

The X Files

The Delphine Dilemma

by Aaron Thode

Editor's Note: This script was written in June of 1994, just after the first season of *The X-Files* ended on Fox. Rumors and speculation on the fate of the X-Files unit abounded, and this story was written in a climate of unknown futures. As this zine goes to press, we are still learning how "The Erlenmeyer Flask" will affect the X-Files and the people who pursue the Truth.

Author's Preface and Disclaimer

Like all X-files, this story is based (a better word is "inspired") by actual events that have been taking place in Texas over the past six months.

To avoid copyright accusations, I acknowledge I have made references to Douglas Adam's *Hitchhiker* series and Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, and I stress that any resemblance between this story and anything Chris Carter's staff may be working on is coincidental.

The Nimitz Research Center does not exist. All other locations mentioned in the story, with the possible exception of Washington, D.C., do exist.

All of the characters in the story are completely fictitious, and any resemblance to any person, alive or dead, is coincidental.

A BRIDGE ALONG HIGHWAY 89, JUST OUTSIDE JAMAICA BEACH, TEXAS. JUNE 1994

A patrol car, an ambulance and several other rescue vehicles sit parked on the shoulder. Two policemen are walking toward the bridge, which spans a shallow ravine carved out by the ocean.

First Officer: When did this happen?

Second Officer: A motorist reported seeing the wreck this morning. However, since the car landed at least twelve feet below the bridge, it wouldn't have been visible during the night. We'll have to wait for the autopsy to establish a time of death. Hope they can figure something out. The body was pretty waterlogged.

The officers walk down a series of switchbacks beside the bridge.

First Officer: Do we know the cause of death?

Second Officer: The wreck must have been pretty spectacular — there are no skid marks or other signs of braking on the road, so we estimate he must have been pushing sixty when he left the road and did his stunt. Too bad no one saw it. (Steps onto beach) Would have made quite an impression. It made quite an impression on him, that's for sure. We're going to have a hell of a time figuring out whether anything was wrong with him before the crash.

Several men in wet suits are pulling a body bag onto shore, where a backboard is waiting. The officers watch the rescuers tie the body to the board for the difficult climb ahead.

First Officer: Any ID on the fella yet?

Second Officer: We've got a check running on the license plates, which should give us a good idea of who he is, assuming the car hasn't been stolen. The windshield had a Navy parking sticker, though. We may be in for some jurisdictional troubles.

They walk on by a photographer taking photos of the accident scene. He glances down at something, steps around it, and resumes his work. The camera slowly pans down until a dead dolphin, covered in seaweed, appears in the foreground. It has no obvious signs of injury.

FADEOUT. CREDITS.

Fade to FBI HEADQUARTERS, WASHINGTON, DC, WHITE-COLLAR CRIMES SECTION.
TWO DAYS LATER.

Dana Scully glances into the Fox Mulder's new office. The office is spartan and antiseptic. Boxes of unpacked paraphernalia lie stacked against the wall. Mulder is sitting, slumped at his desk, staring at a photograph and short memorandum.

Scully: (Hesitating in doorway) Hello, Mulder.

Mulder: (Looking up, a little surprised, then trying to look cheerful) Greetings, Scully. Where have you been exiled to?

Scully: I've been working with the Medical Laboratory sections these past few months. (Pauses as someone walks past door). And how are you doing?

Mulder: Oh, I am finding accounting absolutely fascinating. Did you know that there are five legal ways of depreciating physical assets? Wish I'd known that before I bought my car.

Scully: (Reproachfully as she comes into the office) Mulder —

Mulder: What do you want me to say, Scully? That I'm fine? That I've shrugged off being locked away from the X-files? That I don't mind Assistant Skinner smiling at me whenever I go upstairs instead of down into the basement? Would that make you feel better, that I have given up so that you can too?

Scully: (Hurt and a little angry) Given up? (Leans forward over desk) I'm just being realistic, Mulder — I'm trying my best with what's been given me. I know you're upset, but you should be doing the same. I mean, there must be *something* interesting here.

Mulder: You want interesting. I have here in front of me my major accomplishment over the past week — a psychological profile of one of the chief culprits of the savings and loan scandal. (Points to photograph) I was hoping for something interesting from a man who cheated taxpayers out of hundreds of millions of dollars without compunction — a distant father, megalomania, anything.

Scully: What did you find?

Mulder: He is perfectly normal. I would find that funny if it weren't so terrifying. So, go ahead and inspire me, Scully. What interesting things are you working on?

Scully: Autopsies. I'm flying out to Texas in a few days to conduct an examination of a Navy civilian scientist who died in an auto accident several days ago. Apparently the Navy insists on a Fed to do the final examination.

Mulder: Sounds real uplifting.

Scully: (Pulling out a dossier) From what I understand, finding the fellow's cause of death might actually be pretty challenging. The man, Harold Sumner, apparently lost control of his vehicle, left the road, and landed in the ocean. He suffered extensive trauma from the crash, then was immersed in sea water for who knows how long. A real jigsaw puzzle.

Scully relaxes as she talks, focusing her attention on the grainy faxed photographs in the report she hands to Mulder. Thus she misses Mulder's expression as he studies the crash scene.

Mulder: I'm sorry I was sarcastic before, Scully. This actually looks fairly interesting. Do you have a copy?

Scully: (Glad to catch his interest) Why, yes, I can get you one.

Mulder: Great. (Glances at clock, the only adornment on the wall, and starts rising). Well, I need to go to a tax seminar in a few minutes, but thanks for stopping by. (As Scully turns to leave, he adds quietly:) And thanks for your advice.

Scully: (At the door, turning) He died in my arms, Mulder. I haven't forgotten that. I'm not saying quit — just lie low for a little while — don't make waves or say anything that could get you into trouble for now. (Exits)

Mulder: (Staring at report) For now ...

Cut to ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SKINNER'S OFFICE. TWO DAYS LATER.

Assistant Director Skinner is seated behind his desk. Beside him stands a clean-shaven man, and in the background by the curtain, half-hidden in shadow, the Smoking Man. Agent Scully walks into the room.

Skinner: Agent Scully, I apologize for calling you here just before you are leaving, but I'd like you to meet someone. Dana Scully, I'd like you to meet Agent Darell Roschner.

Scully: (Nods to Roschner) How do you do.

Roschner: Hello.

Skinner: Agent Roschner is in charge of our relatively young Environmental Crimes Section.

Scully: The wave of the future, I've heard.

Roschner: We like to think so. Apparently, so does your former partner, Fox Mulder. He has asked to participate in one of our cases. Our caseload is rather heavy, so

we're happy to have any help we can, but apparently the situation is more complex than I realized. (Glances at Skinner)

Skinner: Agent Scully, has Agent Mulder discussed this request to you?

Scully: No (Pause) — in fact, this is the first time I've heard of it.

Skinner: I had hoped to learn from you why he wishes to pursue such an action. After all, (Peers over glasses) you are the agent best acquainted with Mr. Mulder's methods and motivations.

Roschner: Agent Scully, the Assistant Director has expressed concern that Agent Mulder's background may be incompatible with our work. I've taken the liberty of examining his record, and it seems his expertise is in constructing psychological profiles of serial killers and other such types. I'm sure he's very good at what he does, but I come across very few psychopathic litterers in my line of work.

Scully: (Glancing at Skinner) Although Agent Mulder's background is indeed in psychology, we have worked together on a broad range of subjects, some of which I suppose could be labeled environmental crimes. Unfortunately, (Glances at Skinner again) all of our cases have been classified by the bureau.

Skinner: Although you are free to choose whom you want, Agent Roschner, I believe Agent Mulder would be an inappropriate addition to your team. If you wish to have more manpower, I can arrange a transfer of some other agents to you. (Abruptly rises). That will be all. Agent Scully, would you stay behind for a moment? (Roschner leaves, and Scully fidgets). Ms. Scully, I hope I don't need to remind you that what we have done to Mr. Mulder is for his own good.

Scully: Of course not, sir.

Skinner: Despite what I said in this office, Roschner may still be interested in Agent Mulder. If he asks you any further questions, I'm sure you'll be able to provide the appropriate answers.

Scully: I will do my best, sir.

Skinner: (Obviously not knowing how to interpret that last statement, but seems reluctant to show skepticism in front of Smoking Man.) Dismissed.

Scully leaves.

Smoking Man: Can't you order Roschner not to take Mulder?

Skinner: Unfortunately, no. Do you know what Mulder is looking for?

Smoking Man: Were you expecting an answer to that question?

Cut to SCULLY'S OFFICE

Scully is packing her briefcase. Roschner knocks on the doorway.

Roschner: Agent Scully, despite what happened in there, I am still very interested in Agent Mulder. His reputation is, shall we say, unique. Would you mind giving me your frank opinion of him?

Scully: If you did accept him, what would he be working on?

Roschner: We are currently investigating possible violations of federal environmental dumping laws along the Texas coast. There are some sensitive wetlands along there, and we believe several major petroleum and chemical companies may be illegally dumping effluents into the area.

