

Previously on ***Not Quite Over The Shark Pit***: Scully giving feminism (and feminine clothes) the finger. Mulder being the tolerable kind of sleazy. Fun episodes with plots that made sense. Previously.

Sirens! I sure hope they're coming to take the writer of this episode to some form of mental hospital. T-minus 10 seconds till suckiness... uh, invasion. A fat kid, a nerdy kid, and a kid who's way too cool-looking to be doing this are dressed in fake suits of armour. They whoop-whoop about blah blah Darryl Musashicakes, and when the timer stops, begin to put on their dumb eyewear. Somewhere else, a hot-ish nerdy guy who looks sorta like Seth Green and that chick who was on that lame show about kidnapping with Brian from *Queer as Folk* (you know the one. It sucked. This episode is the highlight of her career. [checks credits: Constance Zimmer.]) watch their heart-rates. She comments that if she doesn't let them out soon, they'll kill themselves. Fine by me. It would save me from having to watch the rest of this craptacular suckfest. But she doesn't, and I start crying in thought of what I got myself into. This is going to be painful. Fat Guy screams when he gets let out. The three nerds run out and take cover behind a shieldy thing, because they are apparently in some sort of video game. Oh, boy. Where's Sam Beckett when you need him to leap into your body for... however long it takes to recap an episode (and I should know this, I've done two already)? HotNerd: "Do you see them?" NerdNerd: "They're out there, geeks. Looking to fry your huevos." Well, clearly if they're doing this, then they will have absolutely no need for huevos, considering they obviously don't have girlfriends and all. We hear motorbikes rev, and see them turn the corner and drive down the little alley the nerds are at the end of. No, turn around; you don't have to get involved in this episode! The nerds open fire, and a series of fake explosions result in fewer bikes. The nerds duck even though there's NOTHING LEFT TO AVOID, and NotOz points out it's a massacre out there. Let's hope so.

It looks like the game resets itself as we see little mushroom shacks spring up in the middle of the road. There are snipers in the buildings, and we can only hope they hit. The knuckleheads run off and get shot at, shooting back like maniacs. Fat Guy is shot, and yellow paint pours out of his vest. Either that, or he himself is made of molten lard. It's entirely possible. He writhes on the ground in agony, and NerdNerd points out that "Lo-Fat's down". Um, that has got to be the stupidest handle EVER. It's worse than when Britney Spears called herself a virgin. Or when I did. (What? You expected me to get through an entire teaser of this crap without resorting to dirty jokes? Ha! Ha ha ha! Ha!) More writhing and electrocution sounds, and I

wonder how high Giovanni Ribisi could score on this game, before realising that even he wouldn't be caught dead playing it because it's so lame. The two remaining nerds run out of their little bubble dome and get shot at again. Out in the control room, we hear more technobabble, before we get a line about how "the bloodthirst is unquenchable". See, if this was a vampire episode, that would make sense. Almost. And even then, it's not a vampire episode, so shut it, dude. Back in the game, more shooting. NerdNerd runs underneath one of the side buildings and gets all the way to the other wall without being shot. Damn. He pushes open another door, and there's nothing. He turns around and we hear footsteps. Still with his gun pointed upwards, we watch as he sees an Angelina Jolie lookalike walk up wearing next to nothing. Did I mention his gun was up? Well, now his backup is too. He gets on his knees and kisses her gloved hand, and I start having a horrible flashback to Wench in the lesbian dominatrix dress. NerdNerd asks who NotLaraCroft is, and she says her name is Maitreya. She says this is her game, and her hand turns into a hand holding an old-style gun, which she aims at his head. She pulls the trigger. Fade to digital staticky crap. Fade to white. Fade to black. Make up your mind, CC!

Credits! One scene down, too many left to go. Ooh-wee-ooh-ooh-wee-ooh. The truth is out there. Oh, so it's not in here? Then why do I have to put up with this shit?

Commercial Blackspot! Welcome to Mulderholics Anonymous. "Hi, my name is Phoebe Green, and I'm a Mulderholic." "Hi, Wench." "When Mister Mulder and I went to university together in Oxford - that's in England - we did the horizontal mattress mambo atop Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's tombstone. Oh, it was heavenly. Ten years later, I tried to use a pyrokinetic to reignite my relationship with that handsome bastard, but it failed miserably when he decided he would rather bed the detestable Agent Scully instead. It's been 2478 days since my last interaction with Mulder." *the room of people claps*

