I've been playing for a while, and I don't want to change him," said Duchovny. "He's what I want him to be at this point, so there's no opening up to do."



Mulder and Scully question some children whose friend has been infected by the alien organism—a parasite that takes over and mutates its victims.

should have this name or that name. But if you put, say, Gregory Peck in this movie, he's not the character; he's Gregory Peck. And though that works for many movies, it doesn't work for THE X-FILES. So it's a judgment call between what we need to do to interest the public to come see the movie and what makes these characters so real. We've always had [stars] offering to do the TV show; it's just there's never enough time, or their schedules don't afford it. We had a lot of interesting people who wanted to be part of the project, but they were off doing other movies. The people we ended up with, I think, shape the movie perfectly."

Compared with the shooting schedule for TV, the movie is much longer. The first-unit work ran more than 70 days, and the second-unit over 20. Bowman, speaking on day 52, noted that the longest episode shoot "was 20 [days], nowhere near this size. But you expect more. You go and pay your money for a movie, and buy your kids popcorn and pay parking and all that stuff, you've got 25 bucks out

of your pocket, and it better be good."

With the movie somewhat dependent on a back story developed in series episodes that had yet to be shot, Bowman noted, "All the writers and directors who will do the mythology episodes will have to be very careful that it is a progressive building block, since Chris wrote the feature with some point in mind, but then he had to go back and figure out how to get there. That's tricky."

Mulder awaits an encounter that may reveal an important clue to unravel the mystery. The film promises to resolve the major plot threads of the series.



As one of the stars of THE X-FILES, David Duchovny has found little difference in shooting the movie. "The biggest difference is in the production and technical areas," he said. "It's the same character I've been playing for a while, and I don't want to change the character. He's what I want him to be at this point, so there's no opening up I want to do for the movie. I guess in a movie you can say 'fuck' and 'shit,' and most people think that's opening up the character. I don't believe in character growth. I think the character is set and comes into these different challenges and different quests and things like that, but unless you have a terrible circumstance, it's really hard to change one of these characters. I'd like to think the character of Mulder can exist if you put him in any medium. He could do a commercial; he could do a play; he could do a TV show—but he's the same guy. I think to change, or try to strategize what a movie audience would want as opposed to a TV audience, or what a dramatic audience would want, or comic audience, or sci-fi audience—I think that's the worst kind of artistic pose you can have."

Working on the movie, he found, "isn't really stretching my character or me as an actor. It's bringing certain aspects to the forefront of the same character I've been playing. Because it's a movie, there's a lot of big action stuff. I don't have any fights in it; I do a lot of running, a lot of carrying, falling,



Scully leads an FBI team into a dangerous situation. The film features more action and stunt work than the show could afford to do on a TV budget.

X-PANDED ACTION & EFFECTS

“My character in the film is not really new compared to the series,” said Anderson. “Most of the expansion has gone into what we can do with special effects and action.”

jumping. And people think that’s ‘character.’ There’s a story about shooting *THE GODFATHER*: they wanted to fire Pacino because, they said, ‘he doesn’t do anything.’ So Coppola wrote in this scene where he shoots someone in a bar; then they said ‘Yeah. That’s good stuff. He’s a good actor.’”

Although his function as an actor remained the same, Duchovny cautioned against labeling the movie as an extended TV episode. For instance, to capture a sweeping vista worthy of a widescreen, he worked one day “on a glacier outside of Vancouver.” He added, “There are things done by other people on the production that aren’t done on the series. This is a movie production, and it’s that much bigger. In terms of thought and character, in terms of story, it’s the same show. And I think, as that, it’s worthy of being a movie.”

He noted this is the biggest action-oriented film he’s done, and that brings some new challenge: “The tedium of getting that right is very difficult, and you kind of have to pace yourself in a different way. I don’t like doing 20 takes. I like doing none, actually,” he smiled, then added, “Three. If I don’t get it by three, then I’m in serious trouble. But here we do a lot more. There’s a lot more tension on the set. On the TV show there’s a sense in which—it’s not like we don’t work our asses off—but we know it’ll come out and be gone in a week; also, we can come back, if it really doesn’t work, and reshoot it in two weeks. Here, there’s a real kind of looking-over-your-

shoulder, like you’ve got to get it right now, or else we’re all going to look like fools. So that’s not the most conducive to artistic freedom.”