Scully: (Thoughtfully) Texas —

Scully is closing the folder with photos of the Navy scientist's accident. Switch to close-up of photographs of three dead dolphins on the beach next to the crash scene, and then to a close-up of Scully's face, thinking.

Roschner: Agent Scully? Did I say something strange?

Dissolve to MARINE MAMMAL STRANDING NETWORK — TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY AT GALVESTON. STATE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE. TWO DAYS LATER.

Mulder walks to doorway, looks in to his left and sees the bespectacled Director, an elderly man with a leathery but kind face.

Mulder: Dr. Carl Hoffstader?

Hoffstader: Agent Mulder, I'm glad to meet you so soon after your call.

Mulder: Sorry I'm a few minutes late. Apparently there's a storm brewing in the Gulf of Mexico and some flights from Houston were being rerouted, which tied up the runways.

Hoffstader: That's perfectly all right. In fact, it allowed me to give some background to your partner.

Mulder: Partner? (A large high-backed chair swivels in front of him, revealing Scully, who smiles graciously)

Scully: Hello, Agent Mulder. Dr. Hoffstader has been kind enough to brief me on what his center does. It's quite an accomplishment. (Turns to Hoffstader) I didn't realize how much time a place like this spends on orphaned animals.

Hoffstader: We certainly do. During the seal breeding season our volunteers often have to work round the clock. Here (Rummaging) I have lots of brochures describing our facility (Wryly) we nonprofits must spend much time and effort begging for money.

Scully: Thank you, Director. (Places in her briefcase)

During this exchange Mulder has been uncharacteristically speechless, but he recovers.

Mulder: Agent Scully, a pleasant surprise you could make it. I thought you were occupied with other matters.

Scully: Fortunately, I finished the autopsy early this morning, and Dr. Hoffstader was kind enough to tell me when your appointment was.

Hoffstader: Yes, she called just a few hours after you did. When I learned about her expertise in dissection, I was happy to invite her here. As you are well aware, we seem to be getting an endless supply of bodies.

Mulder: (All business again) When did this whole situation begin?

Hoffstader: About a month ago we began noticing a sharp increase in the number of dead dolphins washing ashore. Of course, dolphin beachings are nothing new. Viral infections, shark attacks, other injuries—over the course of a year we typically find 200 or so bodies along the Texas coast.

But what we're facing now is something unprecedented. Two years ago a morbillivirus killed nearly 400 dolphins in the Gulf of Mexico, and I thought I would see nothing worse. (Opens a record book). I just retallied the counts last night. Since last month, over 80 dolphins have washed onto beaches from the Matagorda Peninsula to Louisiana.

Mulder: I read a little bit about morbilliviruses in preparing for this meeting. If I understand correctly, they are a family of viruses that include human measles and canine distemper, and are a common source of marine mammal deaths.

Hoffstader: That's correct.

Mulder: As I told you over the phone, I'm working on a case involving pollution in the Gulf of Mexico. In your opinion, can industrial pollution weaken the immune systems of dolphins so that they are more susceptible to outbreaks of disease?

Hoffstader: Possibly. But I'm afraid that's not the situation here. None of the dolphins examined had obvious signs of injury or disease. A PCR analysis conducted by the Air Force Institute of Pathology on 36 samples of lung tissue found no trace of morbillivirus or any other virus. The dolphins were perfectly healthy, as far as we can tell.

Mulder: What is PCR?

Scully: (Interjecting) Polymerase Chain Reaction. It's a relatively new technique that can detect extremely small amounts of DNA or RNA in biological tissues. The FBI often uses the method to carry out DNA fingerprint analyses.

Mulder: Thanks.

Scully: (Cools) No problem.

Mulder: Are the dead dolphins all the same species?

Hoffstader: No, whatever this is, it seems indiscriminate. The majority of deaths are bottlenose dolphins, but they have the largest population around here anyway.

Scully: What about other animals? Seals? Fish?

Hoffstader: Good question. No, just dolphins and a few orcas—killer whales — which are technically dolphins too. The seals and sea lions are just fine, as are the

pelicans and gulls. That's another reason why I am doubtful that these events are related to your current case, Agent Mulder.

If some new type of pollution were being dumped around here, it would be affecting more than dolphins.

Mulder: Have you notified any authorities or the press?

Hoffstader: No, I didn't want to make a great deal of noise until I could prove something strange was going on. By next week I probably would have issued a press release.

Scully: Do you have any of the bodies here?

Hoffstader: Yes, as a matter of fact, we still have around half the bodies in storage. Normally we hold them for two months or so, but with the increased volume, we are disposing them almost as soon as we get them. But if you would like to examine them, Doctor, please feel free to do so. I'm afraid we need all the help we can get.

OPERATING ROOM, TEXAS A&M AT GALVESTON

Scully is washing up for the dissection. Mulder is hovering around, looking and feeling useless.

Mulder: Am I getting that predictable?

She nods, otherwise ignoring him.

Mulder: How did you know I was coming here?

Scully: Agent Roschner came by my office two days ago and told me about your transfer request. I wondered why you had done that — and then I remembered the report I gave you. (Finishes washing hands) Looking at the pictures again, I saw the dolphins. From there it was just a few phone calls away from Hoffstader and confirming that you were coming here this morning. (Glances at him) Let me guess — besides cattle mutilations, alien abductions, and prehistoric parasites, you know everything about dolphins too, right?

Mulder: Actually, my interest flagged when I entered the Academy. I couldn't keep up with everything.

Scully: (Putting on latex gloves) Mulder, why didn't you tell me? If you were on to something, why didn't you let me know?

Mulder: (Facetiously) You said to lie low, don't say anything. I thought that was good advice.

Scully: From me, Mulder? I thought you trusted me. (Walks to cutting table) I thought we were partners.

Mulder: (Sensing that she is hurt) I do trust you, Scully. It's just that, well, all I had was a grainy photograph and a wild hunch. I didn't want to say anything until I was sure those dolphin deaths were unusual. Even after calling Hoffstader and learning about this peak, even now (Gesturing toward table) I don't know whether this will

lead anywhere or not. I guess I didn't want to say anything that would make me look crazy, that's all.

Scully: (Deadpan) Now why would I think you're crazy, Mulder?

Mulder: (Smiling slightly, gestures toward dolphin) Anything here to prove otherwise?

Scully: (Detached) Well, cetacean forensics is not my specialty, but this subject is what Dr. Hoffstader called condition code 4, or quite decomposed. Skeleton exposed in several places, dorsal fin and rostrum partially missing. I think the subject has been dead for several weeks, and has been lying on the shore for a long time. (Glances at Mulder) There isn't much here. Why did you choose this one?

Mulder: I was assuming that since the dolphin was so decomposed compared to the others, it might have been killed earlier, and may give us a clue to how and when this whole thing started.

Scully: You're really pushing your hunches, aren't you?

Time passes. A rancid odor fills the air (although how one gets that across on TV is a slight problem).

Scully: This is interesting. The stomach is still relatively intact and has some undigested material in it. Fish — I'd say the remains of three whole ones.

Mulder: Is that unusual?

Scully: (Shrugs) All I can say is that the subject died within an hour after eating.

Mulder: Why are you calling it "the subject" anyway?

Scully: I don't know — it just feels appropriate.

More time passes.

Scully: Nothing more here. I suggest we look at some fresher patients.

(Much time passes)

Scully: As far as I can tell, the subjects were perfectly healthy. No internal damage or bleeding, no signs of circulatory or respiratory infection. (Looks for Mulder) We're learning nothing here — I'm afraid you have nothing to back up your hunch. What time is it?

Mulder: (Emerging in a rubber apron, mask, and gloves) Time to quit. You've done more than enough to help me chase ghosts, Scully. Here, I'll help you clean up.

Scully: (Slightly disappointed, although can't explain why) Hoffstader just instructed us to shove the remains into these plastic bags for disposal tomorrow.

Mulder grimaces while shoving the dolphins into the bags. Looking around, he sees the fish still sitting on the table. Picking them up, he is about to throw them away when he starts. He begins to massaging the fish.

Scully: What in the world are you doing?

Mulder: Look at this. (Squeezes out what a large pill) Isn't that some sort of medicine?

Scully: (Picking it up) Why yes, it is. I have no idea what is in it, though.

All the disappointment residing in Mulder's face and posture has vanished. His voice is now crisp and confident.

Mulder: I know what it is — it's some sort of vitamin. Now where would a dolphin be fed a fish with a vitamin?

Scully: (Realization dawning) It would have to be in captivity.

Mulder: And it died shortly after eating. I think I have a straw to grasp.

Cut to CHEAP FAST-FOOD DINER.

Mulder and Scully are eating hamburgers in a booth. Across from them a black-and-white TV is carrying the 10 o'clock weather report.

Mulder is leafing through the brochure the Director had given to Scully.

Scully: The death of that dolphin may be unrelated to the others.

Mulder: I know its a long shot, but it's all I have, and I have a bit of time to kill.