FPS Corporate Offices, Inland Empire, California. It's a building which looks sort of like one of those box-shaped Tetris pieces mated with one of the tunnels from the Super Mario games. At least they're using it for the right episode, rather than trying to pull it off as, say, the Brady Bunch house. Anyway, we cut to the inside of the building, where Mulder and Scully are walking in. Behind the reception is a security guard who looks totally bored by seeing them. He's in the right place. He scans Mulder's badge with a bluelight, then does a retina scan. It seems weird (but not totally unlikely) that this building has more security than all those secret

government facilities that Mulder has been breaking into all these years. He does the same to Scully, and she looks like she's nervous as if she's trying to hide the fact that she's been practicing for all the crying she'll be doing over the next two years. Non-disclosure agreements abound, and it says something that Scully reading this aloud is the most interesting part of the episode so far. She looks up and sees a security camera panning around.

Someone correct me, but is this the first time the Lone Gunmen got credited separately as guest stars? Maybe you should have taken the result of this episode as a white buffalo omen, writers.

Scully: "FPS?" Mulder: "First Person Shooter." Scully: "Video Games?" Mulder: "Digital entertainment." Firstly, Scully's right. It sucks that they're investigating a video game, because it makes no sense at all, even by X-Files standards. Buffy didn't do a video game episode. Doctor Who hasn't done a video game episode (yet). Quantum Leap didn't do a video game episode. So what makes this a good idea, exactly? Secondly, I thought it was already established that the only digital entertainment that excites Mulder involves watching videos that aren't his.

Scully remarks that the Pentagon is easier to get into, and as I pointed out above, Mulder ALREADY KNOWS THAT FROM EXPERIENCE. Hell, he's even been in there legally to investigate (in Unrequited or whatever that invisible man episode was). Suddenly, we see the Lone Gunmen walking up behind the agents. Langly tries to act like he's down with it, homies, and it looks even faker than... the rest of this episode. If you pause at the right moment here, you can see that no matter how advanced technology can get, it still hasn't figured out a way to stop ugly powerpoints from sticking out of the wall. Hee. Welcome to the land where silicon meets silicone. Blech. Way to put the bad taste in my mouth already. In an episode that does not feature Fowley, Wench, or Moronica. Pure talent. Frohike asks if the agents want a latte or designer water, because we all know that water in Silicon[e] Valley needs to be given an Extreme Makeover before it's ready to go down your throat. Mulder passes and Scully just wants to know why the fuck they were called in. She could be at home practicing her crying right now, for God's sake! Langly and Byers yap propaganda about the space shuttles being made of gold or some shit that has no point being in this episode, and Scully shuts them down. Yay.

Apparently there's been an accident, and she asks what kind. We cut to some bland-looking stairway and Langly voices over that it's an industrial accident. In a factory, that would make sense. But you are in the middle of the fucking desert, with the only machinery in sight being the bluelight badge/retina scanner and a bunch of computers. So cram it, hippie. She asks how they died, and the LG's have no idea. Ditto on whether there was equipment involved. That scene with the NDA reading? Was just surpassed by the fact that the N is William Gibson's surname looks like it's trying to escape from the caption when it shows up. Granted, it's no silent H, but the letter N is hilarious by this episode's standards. Anyway, the agents and the LG's are walking down the stairs, and Scully asks why they are there. After an awkward pause in which Frohike does not say they were models for the nudist camp level, he does say that they were "consultants". So... same thing, basically. Langly did some programming and create the bad guys. How much are you willing to bet that at least one of them looks like Byers? Frohike doesn't want to be thought of as in it for the money, and he should audition for the Oompa-Loompa version of The Biggest Loser. He'd fight right in, as long as he can work the phrases "journey", "I just didn't know WHAT to expect", "with a heavy heart", and "shut your pie-hole, Sami Brady, and bring back Aunt Zelda" into everyday conversation. Ahem. Sorry. I just have to distract myself from the congaline of suckiness that is this episode somehow, and going way off topic is the best way of doing it. So... enjoy, I guess. Langly explains the stock options they got in more legalese mumbo-jumbo that is about even with the NDA in terms of episode highlightiness. Anyway, the game ships on Friday and Mulder warns the LG's to check their pants for cake. Oh, ewwwwwwww. Thank God my birthday was last week, and I don't have to even think about eating cake until this time next year.