One of the additions to the cast of the movie was Martin Landau, and Duchovny praised his drive: “Working with him was great. I don’t know how old he is, but he’s been around a while. And it’s been a really hard schedule, with six-day weeks, and at one point, we were working nights. Six-night weeks are just horrendous. We were still working at five or six in the morning after six nights, and we had to tent an alleyway to keep the daylight out. I’m so tired I can’t even think. And Martin Landau had a hard time with the scene because it was so many words, but he had so much pride. It was just sheer will that got him through that scene. And to see somebody that has an Academy Award, somebody who has nothing left to prove, just keep working at it, that was the most inspirational thing.”

Actors Duchovny and Anderson bring their patented professional chemistry to the big screen, but the film may also allow them a fleeting romantic moment.



For Gillian Anderson, *THE X-FILES MOVIE* has some advantages over the series: “Physically, it’s less,” she said. “The hours have been shorter on the film, and there are longer waits between set-ups, so there’s more rest time. Scully isn’t really doing anything different compared with the series. I think most of the expansion has gone into special effects and stuff like that. There is more action, more stunt stuff. But this is a big version of an episode, which I think is necessary at this point, because we’re drawing in not only people who have seen the show and are devoted to it, but people who have never seen it before. And if the film were too different than the series, people might be disappointed, or they might have some kind of averse reaction.”

She admitted that, when first developing the movie, “I would rather have been working on something different, as opposed to being 12 months a year instead of ten months on this show. But I started to get excited as the discussions were getting more intense, and the script was coming along. I’m basically treating it as something in and of itself. We have [TV] episodes that have nothing to do

with what’s happened in previous episodes, or comes after. It kind of feels like one of those.”

Anderson has found that, over the course of the series, the relationship between Scully and Mulder “has become more equal, and she has become stronger and more independent. In the film, there’s a bit more romance. We find ourselves in a situation that draws us closer together.” Even though the movie may have more action than the series, she pointed out that “there are no fight scenes, and I don’t think either of us draws a gun for the entire film.”

She notes that filming on the Fox lot in L.A. is working with “a whole different crew than the one we have for the series. But there is a continuity with Rob [Bowman] and David [Duchovny], which helps. It would be more difficult to make the transition if it were a new director. I actually don’t have any major scenes with other characters from the series. But it’s an X-FILE, and so everything about it feels familiar. I’m still playing Scully. There haven’t been any rude awakenings or awkward moments.”

Finally, although the budget may have been bigger and the schedule longer, nevertheless shooting the movie afforded no relaxation. Said Chris Carter, “It’s not like people take siestas at lunch; we’re burning. I think it takes longer to light; it’s more elaborate and takes longer to set up. So you are really hustling to make your days; it’s not a luxurious thing at all. We could have used 20 more days on this picture, and then maybe had more of a movie experience. I don’t want to fall into the trap of saying it’s just a big TV show, because it’s not, but we’ve certainly been working as hard as we worked on the TV show.”

The results will show when Fox unveils the movie June 19. □

X-FILES

LONE GUNMEN

Surprised fan favorites make it to the big screen.

Our appearance in the film is a similar kind of thing [compared to the show]: there are two or three scenes, but we're not there a lot," said Tom Braidwood, who plays Frohike, one of the "Lone Gunmen," a trio of conspiracy buffs who have developed into recurring characters loved by fans.

Like all the actors, he's under strict contractual agreement not to reveal significant elements of the story, but he did say the film won't feature their typical activity, ensconced in a cave-like office, using the internet to ferret out information: "That's not really what we do in the film. We do something else, which I'm not allowed to talk about, unfortunately." He said that throughout the series this past year, the characters "have developed further, and you're seeing more of their abilities. In the film, it's pretty much what we've been doing over the past few years. The characters themselves don't broaden that much."

In the series his character has used devices such as night vision goggles, but Braidwood said the scenes in the film "are not high-tech oriented. We're there serving

a different purpose." But he noted that his knowledge of the film is "very limited. We never saw a full script; we never saw the full story, so it's pretty hard to comment."

Dean Haglund (who plays Langly, another of the trio) confirmed the secrecy arrangements: "They made us sign these funny little agreements that were quite shocking, actually. I don't think I've ever signed anything like that before in any movie. And it seemed really hardcore." Responding to the official studio production information that the story involves Mulder and Scully getting "drawn into a web of intrigue while investigating the mysterious bombing of a Dallas office building and the secrets buried inside," Haglund said, "Wow, even I didn't know that." As far as how involved the Lone Gunmen are in helping the FBI agents in the film, he said, "We show up for a couple of scenes and offer some key information, and get them out of a couple of tricky situations. Our screen time isn't that extensive, but it's at the point where we're all showing up, and reminding everyone there is a tie-in from the series."