Scully: What about Roschner's assignment?

Mulder: I have a five-day window before the wetland water analyses come in. (Points to brochure) Anyway, the Center has cages for sea lions and seals, but not whales. Those they send to other places. There are two listed here: the Marine World in Galveston and —

Scully: — the Nimitz Naval Research Lab along the Matagorda Peninsula.

Mulder: (Glancing up) That's right.

Scully: That's where Harold Sumner worked.

Mulder: The dead scientist?

Scully: (Nodding) The man who started you on this whole thing.

Mulder: Tomorrow morning, I'll talk to the Marine World trainers and see if they are missing or have released any dolphins. Hopefully from them I can also get the names of other captive dolphins along this coast. However, I have a hunch that the Flippers at Marine World are present and accounted for.

Scully: I can arrange an appointment for both of us to enter the Navy Lab tomorrow afternoon. It's perfectly reasonable that I should ask Sumner's co-workers about his habits and his work, especially given his cause of death.

Mulder: Which was?

Scully: Heart attack on the highway. His internal injuries did not bleed as much as they should have had his heart still been working, and there were other characteristic signs. It was a trivial diagnosis, actually.

Mulder: Do you honestly like your new job, Scully?

Scully: (Stares over her cup of coffee, sighs, and puts it down) It's all right, it's just so — conventional.

Mulder: (Smiles) Tired of rational explanations?

Scully: (Smiles back) Who *me*? (Glances at watch) I'd better turn in — tomorrow promises to be a busy day. (Gathers briefcase, notes, and rises) Goodnight, Mulder.

Mulder: Goodnight, Scully. I think I'll stay up for a while (Pulls out some books on dolphins). I need to reacquaint myself with some old friends.

As Scully leaves, the camera pans over to the TV set.

Announcer: — and the latest satellite picture shows what the National Weather Service is now calling Tropical Storm Julie. The storm is moving slowly but steadily toward the Texas-Louisiana border, and we expect the Weather Service to issue a storm warning any time now ...

Cut to NIMITZ NAVAL RESEARCH CENTER, MATAGORDA PENINSULA, NEXT AFTERNOON.

Scully and Mulder are walking to the gate.

Mulder: Dr. Hoffsteader has received no reports of missing dolphins. I've contacted Marine World, and they and this laboratory are the only locations nearby with dolphin facilities. None of their stars are missing, but they are behaving strangely.

Scully: What are they doing?

Mulder: Apparently they are being uncooperative and noisy — 'more whistles than a horny construction worker' is one description that sticks in my mind.

A middle-aged man with a cane and a sailor in a Naval midshipman's uniform meet them at the gate.

Joshua Harper: Hello, welcome to the Nimitz Research Station. I'm Joshua Harper, and this is Midshipman Thomas Macky, our security chief. (The Midshipman nods) I'm sorry we couldn't meet in happier circumstances.

Scully: Dr. Harper, I'm Dana Scully, and this is my partner Fox Mulder.

Harper: Why don't we go down to my office, where hopefully I can answer you questions. (Begins limping off, with support of the cane.)

Cut to HARPER'S OFFICE

Scully: Dr. Harper, I am required to ask these questions, but you are not required to answer them. Was Dr. Sumner in poor health the last time you saw him?

Harper: Harold was a remarkably fit man for his age, although he did smoke occasionally. He spent a great deal of time outside, so much so that I think he was recently treated for skin cancer. (Pats his leg) He has never needed surgery, which is better than I have done.

Mulder: (Gestures toward leg) An accident?

Harper: (Bemused) A hang-gliding accident in my youth. I was braver and stupider back then.

Scully: (Refusing to be distracted) What was the nature of Dr. Sumner's work, and was it controversial in any way?

Harper: (Choosing words carefully) Dr. Sumner was responsible for designing and organizing the visual and auditory signals we use to train the marine mammals here. I don't believe anyone hated him personally, but there are those who hated this place.

Scully: Who?

Harper: Over the years there has been a growing movement to release all dolphins and whales from captivity. The argument goes that these animals are so intelligent that keeping them captive is akin to imprisonment. I don't know if you've seen the movie *Free Willy*, but that is the sort of attitude we're facing. Over the past year an organization called "Delphine Freedom" has been publicly criticizing our work here.

Scully: What are their accusations?

Harper: Well, the usual — that the Navy trains these animals to attack humans or attach mines to the bottom of ships. What we actually do is train them to locate lost divers or equipment, and even to use special tools to retrieve materiel from the ocean floor. Of course, the truth is not nearly as interesting as their fantasies.

Scully: Would these "Delphines" be capable of violent action against your organization?

Harper: Six months ago, I would have said no, but recently they have been vandalizing the property, and once they even tried to break into the facility. I don't want to accuse anybody — it's a large step from vandalism to murder — but you wanted me to mention every possibility.

Mulder: Dr. Harper, while Agent Scully continues the questions, would it be possible for someone to show me where the attempted break-in took place?

Harper: (Hesitating slightly) It wasn't much of an attempt, but certainly. (Summons Macky) Macky can guide you.

Macky escorts Mulder out of the office.

Cut To NIMITZ NAVAL RESEARCH STATION, OUTSIDE.

Mulder is standing by a chain-link fence near the seals' holding pens. He examines a spot where some of the link has been cut away and repatched.

Mulder: Is the fence alarmed?

Macky: Yes, sir, and they ran away as soon as it went off.

Mulder: This was a crude attempt, all right. Nothing much here. (Stands) However, I would like to walk along the fence for a while.

Macky: Certainly, sir, but we have already checked the fence. (Mulder is already retreating)

Mulder approaches the dolphin tank. It is a large rectangular pit dug several feet from the ocean proper. Coils of barbed wire cover the concrete barrier that separates the tank from the ocean. A channel five feet wide, four feet deep, and three feet long once existed through the wall, allowing the ocean to mix with the tank. Now a gate consisting of thick steel plates seal off the channel. Mulder stares at this assembly for a few moments, then looks at the one dolphin in the tank.

Mulder: Is he the only dolphin here?

Macky: Yes, sir.

Mulder wanders around the tank, peering at various pieces of equipment, a sink, a hose, etc. He notices a whiteboard and walks to it. There is a number written on the left edge, and a series of dates printed along the top.

Mulder: This number, "73-45A," refers to the dolphin in there?

Macky: Yes sir. That, I believe, is a schedule of when the animal should be fed vitamins and other medicinal supplements.

Mulder: Does he have a name?

Macky: It is against policy to name the animals, sir.

Mulder walks to the pool edge and looks in. There are several windows in the tank that look into corridors. The dolphin rises to the surface and listlessly examines Mulder. It breathes very slowly.

Mulder: How old is he?

Macky: I'm not sure of the exact age, but he's an ancient one, sir. I think he was one of the first ones to arrive here when the center opened in the early seventies.

Mulder: Not real sociable, is he?

Macky: No, sir.

Mulder: He just likes to sit there and watch you, eyes half open, giving little, seeing all. I used to know someone who acted just like that — he's dead now. (Looks over his shoulder at Macky) How much does he eat?

Macky: We typically feed him three fish a day. We store the fish in the freezer over there (Gestures).

Scully and Harper emerge from a nearby building as Mulder is looking through the freezer.

Harper: There you are, Agent Mulder. Agent Scully has just finished asking her questions, so I think I will get back to work.

Mulder: Look, Scully — this is the same kind of fish we found yesterday. (Turns to Harper) If it is not too much trouble, may I ask two more questions?

Harper: Certainly.

Mulder: If this "Delphine" organization has not seriously threatened your animals, why have you recently installed this barrier? (Gestures toward the steel-plates and barbed wire) From the lack of corrosion on its surface, it can't be more than a few months old.

Harper: (Cautiously) You are correct Mr. Mulder. It is relatively new.

Mulder: My second question is, why didn't you tell us you have been transferring the dolphins out of this facility within the past month?

Harper: (Looking at Macky) Why do you say that?

Mulder: This dolphin eats three fish a day, according to Mr. Macky. If that's the case, you have a six month supply sitting there in the freezer, which is strange, considering that the expiration date for this particular package is three months.

He walks over to the whiteboard.

Mulder: But what really strikes me is this whiteboard. When a surface like this is exposed to the sun for a long time, the whiteness of the board tends to fade, except where it is protected by ink. Currently only one dolphin ID number is listed there, but there are faint traces of other numbers and dates that have been erased. There were five rows in that chart, and all had markings that extended to this column, which was sometime last month. All this, and other indications, lead me to suspect that you aren't being very straightforward with us.

Harper: (Turns to Macky) Thank you for watching Agent Mulder, Macky. That will be all. (Macky leaves) I believe we should go to the Director's office.

Cut to DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, TEN MINUTES LATER.

Director: What is your real reason for coming here?

Scully: I am here to determine the circumstances behind Dr. Sumner's death, as you are well aware. My colleague here, Fox Mulder, is from our environmental crimes division. He is in the area trying to locate a cause behind the deaths of a great many dolphins along this coastal area.