Cut to Scully and NotOz looking at the dead man. Scully points out that he's clearly been shot. NotOz says that's impossible because a gun wouldn't have gotten past security. I don't remember the guy taking Mulder's weapon away from him, do you? He did the scans, and then Langly started yapping like Queequeg which distracted the agents. No gun-taking at all. See? I blame the writing. Also, this guy died when he was shot in the game, as we saw. So how come Not-So-Lo-Fat is still alive as far as we know? Ugh. I can't believe we're not even nine minutes in and I'm already pointing out SEVERAL bad continuity mistakes. Still, imagine how much worse this could have been if CC wrote it as well as directed. Scully holds up a giant gun to prove him wrong, and he points out that it's a "laser blaster", not a gun. More arguing about it that I can't be fucked writing about (as opposed to the rest of this... thing) and

he points out that this is "total bleeding-edge technology". Hey! Bad puns are the recapper's job, dude! So get back to watching your Judge Judy and let me handle it. Scully sticks her finger in blood and waves it in his face to shut him up, and Mulder asks who he was playing against. More mumbo jumbo about NotOz trying to defend his game, and ZimmerFrame (sorry, I had to make that joke at least once. See what I meant about bad puns?) agreeing with him. NotOz spazzes out at Langly when Scully says she's calling the cops, because the agents were only called in so cops could be avoided. Never mind that Mulder and Scully are basically Federal Police and all, because that would be logical, and we need these to stop making any lick of sense for next year. NotOz is worried about the headlines. Scully goes off to call the cops as he storms out of the 'room', leaving Mulder to interview ZimmerFrame about what she saw.

Cut to the control room, where ZimmerFrame suggests that the computer crashed and there's no way they can tell what happened, basically. Subtext: "He was on the phone with Wench the Lesbian Dominatrix, and I was eating ice cream to make myself look that fat and therefore more attractive to him. I should just give him a blowjob next time." Mulder asks what was under that building where the guy was shot in, and ZimmerFrame says that they hadn't mapped out the area before. Which would imply to me that, you know, he couldn't see anything once he got down there, right? The graphic work is done, and it shows a chick with a gun. Which makes perfect sense and solves the case. Can I go home, now? Mulder asks if she can be wrapped in a doggie-bag to go, because he is three timezones away from his usual collection, and all the Silicon[e] Valley prostitutes are pre-booked months in advance, because nerds aren't that spontaneous. Uh, I mean, he asks for her to be "texture-wrapped". He asks for her to be printed out. Oh, yeah, he's going to masturbate tonight. ZimmerFrame looks depressed as she realises who it is, apparently.

Commercial Blackspot! "Hi, my name is Diana, and... I'm a Mulderholic." "Hi, Diana." "Agent Mulder and I used to work together at the FBI. I helped him discover the X-Files and--" "So it was your fault?!" "Yes, but I don't see what that has to do with anything..." "You don't? What are you, Chris Carter or something?" "Um, who?" "You know, that idiot behind Harsh Realm." "Oh." "You'll get your turn soon, Alex, just pipe down until then, OK?"... [By the way, you should note that in this episode, we never actually fade to black until the end of the episode, so I'm just shoving these in whenever I feel like it. Basically, when the episode sucks, which means there's going to be more writing of this storyline than of the actual episode.]

And we're supposedly back, just in time to see a body bag leave the building. A cop tells Scully that there's no forensic evidence, no motive, no suspect, and no murder weapon. Which means we're only a genetic mutation or alien conspiracy away from having an actual X-File, I suppose. Mulder runs up the stairs in the background and is introduced to the cop, whose name I am not even going to TRY and spell, because it's one of those evil sounding French ones, and I hate those cheese-eating surrender monkeys even more than I hate Moronica, who at least had some redeeming features. He hands the printout of NotLaraCroft to Detective SurrenderMonkey who makes some joke that hardly anybody outside of LA would have gotten, and I certainly didn't, considering I live not only outside of LA, but outside of the country and in a different hemisphere. Anyway, Scully points out how hormonal you'd have to be to get a kick out of this episode, and it happens to be a coincidence that I'm a teenager at the time of writing this, doesn't it? Even so, I'm too mature for this puerile crap. A young Asian man who - and this is not a joke - looks almost exactly like Jackie Chan's son Jaycee, except with normal hair, enters the office, and the LG's go all fangirly like they just saw Mulder naked. Maybe they should join Mulderholics Anonymous (See? I was going somewhere with that). It turns out that he is Darryl Musashi, and blah blah fishcakes about why he's there, but Mulder follows the entourage as Scully whines again and asks if he wants an autopsy on the victim. What kind of dumb question is that? Have you been taking your Moronica pills today, Scully? Because it sure looks like it. She walks off, and we cut to...

