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'X-FILES 2' DAY: Interviewing David Duchovny

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We've pushed two plastic refectory tables together and called dibs on our seats like children at lunch, aiming to score the chair next to the cool kid. Word is [David Duchovny](#) is rolling in early just to jam with us as only a busy, world famous actor and 15 lowly entertainment journos can. He's the first interview and we hear he's coming soon; he may already be here. And then we wait very quiet like for minutes, as if the slightest conversation will propel Duchovny to his trailer and fortify it with mace and tire iron.

The soundstage is nothing more than a dank warehouse, and when the industrial sliding door scrapes opens, a tower of light cascades in and blows out my retinas. Amongst the pinwheel of spots Duchovny strides in, wearing a taupe leather jacket and clipping his sunglasses to the collar of a white T-shirt. He takes a chair, all business except for the wad of gum he's chewing. And we lob our voice recorders his way as if they're roses to a victorious bullfighter.

During the gang interrogation, he stares down at the recorders most of the time, and when he's not sitting on his hands, he karate chops the table to emphasize points. In person Duchovny doesn't come off aloof as some have characterized him. Rather, there's a shyness to the man that thaws as the interview nears conclusion. Upon penalty of eternal exile to comic con autograph tables, Duchovny's mouth is rag-gagged and duct-taped from spilling specifics on the plot of *X-Files 2: Stand-alone Boogaloo*. However, he articulates his thoughts on Fox Mulder, returning to the franchise, typecasting, the *Saw* films, and how working with a director is like saying no to getting corn-holed by a lover.



When the series started, it sort of captured the zeitgeist in the country in a way other shows hadn't before. How is the X-Files different now that the world has completely changed since the last film?

David Duchovny (DD): Has the world completely changed?

Since 1998, I say it has...since 9/11.

DD: People say the world has changed--it's all different. Yet, human nature remains the same. Good stories are going to be the stories people are going to see. I don't think people go to movies because of what's going on in the world. I think people want escapism in a way and that usually remains the same. I think what changed is the size of our cell phones.

Artistically, why now for you is it the right time to make this movie?

DD: I don't know. I felt always at any time it would have been fine. Whenever Chris [Carter] was ready to come up with a script. Whenever his burnout was over. You know, as actors our burnout was probably a little shorter than his. I think he carried a heavier load producing and writing, directing. I know it took me about a year to feel, you know, whole after the show was over. So, after that point I was waiting. It was always my intention, my desire, that the show would continue on in movie form. It was never my intention, when I wanted to leave the television series, to sabotage the show in any way. It was, yes we've done all we can on television. Let's take this into movies like we always said that we would.

Do you see it as a series of X-Files movies, maybe?

DD: Yeah. I wouldn't see any reason to do it unless it were. It's a serial show by its nature. It starts as a television show, which is a serial. The frame and the characters throw up an infinite number of stories and situations. You know, it's a classic, archetypical relationship with a believer and a nonbeliever with this kind of unrequited love in the middle of it. And that all works. That can work forever, as long as your stories are good.

How excited where you to get back into the character again?

DD: Well, I was very excited to do it, and then as the date approached nearer, I started to wonder if I needed to start to work more to kind of get back here. So there was a certain amount of fear that because I had maybe changed -- to go back on my word. What I think happened is my facility and maybe my range or my interests might have changed. And so this character might have represented a narrower Fox than the one I had been working in the last 4 or 5 years since I left. So it was how to bring what I've learned in the last 4 or 5 years into this Fox. And you know, it was interesting last night, they have Internet access here and somebody pulled up one of these homages to the show that has a song, a romantic song, and all these kisses between Gillian and I. And that was actually really helpful for me to kind of feel the show again. Because it was kind of this overview, you know. And it was very romantic. And it was very sweet. And it was like, oh I could watch that and then that would help me get into character. So maybe I'll do that. Maybe I'll watch -- whoever put that together, I thank them.

Is there any input you had in the writing of this script?