Mulder: I have reason to believe that one of the first dolphins to die came from your facility, and so Agent Scully was kind enough to let me accompany her unofficially.

Director: If that truly is the case, Mr. Mulder, I'm curious why you weren't up front with us in the first place.

Mulder: I honestly thought that someone would mention a dolphin release during Scully's questioning. I didn't expect a coverup, and so now I'm curious why you weren't up front with us in the first place.

- Director: (Turning to the window) The hole in the fence you saw, Mr. Mulder, was the Delphines' first attempt. Their second one, late last May, was much more effective.
- Mulder: Effective enough to release a dolphin.
- Director: Yes. Someone managed to swim or motor up to the gate you saw out there, open it, and somehow get the animal out.
- Scully: It seems your security must have been rather lax for that to occur.
- Director: That's part of the reason Macky is our new security chief.
- Mulder: So that's one dolphin. What happened to the others?
- Director: To prevent further incidents, we decided to transfer the animals. Every week during the past month we have shipped an animal on a special truck to facilities on the West Coast. We have been evacuating them gradually, partially because we have only one truck, but mainly because we didn't want to attract the attention of the press — or others.
- Mulder: When will the last dolphin be transferred?
- Director: The truck is presently on its return route, passing through New Mexico. It should arrive back here tomorrow evening, at which point this facility will be relieved of its last cetacean, the first time in its history, I might add. (Cleans glasses) The Navy wanted to keep this quiet, for obvious reasons. Now that you both know what we are planning, you must both keep this information confidential.
- Scully: I'm not so sure that will be possible.
- Director: What do you mean?
- Scully: Mulder's current hypothesis is that your dolphin carried some disease that infected the wild population. (Mulder looks askance at her, but says nothing) Unless you can verify that your remaining dolphins are healthy, Mulder here will have to assume this epidemic is spreading to the West Coast, and notify the Fish and Wildlife Service, the California State Health Department, and our regional offices in Los Angeles and San Francisco.
- Mulder: (Grinning apologetically) I'm sorry I have to be such a jerk about this, but 80 dolphins have been killed here within a month. If this thing reaches the Pacific, the results could be horrendous.
- Director: (Tapping his pencil) I see your point. I'll tell you what we can do. I'll have the most recent medical records of the other four dolphins sent in from California, and you can see for yourself that they are perfectly healthy. I'm afraid that's the best I can do, unless you are willing to go to California.
- Scully: I think the records should be sufficient. How long will it take to receive them?
- Director: I can have the analyses faxed here in by the end of the working day, if you are willing to wait or come back for them.

Scully: (Looks at Mulder, who nods) That will be fine, thank you.

Director: Certainly. You understand I'm in a delicate situation here. I'll appreciate it if you don't make it any more difficult than it is.

Cut to CAR, THE ROAD TO GALVESTON, A FEW MINUTES LATER

Scully is driving the rental car, Mulder is sitting beside her in the front seat.

Scully: Well, you were right about that dolphin. It must have been one of the first to die, after all.

Mulder: Yes, although I was a bit surprised that the release was actually an escape. By the way, that was quick thinking, making up that plague story.

Scully: I didn't make that up. It's the only theory that fits the facts: a radical group releases a dolphin, which dies hours later, followed shortly by a massive die-off. Of course, it could still be just a coincidence.

Mulder: No, Scully, we are on to something; otherwise, the Director would not have lied to us.

Scully: You don't think he was telling the truth?

Mulder: I keep seeing that gate in front of my mind's eye, and from what I could tell, it was not designed to prevent external entry — the lock holding it in place was cheap and easily smashed, and there is no alarm. Instead it was very tall, with a great deal of barbed wire on top. I think that gate was there to prevent the dolphins from jumping out.

Scully: That's a bit of speculation.

Mulder: How would you explain the soft foam sandwiched between the steel plates? The only rational purpose for putting it there would be for attenuating oceanic noise. It makes no sense to me, Scully, and that's why I think we're seeing only glimpses of the real story. I want to locate this *Free Willy* fan club — maybe they will help clarify things for us.

Scully: I'll tell you what. After I drop you off at your motel, I need to go fetch the results of Sumner's blood tests. By then those medical records should probably be ready, and I can go pick them up. That will give you time to locate this group and confuse yourself even further.

Mulder: That would work out wonderfully, Scully, but would that interfere with your official assignment?

Scully: (Quiet for a moment) If you have the time, I can work it in. Don't worry about me.

Cut to TEXAS A&M — HOFFSTEADER'S OFFICE

Hoffsteader: Delphine Freedom? Why yes, a former colleague of mine, John Lillian, belongs to that group. I believe he has been a member for quite a while. Let me look up his address for you. (Rummages through his disorganized desk)

Mulder: On the way back I thought of a few more questions. Is this die-off limited to Texas alone?

Hoffsteader: I don't know. I've requested statistics from other centers around the country, and they haven't sent them yet.

Mulder: I've also been wondering, given the locations of the beached dolphins, would it be possible to retrace their path back to a source, if any?

Hoffsteader: Five years ago, I would have said no. But I know the physical oceanography department has recently written a computer program that models coastal currents in the Gulf of Mexico. While the results would be so rough as to be practically useless, I suppose I could ask them to do a few runs. (Stands up) Ah, here you are. I wish you luck, Mr. Mulder. John Lillian is — well, let's say he's not your typical scientist.

Cut to RESIDENTIAL AREA NEAR GALVESTON, SUNSET.

Mulder walks up to the door of a neat but nondescript house, and rings the doorbell. An elderly woman answers.

Mulder: Good evening, ma'am. My name is Fox Mulder, and I am from the FBI. (Flashes badge) Is a Mr. John Lillian at home?

Woman: (Nervous) Yes, he is. What is this about?

Mulder: I'd just like to ask him a few questions concerning incidents the Nimitz Naval Research Center.

Woman: Just a minute, please.

A few minutes later, a sixtyish-looking man with iron gray hair (no glasses) comes to the door.

John Lillian: Good evening, come on in. We'll talk in the back yard.

Cut to JOHN LILLIAN'S BACK YARD.

Lillian: I love the clouds that herald the approach of a storm — their patterns are simple, but intricate. (Turns to Mulder) What can I do for you, Mr. Mulder?

Mulder: Dr. Lillian, are you a member of Delphine Freedom?

Lillian: Yes, I was a founding member in the late seventies.

Mulder: That was when you left your position in the Navy?

Lillian: That's right. Where did you learn that?

Mulder: Dr. Hoffsteader at Texas A&M was very helpful in giving me your background. I even have a couple of your papers. Did you leave voluntarily?

Lillian: Let's just say it was a mutual request. I didn't like what they were doing, and they didn't like what I was doing.

Mulder: I'm assuming they didn't like your "mind expansion" experiments with LSD and sense deprivation tanks.

Lillian: Obviously, and I didn't like their dolphin research program. When I first joined that program, I thought dolphins were just animals. Relatively smart animals, but still animals. A year later I started to change my mind, and from then on it was virtually assured I and the Navy would part ways.

Mulder: I take it you assume that dolphins are as intelligent as humans?

Lillian: Mr. Mulder, dolphins are not only as smart as men — they're smarter. We think that because we have computers and weapons we are more advanced than they are. Well, dolphins have existed as a species three times longer than we have, and they have a civilization much more complex than ours. Theirs necessarily is one of the mind — an abstract, oral society — but I'm convinced theirs is the more advanced. Citizens of advanced civilizations abhor violence and emphasize reason. They have no concept of mistrust, betrayal or hatred. They help complete strangers to safety, even if they get no benefit from it. There are countless stories of dolphins helping humans — drowning swimmers and the like — but very few stories of humans helping dolphins.

Mulder: So dolphins are either very stupid or very enlightened — and you take the latter viewpoint.

Lillian: I believe that if mankind ever reaches the stars, any civilization they find will be more like the dolphins' than ours. Fortunately, I think men will never break beyond the solar system to trouble them. These are very interesting questions, coming from an FBI agent.

Mulder: Let me revert to form. Did your organization attempt to break into the Nimitz Research Center along the Matagorda Peninsula last month?

Lillian: That would be against the law, now, wouldn't it, Mr. Mulder? Our activities are completely legal. We act as a watchdog organization to keep the military honest. We bring in independent veterinarians to check the health of the captives every so often, and tag along behind the Navy during their training sessions at sea. Think of us as an Amnesty International for cetaceans.

Mulder: Are you aware that a dolphin escaped from the facility May 30, and a large number of dolphins began washing up dead on the beach soon afterward?

Lillian: Dr. Hoffstader has told me about his recent problems at the center, but I did not know about the escape from the facility — I can only say I wish it happened more often. (Glancing at the sunset) I had planned to do some writing this evening, Mr. Mulder. Do you have any further questions?

Mulder: Not at the moment; however, if you get any information about either of these two subjects, would you contact me at this number?

Lillian: Certainly, but it's unlikely you'll hear from me.