Asked if Langly's characteriza-



Left to right: actors Tom Braidwood, Bruce Harwood, and Dean Haglund were surprised to find their characters (Frohike, Byers, and Langley) in the movie.

tion is developed any further in the film, Haglund noted, "I get to dress a little better. I'm moving up from having the same T-shirt, to a different one, and having some Adidas. I don't know if that's product placement or what. I guess I got paid for finally delivering 'The Lone Gunman' papers or something." He also pointed out the group is in another setting: "We don't appear in The Lone Gunmen office. There you go—there's a piece of information I can reveal." (This is hardly unprecedented—the trio have appeared outside of the office a couple of times in the series.) "But there's no new technology we use."

In another magazine, Haglund commented that he appreciates the issue-oriented series as a context for discussing current sociological and political trends, but at the moment he can't really comment on what issues the film explores: "I haven't actually read the whole script; they just gave us our scene, and our name was stamped across the page, so if it went missing they'd know who was the leak. I maintain my own web page, and I've sort of purposely kept myself in the dark, not that I'm a blabbermouth or anything, but if I were a prisoner of war, I think I'd be like the second person to crack and fess up on everything. I get a lot of e-mail asking 'What's the movie about?' and the sheer fact that I

really don't know, really pays off."

Unable to come up with some plot element to reveal, Haglund noted that since the first Lone Gunmen appearance, he's been wearing his own jeans and shoes, "And finally costume felt guilty about it and said they'd buy them. So I had to bring my sneakers down [to Los Angeles] for the movie as well. There's a history with Langly that his glasses have been different every time. For some reason, they didn't get the glasses down to the location for the film, so the prop guy there had to make another pair that look sort of like the ones I usually wear."

Also under an oath of secrecy about the story, Bruce Harwood (who plays Byers) said he can at least reveal that The Lone Gunmen appear in a hospital, and he recalls that Byers was in a hospital with Mulder in one episode. Harwood said he's somewhat surprised at the inclusion of The Lone Gunmen: "We appear fairly rarely on the TV series. We're characters the hardcore fans are aware of, but people who watch in a much more general sense are not, and I assumed we wouldn't appear in the movie because you've only got two hours to make an impression, rather than 22 episodes in a year, so we would just be a distraction for the most part. So I was really pleased to actually make it into the movie after all." **Doug Eby**

This season's episode "Unusual Suspects," co-starring Richard Belzer in his Detective Munch role from *HOMICIDE*, explored the origin of the gunmen trio.



perspective, TITANIC cost less per minute than SPEED 2 or STARSHIP TROOPERS. Not that I'm putting those pictures down; it just puts them in perspective. I don't think people would consider those epics in the old-school sense."

Cameron finds it ironic that the media attention on the budget and the "negative things" actually created a high awareness for TITANIC. But he also said the media scrutiny of his movie will spell dire consequences for future filmmakers with potentially expensive visions. "It was a brave, even perhaps foolish choice on the part of the studio heads to green-light a picture like this," he said. "The unfortunate thing about this whole experience is that because of the intense negative media scrutiny of the people who chose to make this film, they won't do it again. Other studio heads will look at the drubbing they received and say, 'We're not going to do this' when somebody comes along with a vision that steps outside of the contemporary Hollywood wisdom, which is that if you want to make a movie costing over \$100 million, it better be a sequel to a hit—or at least have the ability to spawn sequels. They better be able to merchandise toys and video games and Slurpee cups and do promotional tie-ins and at least get a theme park attraction out of it. The next time somebody comes along with a vision that steps outside that category, it's not going to get made."

Money was such a hot-button issue not only in the press but in Cameron's relationship with 20th Century-Fox and Paramount that the filmmaker did the only thing he thought responsible under the circumstances: he waived all his income from the project except for his fee for writing the script two years ago. "At some point when Fox and Paramount were looking at a gamble—a losing gamble—they didn't know how well the film would turn out financially—they felt they were in a too disadvantaged position. I didn't feel as a responsible filmmaker I should be putting my studio in that kind of position. I didn't feel that I did that in TERMINATOR 2. It cost \$100 million and was the most expensive film in history at that time, blah, blah, blah. I knew they would get their money back. Same thing on TRUE LIES: I knew they would come out OK. This one [TITANIC] was always riskier, and it went significantly over budget much more so than those other movies. I am responsible for those situations. The buck stops here. That's the best I could do."