DD: Not in the initial conception or the first writing of it and hardly at all. We kind of signed off on the script right as the writer's strike happened. So, we had discussions about particular scenes and things we might try once we get there. But, you know, it's a tightly plotted thriller. In essence, there's very little -- if you have a tightly plotted thriller, there's not a lot of rewriting that should be done, hopefully. There's not a lot to do. The story drives forward. If you fuck around in the scenes, you don't drive the story forward. So it's not really a form that tolerates

improvisation. And it was well enough put together when it was presented to me and Gillian; I thought there was really nothing to add.

Rumor has it that this one goes for more of a supernatural feeling, more back to the horror, scary roots of the show. What kind of a relief was that for you to kind of break outside the mythology?

DD: Well, I like the mythology stuff. I always liked it actually more when we were doing the show because it usually gave Mulder kind of an emotional stake, either through his sister or he was personally involved in the episode. And that was a relief and more fun for me as an actor to approach. During the yearly grind of the show, so it was like 'oh, you know, I understand this one. I can chew that up a little bit rather than just being a Law and Order procedural -- did he do it, did he do it? He didn't do it. This is my theory. Get out of this.' So, in a way, I think I had the opposite reaction. So, you know, I wish this was more about me. [Laughter.] But [the sequel is] more about the show. It's about establishing the parameters of the show for those that don't know it, for those who have forgotten it, and even for those who love it will get that part as well. So, if there is another one -- and I hope there is -- I think we would get into a story with more of the mythology because I think that is the heart of the show.

You directed an episode of the series. You directed your own movie. How interested would you be, if there is a next X-Files, in taking the helm?

DD: Yeah, I'd be interested but it's not in my wheelhouse to direct a big action film like this. I would feel out of my element, which is probably a good thing. I wouldn't offer it to me. I might try to get it. I don't know. No, I think I'd stay away from this. I might be interested in directing an action film, but I don't think it'd be wise to direct myself in an action film or to screw around with this actual franchise. I don't feel like I need to. I feel like there are other opportunities for me to direct, and I have other interests. If it was like my only way in to directing and like, 'Please let me,' then I might. I don't think so. I think it'd be fun and great, but I think there are better people.

A lot of actors who headline hit series often worry about being typecast for the rest of their careers. Coming back into this, you apparently are comfortable now that you've moved on and done other things.

DD: Well, it's interesting. I get asked questions by you guys. The first question is 'Have people forgotten?' And the second question is 'Well, nobody's forgotten. Aren't you typecast?' I don't know. I gave up a while ago worrying about the whole phenomenon of typecasting once I realized that it happens across the board. It doesn't just happen in terms of television shows. So, comedy actors get trapped in there and dramatic actors can't do comedy and, you know, all this stuff with people -- or even movie actors who have had long careers have 2 or 3 roles that they get stopped for, unless you're Brando. There's only a couple that have done so much that it's even hard to yell something stupid to them on the street. So, I don't worry about that. I think what overcomes that is just my kind of sense of love for the show and belief in its legitimacy as an interesting movie franchise with a lot to offer -- the thriller aspect and the horror aspect and also an intelligence and, like I said, this great frame of man and woman and the believer and the nonbeliever. I think all those things make it a very kind of fertile area to move on it.

Why do you think people love the characters of the show? Could you speak a little about your character and why people love the character?

DD: That's more for you to speak of. I think it was a very classic, not a contentious love relationship between Mulder and Scully... I think why I love Mulder is because first and foremost it was always the truth and the case and yet he wasn't so single-minded that he it was kind of a drag; he was never a drag. It's that kind of character. So, I always liked that he was so kind of narrow minded in his pursuit. And I think that's attractive. I think people respect that in somebody. And I think they also yearn for it. He's a guy on a quest. He will always be.

Will you get beat up and lose your gun in this movie?

DD: I can't answer that, but I'm sure if I ever get my hands on a gun, you can be pretty sure that somebody will take it out of my hands.

How do you relate to working with Gillian on this now?

DD: Yeah, it's good.

Was it very different from what it was working on the series?



DD: Yeah, it's probably different in that we are not both exhausted all the time. We're kind of excited to come and do what we think is the heart of the movie -- we think is the relationship. So, we'll do these scenes that are action-orientated and has to do with this particular plot and Billy Connolly. Then we come back to scenes like what we're doing today, and we're aware that this -- we feel like this is where the heart of the movie is and that we have to trust each other and hold each other up in these scenes and to bring back whatever it was that was there.