Dissolve from SUNSET SHOT to CHEAP NEON SIGN FOR GALVESTON MOTEL.

Mulder enters the lobby.

Mulder: I'd like to keep my room for two more nights, please.

Clerk: Certainly, sir. (Looks at his key). Sir, there is a message for you. (Fetches a piece of paper from the mail slots).

Mulder stares at it for a moment, then looks off into the distance. The message reads: Highway 87, Mile 15, 11 p.m. Alone.

Cut to SOMEWHERE NEAR MILE FIFTEEN, HIGHWAY 87. 10:55 p.m.

Mulder exits car, which has been parked along the shoulder of the road. No other car or sign of life is visible. Mulder begins walking down the road, back toward camera.

Voice: Stop right there, Agent Mulder.

A masked man is pointing a gun at Mulder, who slowly turns around to face the speaker. The man shines a flashlight in Mulder's face.

Man: Drop your gun.

Mulder: (Disarming himself) I'm afraid I only have \$20, and I left my American Express card at the motel.

Man: I apologize for these precautions, but I don't know if I can trust you.

Mulder: I can understand the feeling, but you must trust someone else even less for you to call this meeting.

Man: You're right. I've taken an extreme risk even coming here. My time is short. What did the Director of the Nimitz Center tell you about the fate of the dolphins once held there?

Mulder: He said they were shipped off to the West Coast out of concern for their security and safety.

Man: Technically, that's right. But what he neglected to tell you is that they are now all dead.

Mulder: (Not completely surprised, but definitely upset) How?

Man: Officially, the stress of the trip sent their hearts into fibrillation within hours of their arrival at the new facilities.

Mulder: In other words, they died of heart attacks?

Man: Yes.

Mulder: Is the official explanation the truth?

Man: Strictly speaking, yes. But they didn't die from natural causes. I can't prove it, but I know those dolphins were — and I chose this term deliberately — murdered.

Mulder: Why?

Man: (Hesitating) I think it must have been something they said.

Mulder looks quizzically, but expectantly at the fidgeting man.

Man: Mr. Mulder, approximately ten years ago the Navy gathered conclusive evidence that dolphins — in effect — could talk. They have a language, Mr. Mulder, capable of abstract concepts like death, love, and life. It is completely unlike any human form of communication, and for that and other technological reasons, we have been unable to crack the language, so to speak. At least, until six months ago.

Mulder: (Excited, but trying to be skeptical) Even if what you say is true, it would make it even less likely the government would kill dolphins.

Man: What precipitated the current situation was the escape of dolphin 85-60F a month ago.

Mulder: Escape? Does this mean the Delphine Freedom people weren't responsible?

Man: No, as far as I know, 85-60F acted alone when it jumped over the gate into the ocean — a spectacular, ten-foot leap across a four-foot thick wall. To train a dolphin to do that takes years, Mr. Mulder. We don't train our dolphins to jump at all.

Mulder: How did the escape alter the situation?

Man: As best we could, we tried to formulate questions asking why 85-60F left, and broadcast them to the remaining dolphins. A week after 85-60F escaped, 73-45A — the old one you saw today — said something. I was off duty when he said it, but Dr. Sumner was present. What it said was very brief, but it was enough to shut the entire project down. According to Dr. Sumner, what that dolphin said so upset — even frightened — the government that he was ordered to destroy all copies of the conversation; in fact, destroy all records of all of his conversations.

Mulder: What did the dolphin say: "So long, and thanks for all the fish?"

Man: Mr. Mulder, you must believe me.

Mulder: You're afraid that the government hasn't been content with destroying just records.

Man: I can't prove anything, Mr. Mulder, but I know, I *know* that those dolphins — and maybe even Sumner — were killed because of what 73-45A said.

Mulder: Then why is the old dolphin still here? Why wasn't he the first to go?

Man: Maybe they thought 73-45A was too old to jump the gate. Personally, I think my employers are afraid of him and what he said, and don't want to do anything to him too quickly. I don't know why that dolphin is still alive, but I know he won't be for much longer.

Mulder: What about all these other dolphin deaths along the coast?

Man: I don't know, Mr. Mulder. The situation has become too much for me. Years ago I left the scientific establishment for the chance to make a discovery that would change the way mankind views itself with respect to creation. It now seems that

mankind is not ready for this new perspective, and I'm afraid for myself, 73-45A, every dolphin alive today, and their descendants. I don't know if I can trust you, Mr. Mulder, but I can't be silent about what is happening, and who would believe an old man yelling about talking dolphins?

Mulder: I want to believe, but I need proof.

Man: I've talked too much already. (Starts backing away)

Mulder: When is the last dolphin leaving?

Man: (Limping into the dark) Tomorrow at midnight ...

Mulder: (Noting the limp, says quietly) Young or not, you're still a brave man, Dr. Harper.

DANA SCULLY'S MOTEL ROOM, MIDNIGHT.

Scully is sitting by the bed, fully dressed, watching the weather report. Someone knocks on the door. She rises, checks through the peephole, and lets Mulder in.

Scully: I got your message when I got back with the records. (Looks at his face) My God, Mulder, what happened out there?

Mulder: (Looks at her face, then speaks slowly) Did you find anything unusual in Sumner's blood test?

Scully: Actually, yes. The blood analysis found slight traces of glautocardioids.

Mulder: Chemicals that disrupt the heart's electrical impulses, causing fibrillation?

Scully: Why yes, how did you — all right, Mulder, what's going on?

(Dissolve to fifteen minutes later)

Scully: I'm sorry, Mulder, but this makes no rational sense. First of all, why would the government keep the fact of dolphin communication a secret?

Mulder: It makes perfect sense, Scully. Intelligent species are potential allies — or enemies. If you are the only ones that can speak to them, they will probably remain your allies.

Scully: This brings me to my next point. If the government has spent so much time trying to talk to them, why would they throw it all away now?

Mulder: I don't know.

Scully: Finally, if those dolphins are dead, whose medical records did I pick up this evening? I looked them over, and from what I could tell, they were perfectly healthy — and alive.

Mulder: I don't know, but I have an idea how to prove if those records are genuine.

Scully: (Softly) And what will you do if you find out they aren't?

Mulder: (Slowly) I'll cross that bridge when I get there.

Cut to JOHN LILLIAN'S HOME, NEXT MORNING, 7 a.m.

The phone rings, and Lillian answers it.

Lillian: Hello?

Mulder: John Lillian?

Lillian: Yes.

Mulder: Agent Fox Mulder, FBI. We talked yesterday evening.

Lillian: Yes, we did, and I'm afraid I've nothing new to say.

Mulder: Actually, you may. You mentioned yesterday that your organization had a veterinarian check out the dolphins at the Nimitz facility. I need to obtain his records.

Lillian: And why are you interested in this?

Mulder: I can't tell you just yet. But if you get the records to me immediately, I may just have something interesting to tell you.

Cut to SCULLY'S MOTEL ROOM, 8 a.m.

Mulder is pulling pages from Scully's portable fax machine and handing them to Scully. She is reading them, occasionally glancing at other records sitting next to her on the bed.

Mulder: Well?

Scully: These independent checkups were performed four months ago at Nimitz. They show animals with completely different heart and respiration rates, blood pressure, and blood compositions. Even the weights and lengths are slightly different.

Mulder: They are not the same dolphins, then.

Scully: Even accounting for changes in their environment — no, they're not. Mulder, I have the evidence here, but I can't believe it. Why would anyone want to kill dolphins, and cover it up?

Mulder: There is only one way to find out.

Scully: You're considering abandoning established procedures again, aren't you?

Mulder: That's the polite way of putting it.

Scully: What are you going to do?

Mulder: Rescue Deep Throat.

Scully: (Surprised) Who?

Mulder: (Half-smiling) The last surviving dolphin is a grumpy old fellow who talks very little, but what little he says scares the hell out of everybody. He also can swallow an entire foot-long mackerel whole. A perfect name, in my book.

Scully: I can't believe I'm saying this — what do you want me to do?

Mulder: I want you to take the next flight back to headquarters and show your blood tests to whoever will listen. Someone needs to bring the truth back to Washington.

Scully: You can't possibly free a dolphin by yourself —

Mulder: I think I know some people who might help me —

Scully: — without medical experience?

Mulder: (Pause) I remember someone saying the words "lie low" and "don't make waves" a few days ago. What happened to her?

Scully: Many things have happened in the past few days to change my mind, just as many things have happened in the past year.

Mulder: Scully, I don't need your help here, and I don't want your help here.

Scully: (Ignoring him) In response to the first statement, I doubt any of these Delphine Freedom people know how to neutralize the effects of glautocardioids. As to the second statement, I think you're lying, because you wouldn't have told me your plans otherwise.

Mulder: Why are you doing this, Scully? You still have a future with the bureau. Me, I'm finished. It's only a matter of time before "Spooky" Mulder is just water-cooler conversation. You, however, still have a productive career ahead of you. Don't throw it away on this.