Musashi in body gear holding his guns up just like the nerds in the teaser should have been. In the control room, NotOz, ZimmerFrame, Langly and Byers are watching and comment about more useless crap that has nothing to do with ANYTHING, considering that Musashi is about to die and all. Gun-twirling is always fun, because there's a danger someone can get shot, and anything you can do to liven up this episode is wayyyy overdue. The lame Star Trek door opens and he enters the game, as Byers and Mulder enter the control room. Musashi stands there and watches as the motorbikes turn the corner and drive up. He shoots them all and whatever, and his standing heart rate is 68 at the end of it. Coincidentally, on a scale of one to one million, that's about how much I care about the people in this episode (with one million the highest possible, of course). He runs into the Basement That Shouldn't Exist, and hears steps behind him. Guns raised, he turns around just in time to have his arms cut off. Fun! Cut to the control room, where everyone looks shocked. Even though they have no idea what's going on, considering that the basement hasn't been mapped yet. Maitreya, according to the subtitles,

whose job it is to tell me this sort of stuff, "speaks Japanese". Doesn't give us the Japanese words for what she's saying, or a translation, just that she "speaks Japanese". She uses the samurai sword (though I'm sure Robert Modell will correct me and tell me it means something else entirely) to chop off his head, and it should be noted for no reason at all that we get the crappy video-game static BEFORE HE DIES here. That's it! Video-game static is the key to The X-Files! Wow, what a boring conspiracy. With everyone looking worried, we fade to black. (I lied. Sorry.)

Commercial Blackspot! "Hi, my name is Alex Krycek, and I'm a Mulderholic." "Hi, you little possibly-Canadian hottie." "Um... hi, Xander. I thought the Buffyholics Anonymous meeting was down the hall." "Oops, sorry. Move it, Spike." *Xander and Spike leave the room* "Anyway, I first met Mulder about a year after Wench's pathetic fire stunt burned his poor hands. Until I was forced to leave him by the cigarette-smoking father of a bitch I h--" "I resent that." "Cram it, Crispy." "Yes, sir." "Hey, that's my job!" "You cram it too, Wench!" "Feh."

Anyway, we're back. Scully Autopsy Of The Week time! Yay! She's checking out what killed Retro, even though Musashi just became Mu-sushi. (I'm here all week! Try the lobster!) She says there are no obvious reasons as to why he died, and then apparently suddenly realises a big gaping hole in his sternum. Don't give up your day job, Scully. This hole caused massive blood loss, and was made by something which got through a Kevlar jacket. Again, fuck that shit. It was REALLY caused by something, which left no trace evidence at all. Huh.

Mulder enters and asks if she's found anything, like she's supposed to do all the gruntwork while he goes and beats off to the Maitreya printout. She thinks she has something, and if Mulder doesn't stop playing with his something and do some work, she's going to use her mad autopsy skillz to take his something away from him. So, the vests measure vital signs as well as playing paintball, and sends this crap back to the computer. Also, the vests electrocute the players when they are shot. Well, isn't that nice. Scully says she first thought the vest had fucked up, but that she was proven wrong. She doesn't say how she was proven wrong, so you can assume it was some jerk telling her to go play with her dollies or some shit. Mulder mentions his birthday is coming up and holds the vest up, apparently trying to hint at a birthday present. He wants to get electrocuted for his birthday? I'm sure Wench can arrange that for him. He points out that the technology is good, and Scully counters by calling the game 'stupid'. Once again, Scully is right. Also, cowboys and Indians are suing 1013 for being

associated with this piece of drivel. She asks "What kind of moron gets his ya-yas out like that?" and Mulder does jazz hands. I knew he wasn't totally straight. Ahem. Scully the Magnificent asks why we need a game like this when the country is already Columbine-tastic? And, once again, I totally agree with her. Especially when she points out how dumb Mulder is when he asks what the game has to do with real life. And speaking of real life, weren't you supposed to be doing an autopsy, Scully? Mulder calls Scully sexist when she argues about a testosterone rush, and, dude: Do you see any hot guys in leather bikinis running around the game? No? Shut up, Mulder. There's more "Men go to bars, Women go to penis" arguing, which I am too pissed to recap, but suffice to say: it's even more boring than the rest of this episode. Aside from Scully's voice magically changing in a voiceover.

The Mu-sushi train rolls into the station and Mulder makes like an old-time train conductor.

Okay, that's the last time I make the Mu-Sushi joke. If I do it again, you can fly down here, tie me down to something, and force me to watch this episode over and over and over.

He lifts the cover off of Darryl's body and reveals that Darryl's head is next to his feet. They could have at least gone for a dirty joke and had him sniffing his own crotch, but even FOX apparently has some dignity. Mulder's phone rings and he answers it. The LA sheriff's department have arrested a suspect who looks exactly like digital damsel of distress.

