

## The X-Files: I Want To Believe



One of the most influential television series of the Nineties, *The X-Files* ran for nine seasons and terrified and excited viewers the world over. Agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) became household names, the series won numerous awards and it entered the global mindset like no production since *Star Trek*.

In 1998, the first movie to be spawned by the franchise, *The X-Files: Fight the Future* (or sometimes called simply *The X-Files Movie*), was released. It did reasonably well, grossing about \$190 million. Set between seasons five and six, the first film was firmly planted within *X-Files* lore and although you didn't need to know the series to

understand the plot, being familiar with the alien black oil storyline was definitely in your favour. This was a big movie, with action set-pieces and a spectacular climax culminating with a giant spacecraft rising out of the Antarctic ice.

*The X-Files: I Want to Believe* could not be further from the first film. With a production budget of less than half the first film this certainly was not going to be a sci-fi spectacular to rival the other blockbusters of 2008, such as *Iron Man* or *Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*. No, what Chris Carter (who also directed) and co-writer, Frank Spotnitz have created is an intimate story about a couple coming to terms with not being the people they once were.

So let's get down to it. There are spoilers here, folks, so if you don't want to know what happens, skip to the end now. Gone? Okay, here goes.



The movie opens with FBI agents searching a snowy landscape, aided by Billy Connolly's (in an excellent performance) Father Joseph Crissman. Joseph, it seems is having psychic intuitions about the disappearance of a female federal agent and he leads the G-Men to a

spot where an arm is discovered. It's not the arm of the missing agent, however.

The FBI contact former agent Dana Scully, who is now working in a catholic hospital and she is obsessed with saving a young boy from a seemingly incurable disease. They ask her to bring in Fox Mulder, her life partner (unmarried), and he grudgingly accepts when it is explained to him that the Bureau will drop any charges they have against him following the conclusion of the TV series.

Dragging Scully along, Mulder meets Crissman and we learn that he is a convicted paedophile, something that horrifies all of us, but Scully in particular.

The plot unfolds that what we are dealing with is an illegal medical facility (protected by vicious, two-headed dogs!), operated by Russians who are going round, kidnapping people and chopping them up to keep some old Russian geezer alive with some experimental surgery based around stem cells and stuff. Scully sussed this bit out while researching (on the internet!) about a cure for her dying child patient. Handy, eh?



While Scully drops out of the investigation, preferring to care for her patient, Mulder goes deeper and is eventually driven off the road by the main baddie, Janke Dacyshyn (Callum Keith Rennie). Left for dead, Mulder staggers out of the wreck and ends up stumbling across the illegal medical facility.

Meanwhile, Scully can't contact Mulder, so she calls in a familiar face to help (everybody goes, "Yay!" at this point). They track down the bad guys, save Mulder in the nick of time and put a stop to all the goings-on.

That's a very potted version of the script and, as I said earlier, the story is less about the bad guys and the paranormal and more to do with Mulder and Scully not being FBI agents any longer and their personal relationship.

While I largely enjoyed the film, I completely understand the other reviews I've read that complain about the film being more like an extended episode of the series (and not one of the better episode either!).



The movie plodded along and more than once I checked the time to see how long it had to go. Not a good sign. But it wasn't a bad film. Nor was it a particularly good one,

though. Knowing it was an *X-Files* film and the screen presences of Duchovny and Anderson were the only things that kept it afloat, in my opinion. There were few references to the series, except a reference to Mulder's missing/dead sister and the 'guest star', and I felt this was done to make it more accessible to those not familiar with the nine seasons that had gone previously. For a fan, though, this felt a little like a betrayal. A very brief mention of Mulder and Scully's son (I suppose we can also count a slight watering of Scully's eyes when she is told that she isn't a mother by the parents of the young boy in hospital), no mention of agents Doggett and Reyes and only one mention of aliens and that was used in a jokey manner against Mulder by another agent.

So, while I recommend the film, I must add that there are many better episodes of the series and this film does not have the epic feel of the first movie. Could have been better. *Should* have been better.

SJ