Scully: You've given me that speech before, and all I can say is that it's my business what I do with my career. Had I wanted to lead a conventional life, I would have become a doctor, and not an FBI agent. (Long silence, as she looks down at floor, and considers saying something else) Besides, my future with the bureau isn't too bright anyway.

Mulder: I thought your new assignment was working out. Not too exciting, but okay.

Scully: (Controlled anger) It's a demotion, Mulder. I've basically been expelled from the Washington office. I'm on travel continuously, doing nothing but routine autopsies and double-checking paperwork. They'll never fire me outright, oh no, nothing that obvious. But they are assigning me such trivial busywork that I'm sure the only question they are asking themselves is when I'll leave.

Mulder: Why didn't you tell me this?

Scully: Well, you weren't exactly all bright and cheerful about your new assignment. Why should I add to your troubles?

Mulder: I'm sorry, Scully. (Moves hands awkwardly) I guess I was so wrapped up brooding about the closure of the X-files that I didn't even think about asking how my partner was doing.

Scully: Ex-partner.

Mulder: No ... partner. (Deliberately) Hypothetically, how would you neutralize these artificial heart attacks?

Scully: Hypothetically, synthesizing a vaccine shouldn't be too much trouble. It could be done within a day. The difficult part would be getting near the patient to give the injection.

Mulder: Do you have a theory as to how that might be done?

Scully: Yes.

Mulder: (Smiling) Well, you had better tell me right away. I am going to arrange a meeting with John Lillian, and I guess I had better come up with a plan.

Scully: (Smiling back) Sure.

Cut to SEA-ARAMA MARINEWORLD, NOON.

Mulder and Lillian are sitting on a bench in the middle of a crowd of tourists.

Lillian: Not very busy today. People must be preparing for the storm. (Turns to Mulder) I looked over the records you sent me, and I made my own little discrete inquiries. There is indeed only one dolphin left at Nimitz, and the other ones are not where they're supposed to be. What do you propose?

Mulder: The last dolphin is being shipped out tonight on a large truck-trailer. Unless your organization helps me, that dolphin will die just like the others.

Lillian: Mr. Mulder, you must understand my situation. I have an FBI agent sitting in front of me encouraging me to break the law. Wouldn't you be suspicious if you were in my shoes?

Mulder: Dr. Lillian, the Dallas field office has given me a great deal of information on your organization. You are not afraid of breaking the law; you are afraid of getting caught. You are familiar with the laws concerning entrapment?

Lillian: I've done some legal study, yes.

Mulder: Let me provide you with a hypothetical case. Suppose your organization does assist in a breakout, at my request and under my plan. Suppose I did turn around and try and prosecute you. Would entrapment be a valid defense?

Lillian: Under Texas law, yes, especially if you personally participated in the activity.

Mulder: What if I told you I would; in fact, that I would be the only one to break onto government property?

Lillian: I think our defense might be very strong. Exactly what might this hypothetical plan be?

Cut to a long-distance shot of the men talking, as if the camera is looking through binoculars. There is no sound except for the wind. Cut back to conversation.

Lillian: My sources actually knew who you were. What they said was very ... intriguing. Apparently you're not afraid of skirting the law either, Mr. Mulder; indeed, you're not even afraid of being caught. I wanted to reserve my judgment until I took your measure, but now I'm convinced. Eight hours is awfully short notice, but I think we can pull something together — but on one condition.

Mulder: Which is?

Scully: Our organization is dedicated to assertive nonviolence. We refuse to use any guns or other weapons that might cause bodily harm. One cannot fight evil with evil, Mr. Mulder.

Mulder: I assure you, Dr. Lillian, that this will be a hijacking worthy of an advanced civilization.

Cut to DR. HOFFSTEADER'S OFFICE, TEXAS A&M, GALVESTON. 3:00 p.m.

Hoffsteader is handing what looks like a plastic clothespin to Mulder. Scully stands by, watching.

Scully: What is that?

Hoffsteader: A transmitter. Fortunately, we had a few extra in stock. You attach it to the animal's dorsal fin, and it falls off naturally after two weeks. (Grimly) Assuming the animal lives that long.

Mulder: Other areas are experiencing problems?

Hoffsteader: Yes, and the future is not promising. The death rates are nowhere near as high as along the Texas coast, but all around North America, dolphins are beginning to wash onto shore at an above-average rate. Of course, we can't prove anything unusual is happening for another six months. By that time, it may be too late. (Focuses back to he present) Here is the receiver — as you see, it is no larger than a typical walkie-talkie, so you should have no problem carrying it. Can you tell me what you plan to do with them?

Mulder: I'm afraid we can't, but we thank you for all the help you've given us so far.

Hoffsteader: That reminds me. The physical oceanography department tried to model the drift of the dolphin corpses, but given the variability of the winds and currents and lack of high-resolution data, all they could say was that they all seem to be coming from the same general area. Unfortunately, it's a 10,000 square mile area, so we're no further than before.

Mulder: Still, that's something. Good-bye, Dr. Hoffsteader, I don't know if we will see you again. We might be called off this case very quickly.

Cut to CAR ON THE ROAD TO THE NIMITZ CENTER. 11:30 p.m.

Mulder is driving, and Scully staring straight ahead, the dolphins' medical records on her lap.

Mulder: Got everything you need?

Scully: Yes. Is your secret society all set?

Mulder: They say they are, and looking them over, I think they are too. It takes remarkably little equipment to create a great deal of havoc.

Scully: Mulder — what do you hope to accomplish from this?

Mulder: I'm not sure. But the answer to these deaths, if there is one, lies not at Nimitz, but somewhere off shore. I think Deep Throat is the only one who can lead us to it. Okay, here we are. (Pulls alongside road)

Scully exits the car. Mulder lowers the passenger side window, and leans over toward it.

Mulder: Scully? (She looks back) Be careful. (She nods and turns away).

Cut to DOLPHIN POOL AT NIMITZ RESEARCH CENTER.

A large tractor-trailer is backed up to the edge of the pool. A small crane is lowering a sling, with Deep Throat, into what looks like a small plastic bathtub inside the rig. One end of the tub looks detachable. Two narrow benches run along either side of the tub, and an assortment of technicians, trainers, and guards are sitting on them, guiding the sling into the tub. The wind is gusty, and lighting flashes in the distance.

The Director is standing to the side, supervising the delicate operation. Scully approaches, flanked by a guard.

Guard: Director Gibbons, this lady is from the FBI. She said she had to speak to you now.

Director: Now, of all times? Can't you come back tomorrow?

Scully: I'm afraid I can't. I came to tell you that you had better move much faster. The Delphine Freedom organization is planning a breakout tonight, and if they arrive before this dolphin is out of here, they're going to blow whatever secrecy you had.

Director: Where did you learn this?

Scully: Agent Mulder is very good at his job — he learned that five boats have been rented out to various members of the organization for tonight. He suspects they will try an ocean entry by cutting through the pool gate.

Director: Thank you, Agent ...

Scully: Scully.

Director: Yes, thank you, Agent Scully, but I think we've got the situation under control.

The sound of motorboats approaching distracts his attention. Several packets of firecrackers are thrown over the fence and land beside the pool, creating a great deal of noise and smoke. Several RC model aircraft fly by, dropping tear gas. Technicians scatter. Visibility quickly drops to several feet. There are some scrapping sounds by the gate. In the midst of the smoke, Scully walks up to Deep Throat, who is suspended waist-high in the sling, and inserts a syringe at a strategic point along the back. The entire act takes five seconds.

Director: (Shouting) Those bastards must be crazy. (Turns to guard) If anyone comes through, shoot to kill. (Turns to technicians) Pull the sling and get going!

Macky approaches the Director. His naval uniform has been replaced by a strangely sculpted black uniform with no labels or insignia. After talking for a few moments, the ashen-faced Director leaves. The technicians, eyes streaming, finish lowering the dolphin into the tub, release the sling, and dash out of the cab. The truck pulls away from the tank and hurries out of the gate.

Macky approaches Scully.

Macky: Ma'am, the situation here is serious. The Director is calling a high-level meeting right now, and he would like for you to attend.

Scully: Certainly.

Cut to INTERSTATE 45, OUT OF GALVESTON

The large tractor-trailer rig rumbles along the road. Seated in the cab are a driver and a guard. Seeing stopped traffic up ahead, they slow down and stop.

About ten cars sit motionless on the four-lane freeway. Ahead is what looks like a two-vehicle accident, blocking all the lanes. A police car is parked on the shoulder. Several people are exiting the cars and wandering toward the scene.

Several cars pull up behind the truck, surrounding it. Seven people dart from the vehicles and rush the cab. A crowbar smashes the window, and tear-gas canisters are thrown inside. The guard and driver stumble out, only to face an armed man, dressed in black and wearing a gas-mask. The man motions for the two to lie down. He rapidly disarms and cuffs both of them. He then climbs into the cab. The two accident vehicles and the fake police car suddenly drive off the road. Traffic begins to move.

The truck takes the next off-ramp, crosses the overpass, and heads back on 45 South, toward the sea.