Ugly Police Station, Which Still Looks Better Than The Rest Of LA. The boys club is in a hallway outside a room with the suspect. When one cop leaves the room after interviewing her, they all act like frat boys until Scully shows up and puts an end to it. She was picked up outside a strip club and read her rights and read her rights and read her... you get the idea. Scully walks in like a professional, but Mulder turns around and bites his knuckle because he just wants to be one of the big boys. Coincidentally, every woman he's ever met has also complained that he wasn't a "big boy", so make of that what you will. Mulder closes the blinds and Scully asks our suspect what her name is. Like she was never asked that before. The camera tilts up to show she's got long brown hair and is dressed like a reject Gladiator. Remember, if you're going to make your own Gladiator uniform for whatever dumb reason: Beads? Not good. She acts all pissy, and I don't blame her. Having to put up with FratBoy!Mulder would do that to anyone. She says she upset the metal detector guy, and then does the Basic Instinct knee crossing

thing which would have been funny if the movie wasn't already old by this point, and certainly isn't funny right now.

Scully looks all awkward and tells her that she has no knowledge of Ivan Martinez [who? Oh, right, NotOz...] or First Person Shooter. FakeyFury says she meets a lot of men, and when Scully tells her she was at the murder scene in some building she doesn't know, inside a video game, she doesn't even bat an eyelid. Now THAT is bad scriptwriting. Granted, she may not have wanted to flutter her eyes with all the FratCops around, but still... I blame Chris Carter. Scully tells her to cram it unless she's going to tell the truth, and Mulder tells her she is a dual murderer. FakeyFury says that Mulder is a twit who can't tell the difference between her and Lucy Lawless, basically. You know, like how Doggett thought Lucy Lawless was a friend of his until she tried to drown him. Again, I blame the writing. Mulder pulls out his now-probably-covered-in-semen printout of EvenFakerFury and asks if it's her. FakeyFury figures it out and says that some medical imaging place paid her to do a body-scan. Scully points out some of the stupidity, and I guess it's up to me to point out the rest of the holes in this argument. But I'm lazy, and let's just say it involves that imaging place not having anything to do with FPS, dammit. FakeyFury asks Scully if she thinks that is the strangest thing she's been paid to do, and: her outfit. She ain't wearing that because its comfortable, dude. Mulder tells her she's free to go, and she grabs her coat to walk out the door. Seems like it would be a good idea to put it on BEFORE you enter the Hallway Of Frat Cops, doesn't it? Nope. Mulder sits in her chair and leans to the side watching the door hit her ass on the way out, until Scully leans herself and he looks all sheepish. He says he wants to blast the crap out of something. Huh. Me too.

Mario's Impaled Tetris Piece World, 5:42am. We see a quick shot of a poster (complete with stupid "the bloodthirst is unquenchable"-ness) before the camera pans down to show Mulder and Scully walking around the corner. They walk into what looks like an abandoned room full of computers and other junk. So THIS is where the Lone Gunmen were hiding their office. Scully hears something, looks around and calls out for Phoebe, who apparently is ZimmerFrame, but you never know, they could have smuggled in Wench just to torture me some more. She gets up off the floor, and relax, everybody, it's only ZimmerFrame. She says she went to sleep on purpose because she's been awake for 70 hours straight trying to fix the game. Scully asks if she knows where Ivan is, 'cause he got some 'splainin to do about Jade Blue Afterglow. Mulder notices that the Lone Gunmen are gearing up, even though we saw in the teaser that that happens in the little tiny locker room thing, not in the big giant white room. Ugh.

ZimmerFrame ignores that stupidity and says they're there because Langly helped develop a patch for the game to try and fix it, and they want to test it out. Can I remind them that patches wear off? Fucking idiots. The screen goes all digital and ZimmerFrame is flummoxed by it. Mulder realises that they are in the game. We see ZimmerFrame typing really fast, and thanks to DVD slow-motion, I can now reveal that she typed (tope?) the words "TEH WRITERS ARE TOOLS!!!!1!!!1!" We hear the Lone Gunmen screaming, and Scully reveals an eyebrow that would give Milhouse Van Houten's a run for their money. Somebody save her poor Hickey! ZimmerFrame says the game is running itself, and Mulder runs off. Scully half-heartedly yells after him, and ZimmerFrame keeps on typing.

...And I'm back, after a month and a half of absence. Can you tell I really didn't feel like writing the rest of this up? And back to the incredibly sucky suckfest that really did suck, which for some reason has now decided that it would rather piss me off by stretching itself out in the half of my laptop screen I have for it rather than stay in its normal shape with black bars. Ugh.