Is there still a sense of discovery? Is there still a journey for you guys in doing productions like this, reuniting with Gillian and Chris or is like you guys are back in you're groove?

DD: No, I think there's a real sense of which we don't just want to cash in on the past. We want to all do something new. We all want to make it good. We don't want to throw a piece of crap out there and grab people to go look at it for nostalgia's sake... When I started there was certainly a boyishness to the guy, which I feel I can't play anymore physically.

Has it changed any working with Chris?

DD: Yeah. I have ways I like to work. And he has ways he likes to work. And they are not always the same, with respect. And probably we deal with it. That's a matter of getting older too, being a professional. It happens. It's not a big deal. It's like telling a lover, 'You know with that finger there? That wasn't great. I know a lot of people like it. But me personally? Not me. Just so you know. Somebody else may love that.' So I know how I like to work now. I know how I like the director's hands on me.

Does this film strike a balance between the shout outs to the series and then like in the first film kind of making it accessible for people who've never seen it?

DD: Well, I'm not a fan of the shout outs. But they're just little things. They're like little "Where's Waldo" things. I think this movie is actually a lot more accessible to the nonfan in terms of story, plot, everything else. In terms of maybe this water bottle having the name of one of our producers on it, this movie probably has tons of those things. I'm not even paying attention... There's a lot of that going on and I think it's fun. And for most people it just going by the boards, and for people that are into it are going to love that, I guess.

[After a few banal question and answers regarding the scariness of the film, someone asked if the film will be PG-13?]

DD: What was the first movie? PG-13? I think it was. It's so confusing to me.

There were episodes that bordered on near R sometimes.

DD: In a way you could do more on TV. You could almost do R stuff on -- like some of those TV shows probably would've been getting close to an R. But I know the mission is to make a PG-13 film here. So I assume we will. But it's more the ideas behind it. What is *Saw*? *Saw* is R?

Would you say this is Saw?

DD: It has some of, you know, there's some danger in there. There's some twisted, weird --

-- Torture?

DD: I said danger. No. There's no torture because there's always, you know like to me *Saw* doesn't really have a point. It's like a guy teaching somebody a lesson. Right? Torturing them.

And that's entertainment.

DD: Well, obviously for a lot of people it is. I think *The X-Files* was never just about the nasty stuff. Hopefully there was a story behind it. You'll know we'll always torture for a reason. We're like the American government. We want something; we'll torture for it. [laughter]

When the episodes of the old show come on, do you watch them or do you flee like hell?

DD: I don't flee. I don't seek them out. I'm not an appointment television watcher. I guess I'm a child of the '70s television watcher. I'll leave myself sometimes open to watching an *X-Files* because I'll be just flipping around. And I don't TiVo or anything. I'm really silly that way. So if something comes on, I won't watch it alone. But if I'm in bed with [my wife] Tea [Leoni] and we're just going to sleep and just watching, maybe watching 10 minutes before we go to sleep, and it comes on she'll say, 'Oh I've never seen that one.' And I say, 'Yes you have. I think you've seen them

all.' 'No, no, I've never seen this one.' And I say, 'No, you've just forgotten. No you really have seen this one.'

Are you planning for any DVD extras?

DD: Yes. A lot. Because I think there is a lot of extra gore and stuff.

What's next after this?

DD: I have to go back and we'll do another year of "[Californication](#)," starting late April.

Will it change at all in the second season?

DD: In what way? It'd be better?...It lives right in between comedy and drama. Comedy tends to maintain the same characters and the same situations. Dramas tend to change. So I think we'll change a little bit. You know, it's still a new show and, especially on cable, you only do 12 a year. I think we're still finding our way.

Our *X-Files 2* coverage doesn't end here. Be sure to read our interviews as well at the following links:

- [The Set Visit](#)
- [Gillian Anderson](#) (Dana Scully)
- [Chris Carter](#) ("The X-Files" series creator, executive producer and *X-Files 2* producer, co-writer, and director)
- [Frank Spotnitz](#) ("The X-Files" series executive producer and *X-Files 2* producer and co-writer)
- [X-Files 2 Info Page](#)

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