Cut to SOME UNKNOWN PIER, SOME UNKNOWN OFFRAMP, SOMEWHERE NEAR GALVESTON.

The truck barrels off the road, directly onto the beach. It hits the water at around 30 mph, creating a huge bow wave before it slows and stops. The water level is high enough that all the vehicle's tires are completely submerged.

John Lillian guides a 15-foot motorboat up to the cab, almost hitting it in the rough sea. The man, revealed as Agent Mulder jumps out of the cab and into the boat.

Mulder: (Muffled) You're alone?

Lillian: This is the most dangerous part, Mr. Mulder. I can't assign anyone else to do this.

The boat putters around to the back of the rig. The door is being opened from the inside.

Mulder: (Jumping onto bumper) Looks like we won't have to break the lock after all.

Waving the gun at the exiting guards and technicians, Mulder motions them to jump into the ocean, where the rough water knocks them over. They all start swimming for shore. It is now raining heavily.

Lillian ties the boat to the bumper and hops into the trailer, where Mulder has removed his mask and attached the transmitter to the dolphin's dorsal fin. At this moment he is trying to unlatch the tub on one end.

Lillian: Well done, Mr. Mulder. I see, however, that you used a gun.

Mulder: (Pauses, opens the gun and presents an empty chamber) Sometimes the threat of violence is necessary to prevent it.

Lillian: (Pulls out another gun, aims it at Mulder) I couldn't have put it better myself.

Mulder: (Pauses) I take it you don't consider yourself a member of an advanced society just yet.

Lillian: Sadly, no.

Mulder: You never left the Navy, did you? You were ordered to infiltrate organizations hostile to the Navy.

Lillian: Yes.

Mulder: (Angry) I wondered where you found tear gas. Do you actually believe anything you told me? Or was that just part of your cover?

Lillian: Another facet of an advanced species is the ability to cope with contradictions. I truly believe everything I told you, but they know where my wife lives. I'm sorry I have to do this, Mr. Mulder. In a quirky way, I liked you. (Cocks gun)

A bullet ricochets from the bumper, causing Lillian to glance behind him. Too late, he realizes his mistake as Mulder tackles him, knocking both into the water. A large fleet of official-looking Navy and police vans are parking by the water, and all types of uniformed men are taking shots at the rig, but the terrible weather and incoming waves hampers their aim.

Bullets splash like rain drops around the two struggling men.

Mulder: Looks like they think you're expendable.

Mulder is younger — and angrier — and he manages to knock the gun out of Lillian's hand. Swimming up to the bumper, he climbs back inside and pulls open the tub. A rush of water flows out, carrying Deep Throat over the trailer's edge and into the sea. He is disoriented and sculls around for a few moments, giving Mulder enough time to climb back into the boat, toss off the anchor, and start the engine. Lillian tries to climb on board, but his attempts to grab the boat are foiled by the battering waves.

The dolphin begins swimming out to the open sea, and Mulder, braving the five-foot high waves, pursues him in the boat. Peeking into his jacket, he checks that his receiver is working. Man and dolphin disappear into the spray, as lightning flashes on the horizon.

Cut to NIMITZ RESEARCH FACILITY, CONFERENCE ROOM.

Scully and Macky enter an otherwise empty room.

- Scully: Where are the others? Where is the Director?
- Macky: The Director, Agent Scully, is out of the picture. He and the staff here have handled this situation incompetently, and I've been put in charge of this mess now. I plan to settle it quickly.
- Scully: What mess are you referring to?
- Macky: A staff member at this facility had an attack of conscience and released classified national security information to uncleared personnel. (Pushes a button on a side panel, and part of the wall begins sliding away, revealing an underwater view of the dolphin tank) The problem with honorable men, Agent Scully, is that they are predictable. Tracing the source of the leak was easy, as was silencing it. (Dr. Harper is seen suspended in the tank, dead. Scully reaches for her sidearm, but Macky is much faster as he levels a much nastier-looking weapon at her) There is still the matter of the security breach.
- Scully: (Furious but controlled) That's not a Navy uniform. I demand your real name and your real employer, so I know who to charge with first-degree murder.
- Macky: My name does not matter, and as for my superiors, all that matters is that they work for the government. As for Dr. Harper — he placed his own feelings higher than the trust his government placed in him. Men like that often don't grow old. Now, as an employee of the federal government, Agent Scully, you have been entrusted to support it. Thus I ask your assistance in locating Fox Mulder.
- Scully: (With derision) I have been entrusted with supporting the law, something you apparently know nothing about.
- Macky: That sounds very strange coming from someone who just participated in a major theft of government property.
- His radio crackles, and he picks it up and listens, his eyes never leaving Scully. After a short pause, he places down the phone.
- Macky: (With a hint of admiration) That's one problem solved. At this moment Mr. Mulder is driving a small boat out into the Gulf of Mexico, directly into the heart of tropical storm Allise. Despite being a honorable man, he does have the virtue of being occasionally unpredictable.
- Cut to GULF OF MEXICO, MULDER'S BOAT.
- The rain is coming down hard and lightning flashes everywhere, but Mulder drives through the waves, always checking the receiver. Up ahead, Deep Throat pokes its head out of the water, waits for the boat to catch up, then continues on.
- Cut back to CONFERENCE ROOM
- Scully: Killing everyone and everything associated with this project is not going to work any more. It's over. If you kill either me or Mulder, your precious cover-up will be blown sky-high.
- Macky: Oh, I'm not going to kill you — that I'll leave to nature, who knows how to take care of fools. When Mulder's boat capsizes, I expect the bodies of two FBI

agents to wash onto the beach tomorrow morning. Brief investigation, cause of death obvious — drowning and bad judgment, case closed.

He glances up at Scully's hardened face, then picks up a clipboard.

Macky: I thought you might need a little more encouragement. Let's see. At 6:30 this morning your mother went on her daily walk to Fitzgerald Park. She went to the supermarket at ten, and the drugstore half an hour later. She is currently taking medication for high blood pressure. (Looks up) I'm glad she's taking good care of herself. We wouldn't want her to have a heart attack like her late husband, would we, now?

Scully's face turns white. She stares at the floor.

Cut to GULF OF MEXICO.

Mulder is still battling the storm, but suddenly the rain falls off and the waves settle down until the surface is calm. Mulder cuts the motor and looks around. Lightning still flashes in the distance, but not around here.

Cut to INTERIOR OF MILITARY VAN.

Macky sits across from Scully, training his gun at her head.

Scully: What did the dolphin say that justifies killing it?

Macky: Even asking that question is classified.

Scully: Aren't you the least bit ashamed that you are betraying everything this country stands for?

Macky: (Finally showing some anger) Do you think the government is doing this on a whim? That it kills for no reason? Has it ever occurred to you that the government acts ruthless because it faces an ruthless enemy? That we are only mirroring their tactics?

Scully: What enemy?

Macky: That is a question you can think about for the rest of your life. Think fast.

Scully: No matter what "enemy" you may think exists, the fact remains they are not the ones killing dolphins.

Macky: (Almost smiles) If you say so.

Cut to GULF OF MEXICO.

Mulder notices a green glow off to his right, about 50 yards away and ten feet in diameter. Quietly he begins to paddle toward it.

Cut to AIRPORT, LOCATION UNKNOWN.

Scully is being shoved into the passenger seat of an unmarked twin-rotor anti-submarine helicopter. The pilot has the same featureless uniform as Macky, who jumps in behind Scully and slides the side door shut.

Pilot: (Glancing at rain pelting on windshield) Sir, I suggest if this guy is stupid enough to be out there, then go ahead and let evolution take its course.

Macky: Normally, I would agree, soldier, but it seems he forgot his partner. We need to drop her off with him.

Pilot: Where to?

Macky: (Handing a piece of paper to the pilot) His boat has a hidden transmitter at this frequency.

Cut to GULF OF MEXICO.

The glow turns out to be a ring of light emanating from the bottom of a strange-looking, gelatinous buoy. About six feet underneath the buoy float a group of immobilized dolphins. They are all facing the center of the circle, and on each one a beam of ghostly green light is focused on their "melons." Among these is Deep Throat, identifiable by his transmitter. Mulder checks his receiver. It is no longer working.

Mulder's face shows half-fascination, half-terror as he watches the frozen dolphins. Suddenly one of the light beams briefly brightens on one, then vanishes. The dolphin gives a slight jerk, then starts slowly drifting away. It is not breathing.

Mulder: (Quietly) No ...

Another beam brightens and vanishes, leaving another dolphin dead.

Mulder: (Glancing at Deep Throat) Is this what you tried to tell them ...

Another dolphin dies.

Cut to HELICOPTER.

The storm is tossing it around violently. All conversations in the helicopter take place through headphones.

Pilot: We have a fix on the signal, sir. ETA is three minutes.

Cut to GULF OF MEXICO.

Mulder is quietly pivoting the boat so that the motor faces the buoy. He lifts the motor so that the propeller is out of the water. Giving a final paddle stroke, Mulder grasps the starter cord as the boat drifts right into the buoy.