Oh. Right. The show. A countdown from 10 in what sounds like Steven "X" Williams's voice but probably isn't. A slow pan up reveals that Mulder is in his suit pants, a tank top, and a full suit of hardcore body armour, containing such things as kneepads and a crotchpiece which almost certainly has an entire sock drawer crammed behind it. Just the sort of thing that says "Fun for all ages, as long as you're related to Ned Flanders"! (Incidentally, the Stretchy Computer Realisation Of Torture Unto Me makes it look like he's hanged himself here.) As the countdown finishes, Mulder says, "Bring it on". Hey, that movie was on TV again the other night! And you should sooo prepare for total domination, domination, domination, Agent Mulder.

The Lone Gunmen are waiting outside crouched behind that first turret-y thing and Byers has a flesh wound. Diddums. Grow a pair and deal with it. I'm sure Mulder would be able to lend you at least one of his pairs of socks. Maitreya apparently nailed Byers with a flintlock. Mulder starts shooting after a countdown as the gunmen head back into the supply room, which they are calling the "module" for some BS reason. Maitreya runs past in a full-on black bodysuit with the face cut out, because that is the one part of your body they can't identify you from in this fucked-up virtual world. Where are the Virtual Porn Nurses from Kill Switch when you need them? She runs into the Basement of Dread and we hear the gunmen yelling as ZimmerFrame asks Scully what the hell she's doing. He's "getting his ya-ya's out", and now is a

good time to tell you that 1) my internal monologue just started singing Lady Marmalade for no real reason, 2) the S.C.R.O.T.U.M. makes Scully look like she's on the edge of an orgasm as she says that, and 3) there is no fucking way I can sit here and recap another 20 minutes of this shit. Will come back tomorrow and add more.

Can't even remember how long it's been since I wrote anything for this, but it wasn't yesterday. Apparently, I'm getting better at blocking out all painful memories of thi... all memories of this episode. Yay for me. Anyway, Mulder walks down the ramp into the basement and sees Maitreya with a sword. The one that killed Daryl Musashi, even though it's spotless and without a trace of blood, virtual or otherwise. He tells her to drop the sword. She starts to, then decides to use it to teleport her way out of the basement. Did she turn into one of the Cult of Skaro while we weren't looking? 'Cause otherwise, that makes no sense at all. But the graphics people loved it enough to put that on the DVD cover, so... enough said. Unlike the Daleks, though, she only teleported behind Mulder and tries to hit him with the sword like she's playing a life-size version of Whac-A-Mole. Mulder manages to stop her with his gun.

As gunshots ring out, Frohike calls for Mulder. Not hearing anything, they run towards the basement but are teleported out and end up in that white room, apparently bypassing the supply room/"module" somehow. With ZimmerFrame and the gunmen perplexed, Scully busts in and demands to know where Mulder is.

Without an answer, Commercial Blackspot! "Anyway, before I had to leave him I had this huge crush on him which I never acted on. The closest I ever got was ogling his package in a Speedo. Ever since then, I've been trying to let him know I want to get back together with him. I even followed him to Hong Kong just to try and score, but he made me puke an alien out of my eye sockets in North Dakota. We went to Russia together so I could -- supposedly -- help him get proof about aliens, but he got me locked up in a gulag and had my arm cut off." "So it has nothing to do with a cruel dominatrix?" "Didn't I already tell you to shut your suckhole, Wench?" "Yeah, but--" "No buts! ... Unless it's Mulder's."

We're back, and not a moment too soon. Scully reminds us that she wants to know where Mulder is, and THAT is much less invasive than the over-recapping we get now in the TiVo generation. I feel so sick writing that this episode did something right, but it did. Writers and editors should quit complaining about getting less time to tell a story and more time not filling

that time with recaps. Rant over. Scully wonders whether the gunmen didn't hear her. Over... what, exactly? An invisible traffic jam? The running of the invisible bulls? Help me out here. Scully points out that she wants to know where he IS, not where he went. Given that the gunmen got booted from the game before they even saw Mulder, how the fuck are they supposed to know? And why isn't Byers in agony like he was in the game?

Scully asks if there was an exit or a gate or something Mulder could have used. The gunmen point out that it's only the one she came in. Because the one THEY use to get into the supply room is apparently not a door of any kind. Fucking idiot writers. Byers points out that it's just a game. Says the person who wasn't chopped up into sushi by Maitreya. ZimmerFrame uses the "only" door to come in and tell Scully that she's found Mulder.