Dan Gire



#10: Jim Carrey's successes in the genre reached a peak with LIAR LIAR. He follows that up with another fantasy effort, THE TRUMAN SHOW.

8 RICK BERMAN

(Last year: 4)

The guiding light of STAR TREK is prepping another big-screen adventure for the Next Generation—a follow-up to the successful STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT, which put the series back on track just when it looked as if it was running out of gas. In the meantime, however, the TV series have been replaced by X-FILES as the reigning sci-fi, pop-culture phenomenon. Expect him to bounce back into the Top 5 with the next TREK—unless, of course, the film succumbs to the curse that has plagued all the odd-numbered films.

9 CHRIS CARTER

(Last year: 10)

MILLENNIUM never caught on as planned, and the most recent season of X-FILES was marked by disappointing retreads (usually inferior) of material that had been used before. But that didn't stop the show's ratings from soaring—not only new episodes but also reruns. The film version of X-FILES should further energize a franchise that shows no signs of waning, and even though Carter has dropped hints about leaving the show, he should be able to do so on his own terms, pursuing new projects that hit-hungry Hollywood will eagerly purchase.

10 JIM CARREY

(Last year's ranking: 25)

After the relatively disappointing performance of THE CABLE GUY, the rubber-faced actor bounced back with LIAR, LIAR, a fantasy-tinged comedy with family appeal that became his biggest hit ever—at

\$180-million plus, the third biggest genre film of 1997 (behind MIB and LOST WORLD). Carrey's over-the-top antics seem perfectly suited for fantasy material—a trend he continues with THE TRUMAN SHOW, about a man whose life has been carefully structured (unknown to him) to provide TV entertainment.

11 KEVIN WILLIAMSON

(Last year: not ranked)

You can't argue with success, and Williamson had three in a row—SCREAM, I KNOW WHAT YOU DID LAST SUMMER, and SCREAM 2—whose combined box office exceeds \$300-million. Due to make his directing debut on KILLING MRS. TINGLE, he's already talking about abandoning, horror, but that didn't stop him from developing HALLOWEEN H20 and signing a multi-pic deal with Dimension, which includes scripting a horror film for director Robert Rodriguez.

12 JOHN TRAVOLTA

(Last year's ranking: 11)

He's not known as a genre icon, yet Travolta landed on our list last year thanks to MICHAEL and PHENOMENON. He followed that up with FACE/OFF, a science-fiction themed action film that earned over \$106-million, overtaking the overhyped BATMAN AND ROBIN, to become last year's fourth biggest genre film. Though unlikely to devote himself exclusively to the genre, he is reportedly interested in bringing L. Ron Hubbard's BATTLEFIELD EARTH to the big screen, and with his box office track record, it would be foolish of Hollywood not to let him try.

13 WES CRAVEN

(Last year: 24)

The father of Freddy Krueger bounced back from a series of (admittedly entertaining) box office disappointments by directing the sleeper success SCREAM in 1996. Then he proved that lightning could strike twice with 1997's SCREAM 2. Dimension wants him back for SCREAM 3, and Craven is using that clout to get the go-ahead for projects of his own.

14 JOHN HUGHES

(Last year: not ranked)

The one-time king of dumb teen comedies (including WEIRD SCIENCE), Hughes has recently forged a new career by applying his HOME ALONE formula for box office success to remakes of beloved fantasy classics: MIRACLE ON 34TH STREET, 101 DALMATIANS, and FLUBBER. The results were hardly praiseworthy, but DALMATIANS was a certified blockbuster two years ago, and last year FLUBBER did almost as well (over \$90-million domestic), insuring that Hughes will continue to be given a free hand.

15 TOM SHADYAC

(Last year: not ranked)

Not a fantasy specialist per se, this comic writer-director almost single-handedly revived Eddie Murphy's stalling career with a remake of THE NUTTY PROFESSOR, which went on to achieve certified blockbuster status. Then he topped that by guiding Jim Carrey through LIAR, LIAR. His next effort is a straight-out comedy, but he's proved his ability to spin box office gold whenever he returns to the genre.

#14: John Hughes (WEIRD SCIENCE) scored with remakes of Disney's 101 DALMATIANS and FLUBBER.