Mulder: (With determination) Interrogation time is over.

He pulls the cord, starting the engine, then lowers the propeller into the buoy. There is a flash of light, followed by an explosion that knocks Mulder into the water. The boat sinks, and the light is extinguished. The dolphins arise from their stupor, filling the ocean with clicks, squeals, and chirps. They begin swimming off as fast as their flukes can take them.

Mulder is treading water, when suddenly the entire ocean surrounding him is filled with a bright green light — as if a 100-foot wide spotlight has been turned on from the ocean floor. A loud, low-frequency hum fills the air.

Cut to HELICOPTER.

Pilot: Sir, we lost the signal from the boat. But I've pinpointed the last location.

Macky: Head that way.

Pilot: (Listening) Sir, telemetry is picking up a new signal ... (Glances at Macky) It's the Coast Guard! They're picking up a distress call ... from us!

Macky pulls out what looks like a small Walkman and scans Scully. In a flash he pulls out a transmitter identical to the one Hoffstader gave Mulder.

Macky: Ingenious, Agent Scully. I should have searched you more thoroughly.

Pilot: Sir, the Coast Guard is sending two helicopters and a ship our way. I haven't responded to their transmission, as you ordered.

Macky: Good, soldier. They'll be searching for bodies soon.

He grabs Scully by the arm and drags her to the side door, sliding it open.

Pilot: Sir, I see a large circular glow just off to our right. (Pause while he struggles with suddenly unresponsive controls) I've lost control of the craft! We're being pulled toward the light!

Macky: Apparently the Coast Guard wasn't the only one to notice your signal, Agent Scully. I think you've done quite enough.

Scully: (Defiant) I didn't want you to become bored with my predictability.

She is shoved off, and falls into the now calmed sea.

Cut to MULDER TREADING WATER.

Something grabs him from below, pulling him under. He struggles desperately, and the camera follows his gaze up to the surface, where the rising air bubbles shine a brilliant green as they break on the surface. A thin beam of light begins inching up his body toward his head.

Cut to HELICOPTER

Pilot: Sir, I can't restore control of the 'copter! We're being pulled down!

Macky: We have some torpedoes on board. Can we release them manually?

Pilot: Yes, sir!

The torpedoes are dropped into the water, where they cruise offscreen.

Cut to MULDER.

As Mulder tries to keep his head away from the beam, there is a flash of silver as Deep Throat streaks past him down into the depths. There is a muffled thud, and Mulder is suddenly released. He scrambles desperately to the surface.

A massive explosion echoes through the water as the torpedoes find a target.

Cut to HELICOPTER.

Macky watches with satisfaction as the light dims appreciably. Suddenly it flares up again. All the controls turn dim.

Pilot: Sir, we've lost all power! We're going to —

The 'copter crashes next to the light.

Cut to MULDER.

As Mulder treads water, he hears the sound of helicopters in the distance. The green circle brightens as it begins to move horizontally beneath the surface, picking up speed as it vanishes into the horizon. The rain begins to pick up again.

Scully: (Faintly, from a hundred yards away) Mulder!

Mulder: (Glances behind him) Scully? (Swims to her through the roughening waves) Are you okay?

Scully: My leg — what happened?

Mulder: (Shouting over the rising wind) I think we — (Wave submerges him for a moment, as the sound of helicopters draws near). What's that!

Scully: (Half-drowned smile) I asked Dr. Hoffstader for an emergency locating transmitter. He had a spare.

Mulder: You are remarkable.

Cut to COAST GUARD HELICOPTER, battling the winds.

CG Pilot: Base, this is Alpha-Bravo-Niner. Weather too rough to continue. Repeat. Weather too rough to continue, and getting much worse. Returning to shore.

Radio: Roger.

Cut to GULF OF MEXICO.

Mulder and Scully are trying to support each other in the waves. The helicopter sounds fade away.

Scully: ... didn't work ...

Mulder: (Shouting) ... was a great ... swim?

Scully: (Shouting) ... leg ... miles from ... finished ...

Mulder: (As a large wave approaches) ... sorry ...

The wave crashes over them, and white fills the screen. As the sound fades, the whiteness fades into an early morning sun. The camera descends until a beach front appears, running off into the horizon. Two dead dolphins lie in the foreground, covered in seaweed. The camera rotates 180 degrees, revealing boat and 'copter wreckage strewn over the beach. As the shoreline reappears, we see the body of the 'copter pilot, lying face own in the sand, also covered with seaweed. The camera rises, revealing two figures lying several hundred yards away.

As the camera zooms closer, the image resolves into Scully and Mulder entangled in both seaweed and each other. Mulder lies on his back, and Scully is lying prone across him, her face on his chest. All is quiet except for the waves breaking on the shore.

Scully stirs, opens her eyes, and raises her head. Clearing seaweed from her eyes, she realizes she is on top of Mulder. Looking frightened, she tries to take a pulse, then starts shaking him.

Scully: (Gently) Mulder?

Mulder stirs, and cracks his eyes. Camera cuts to a view from his perspective, with the sun silhouetting Scully's tangled hair.

Mulder: Ariel?

Scully: (Relieved, exasperated and slightly incredulous that Mulder could be cracking jokes at a time like this) No, there is no way I tugged you ten miles across the sea. What happened out there?

Mulder: (Murmurs while looking at the ocean) I believe we disrupted an ancient relationship between an advanced civilization and a primitive one.

Scully: (Not understanding) Mulder, speak sense.

Mulder: The primitive one was taking advantage of the trust of the advanced one. We put a crimp in that plan.

Scully: (Giving up, changes subject) How did we get to shore?

Mulder: I think that was the advanced civilization's way of saying thanks. (Gestures to the ocean).

Scully shades her eyes and stares out to sea. All she sees is a pod of dolphins breaching.

CONCLUSION. Fade to MULDER'S NEW OFFICE, ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION, TWO WEEKS LATER.

Mulder is staring out the window. Scully knocks on the doorway.

Scully: Hey, hero.

Mulder: (Looking back) Hey, what?

Scully: Agent Roschner called me and told me how pleased he was with you. How did you have time to finish your official assignment?

- Mulder: Like I said, Scully, an open and shut case. The polluters were relatively brazen, unlike some others we met.
- Scully: It also seems that Dr. Hoffstader called him and praised you to the skies. The dolphin death rate in both Texas and elsewhere has plummeted. Officially, a morbillivirus is being blamed for the deaths.
- Mulder: Do you believe that's what happened?
- Scully: I don't know what to believe. Why do you think the deaths have stopped?
- Mulder: They're being more cautious now.
- Scully: Who?
- Mulder: I've been blind all this time. I've assumed all along that they were primarily interested in studying human beings. I'm starting to think that humanity has only recently become interesting.
- Scully: (Skeptical but good-natured) Why would "they" kill dolphins?
- Mulder: I've asked that question over and over again the past two weeks. Strangely enough, I think that man who tried to kill you came closest to the truth when he said the government was just mirroring their actions. I think dolphins have been singing with the stars for millennia, and the stars just didn't want them singing to anyone else. Just like we didn't want the dolphins reporting our communications breakthrough. Quite a delphine dilemma.
- Scully: This is another hunch, isn't it?
- Mulder: (Brushing off that statement) Both sides felt it was simpler just to kill the dolphins off. We thought our disposal methods were elegant, but we were clumsy compared with them. They just played a siren song, waited for the dolphins to come with greetings, and then squeezed out everything they knew. (Lapses off into silence)
- Scully: But why kill all those dolphins, and not just the ones who were actually talking to the Navy?
- Mulder: I don't know. Maybe they couldn't tell which ones were which. Maybe the dolphin's weren't talking. Maybe their ways of reading minds are lethal. Only Deep Throat knows, and I don't know whether he's alive or dead. Hoffstader has located no sign of the transmitter. (Pauses) I fear for him, and I fear the future of all dolphins. They are not going to give up that easily.
- Scully: (Looks at his morose face) My would-be executioner was also right about honorable men being predictable. You're feeling guilty about Deep Throat, aren't you?
- Mulder: (Grimly) I've just been an open book to you, haven't I? (Pause) He was the one they wanted, and I delivered him right into their clutches. In the back of my mind, I knew, just *knew*, that I was probably sacrificing him by setting him free. But I had to know, so I went ahead and used him just like so many others have used me. He saved my life, Scully, and I don't know why. (Looks at her) Have I

become so obsessed with finding the Truth that I'm starting to lose my principles?
Is the Truth worth your soul?

Scully: (After a short pause) I have lost faith in nearly everything and everyone, but I am certain of this. (Walks to the door, looks back) You are many things, Fox Mulder, but you are not an evil man. (Leaves)

Mulder turns back to the window, watching the blue sky.

Dissolve to a view of the open ocean at moonrise. A silhouetted dolphin leaps against the background of the full moon. Pan up to the stars.

Hold shot. Fade Out.

CREDITS.