We see a computer screen with techy crap on it, and ZimmerFrame says it's his telemetry. We spend a little while explaining to Scully that the player listed without "Game Over" is Mulder. Since when did the gunmen get an official game over, though? Mulder has apparently been turned into a three-inch-long bar by the game. For those keeping track, that's apparently either much bigger or much smaller than Scully is used to. I'm going with much bigger, considering how obvious the sock drawer crammed down his suit is. If he was naturally bigger, he wouldn't need so much, would he? She finally figures it out, but now wants to know where the game is. My guess is on the computer somewhere.

Mulder wakes up on a cold floor. It's in the basement still, but Maitreya's gone. She did leave her sword, which has conveniently been parked in the middle of one of the building's supports. Huh. Mulder leaves the basement with his gun and begins yelling for the gunmen, which is a stupid decision. He hears a footstep behind him, and we see a body wayyyyyyy off in the distance. After zooming in on his face so damn far we could see the blood vessels in his eyes if he wasn't wearing those ugly glasses. The person is Maitreya, who begins running towards him and does (by my count consisting of noise analysis and Zaprudering) 36 consecutive somersaults before leaping over him. That seems like the setup for a joke about it all being in the wrist, but it's not quite coming to me. Uh, not not coming, but... you know what I mean. Mulder looks around and she's gone.

In the real world (where computer programmers stop being polite and start getting technical), ZimmerFrame asks Frohike and Langly what they're doing. They're making a kill switch even

though ZimmerFrame says it won't work. Suddenly, NotOz enters, says he's back in business, and calls Scully a dope. Nice to know that Mulder isn't the only guy not getting any off Scully tonight. And the X-Files Simpsons episode was on here last night, so if anybody is a dope, it is Homer. Anyway, NotOz says that the flames were licking his ass. Wow, Wench must have been paid extra for that. Apparently, Scully fixed their problems when she put on the autopsy that she doesn't know what killed Darryl Musashi. She threatens to knock him out and his eyes bug out a little. Byers tells him that Mulder is still in the game. Scully says that the game has disappeared, and we know it hasn't because they got Mulder's telemetry before. She asks him if Jade Blue Afterglow sounds familiar, and he looks confused. Scully says that he'd remember her. Suddenly, ZimmerFrame runs out of the room, and Scully slowly follows.

She catches up with her in the hallway, and finally gets some non-gibberish out of her. In short, ZimmerFrame created Maitreya for another game to be everything she wasn't. Maitreya was a secret but managed to jump games. She gets stronger from male aggression. Scully wants to know about weaknesses, and Maitreya no longer has any.

Mulder runs up to the supply room door, which must not have the turrety thing in front of it now, and starts yelling out. He turns around at another footstep, and she's walking to him again. He goes to shoot, and he has no ammo left. Maitreya walks right up to him and he comes close to her. She goes all kung fu on his assorted weapons, both without ammunition and with padding.

In the single most character-destroying moment of this character-destroying episode, NotOz yells at ZimmerFrame for putting Maitreya into the game after some more wiggly vital tech talk, and Scully goes all "no fair picking on a girl!". Lucky Wench and the writers of this episode all pass for men, then. Also, Wiggly Vital Tech Talk is so going to be the name of my new band.

More kung fu Maitreya, but Mulder flips her when she tries to ram her stiletto into his face. Only Wench can do that, bitch! Mulder runs off and we pan on Maitreya looking all fake exhausted. In the Basement That Never Was, Mulder manages to removed the sword from the stone, and I really could have done without the Excalibur reference. As Mulder holds the sword up, we get teleported or something into a fake-looking Wild West village. Possibly the one from Kid Nation, though I don't see Taylor making a nuisance of herself yet. Give it time,

though. There's a big zoom out, and a second shot which REALLY looks like it was done in front of a green-screen and fixed by a first time graphics person. Ugh.

In better news, Commercial Blackspot! "The next year, I actually got to kiss him, but he thought it was one of those Godfather-type things where I did it so he would die quicker. Then I tried to save his life by killing some doctor with these weird alien rubbings, but.. well, let's just say it's not pretty. So, his birthday is coming up again, as you all know, and I wanted to do something special. Any ideas?" "Um... you do know this is for people who are trying to get OVER Mulder, not people who are trying to get Mulder over their knee, right?" "Oops. Sorry. Wait, why didn't you stop me before?" "We were all getting a little turned on. Except for Scully over there. She INSISTS she has no romantic feelings for him whatsoever. Nobody believes her."

Yeah, the Bastardised Queen News Room was a much better idea. Sorry. I'll try and do better next time.

Back. Langly yells out that the game is online again. Everybody has their own conspiracy theories about why the pictures aren't working, and: Bad Graphics People are the key to The X-Files! [Sorry, I'll quit guessing now.] The picture finally shows Level 2 and everyone wonders why that's there when Mulder was in Level 1. I'd say the better question is how you would have gotten out of Level 1 if Maitreya and her sword were never there. The picture cuts out again as Langly tries to shut the game down, which: why didn't they think of that earlier? Frohike tries to point out that they have to hurry because Maitreya's there, all cowgirl'd up. What's creepy to me is not that she's there, but I saw a pic of a frat boy in an identical outfit on a website once. (Don't blame me, I'm a recovering internet porn addict. Recovering only in the sense that two hours a day is better than three hours a day.)

Mulder is walking down the street and turns around to see Maitreya. He lifts the sword and tells her to stop, and she twirls her gun on her finger before putting it back in its holster. Pfft. I can do that. Mulder whines that it's not fair, and she apparently agrees, because four imaginary clones rise up out of the tumbleweed. Note that the shadows of all five of them stop at their waist for some reason. After what sounds like a gunshot from behind him, Mulder turns around and sees Scully behind the supply room door. Firstly, where is her crotch pad? She could get one of these tiny tumbleweeds stuck inside her crotch. Secondly, how is she

right behind him? We saw an overhead shot of Mulder walking down an empty street... without the door. Thirdly, how did she get to this level without Maitreya's sword? Fourthly, even Scully has a bigger weapon than Mulder. Although, that probably proves my point about the crotch stuffing.

The Maitreyas look at Scully and all six women start shooting at each other. Back in the control room, the gunmen are going apeshit while NotOz stands and looks a little bored. ZimmerFrame points out that it only gets harder from here. As the supply room door begins to shut, the agents run towards it and Mulder just manages to slide Maitreya's sword underneath. Scully tells him to look around, and they see more clones forming, this time like some horrible cross between Crocodile Dundee and the Coyote Ugly girls. This is where the Count would show up and tell me that there are NINE evil clones, mwahahahaha. Scully loads her gun, and all nine start shooting at her before she starts shooting at them. When Scully hits them, they start leaking what looks like salsa. Mmmm.

More arguing from the control room. ZimmerFrame tries to use a kill command to stop Maitreya, but NotOz won't let her because it'll kill the whole game. That's all you really need to know from this whole scene. Aside from everybody trying to wrestle the keyboard away from Frohike, it's not entertaining at all.

Scully keeps shooting at the clones while Mulder tries to open the door, somehow bending the sword. Mulder, in this show, we obey the rules of physics, dammit! Scully finally shoots the last clone, and I finally wake up enough to notice that it's raining hard. A tank starts forming, and aims directly at Scully, almost as though she's standing in Tiananmen Square. Maitreya sits on the turret, and I defy anyone to not think that was intended to be a dirty joke. The tank rolls towards Scully slightly, and Scully shoots it. It explodes but then resets itself, and again after yet more kill command arguing in the control room. My god, Scully's stuck in Groundhog Day again.

But to save her, ZimmerFrame gives Frohike the code. The gunmen and ZimmerFrame run into the white room from before, and the gunmen really should know that they aren't there, considering that that's what they told Scully before. Langly says his next line about killing the agents along with the game as though he's reading from a phone book. ZimmerFrame finds Mulder's gun and all four of them hurry to open up the door to the supply room. Inside, they

find a paint-covered Mulder and Scully, with Scully's hair looking as though she just finished entertaining herself with Mulder's weapon. Maybe this is where William was conceived. No wonder they wouldn't admit it. And Mulder is sleeping when they open it too, so it's entirely plausible.

Mulder sits up and yells out "THAT's entertainment!" To you, maybe. To any of the poor people who had to watch that, and especially to the idiot who decided to recap it, THAT was pure torture.

In slomo, everyone walks away as Mulder gives his voice over. Crap about Sweet 'N' Lo, crap about imagination, crap about darkness. Shot of NotOz asleep as an image loads on his computer. NotOz waking up to see a bad CGI version of Scully aiming a gun at him. She'd be doing that if it was real-life, too. And I find it ironic that an episode so based around technology had such bad special effects.

Head Scapegoat? Chris "You Forgot The T" Carter. First Assistant Director? Craig "I Tried Warning Him" West. Gaffer? Jono "Oh, No!" Kouzouyan. Assistant to Head Scapegoat? Brad "Any Similarity To Actual Persons, Living Or Dead Is Purely Coincidental MY ASS" Follmer.

Next week: Raceguy checks into an insane asylum after agreeing to voluntarily watch that episode.