**Facts Not in Evidence by Flutesong**

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Spoilers: Let's say, season 5 or so, no movie  
Rating: Adults Only  
Summary: Adventures and a hard won relationship - plot, plot and more plot, then sex  
Warning: Adult Themes /Slash /Language  
Notes: reading amnesia fics recently from Alex-h-c and Biani's Live Journal, I thought I would write one incorporating some elements from stories that languish on my hard drive  
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Introduction

Alex Krycek opened his eyes. There was nothing much to see, white walls, and two windows curtained with light blue drapes, closed so that the bright sun behind them spilled soft light over the bed Alex was laying in. He could see a door, partially opened and what looked like a dark room or hallway beyond it. He was covered with a pale blue sheet and a light blue and white striped blanket was folded over his ankles and feet, this made him acknowledge that he was comfortably warm. He fingered the white tee shirt he was in, it was not one of his, he thought, because it was several sizes too large. But, it served very well as a pajama top nonetheless. He was wearing light blue, extra large boxers beneath the sheet and smiled a little bit, thinking that whoever the place belonged to had a definite preference for blue and white, or perhaps, simply had no imagination.

Alex shifted, hoping to see more of the room and gasped. His head ached like the devil and his small movement had caused it to pulse with pain. He swallowed, tasting some kind of drug and a faint echo of copper tinged blood. His throat was dry and his lips felt like they were coated with some kind of gummy film, he tried to lick his lips, but his tongue was too dry and swollen.

Alex sighed gently, careful not to move anymore. Although the light was not bright, he closed his eyes to it and fell asleep again.

Breakfast in the Lion's Den

Fox Mulder eased the door to the bedroom open. He peered in and saw Krycek was still asleep. The man should regain consciousness soon or there was something wrong with the drugs he's administered. On the other hand, Krycek had been genuinely exhausted when Mulder had found him two days ago, so some of the sleep must be to recuperate from that as well as the drugs.

He sat in the easy chair by the bed. He didn't recall exactly when the plan to delude Krycek had formed in his mind and then went from idea to plan and from plan to execution. Maybe it had been when he'd been mind-wiped once again at Weikamp. After all, Krycek had been the messenger who had brought him the information to follow and he should have expected no good to come of it. Besides, of all his enemies, Krycek was the most accessible, if not cooperative.

He had the Gunmen find the safe house and the drugs, as well as the van to transport Krycek in. He hadn't told Scully about his plan. Even now, she was enough of a by-the-book Fibbie to want to arrest Krycek and be done with him. But, Mulder knew arresting the SOB would not solve anything. Krycek would tell them nothing, his connections would either arrange for his release or an assisted suicide and they would be left with all their questions unanswered.
Mulder wanted answers and he wanted them now. Since Russia, the field of players in the Smoker's game had become exponentially larger; there were alien rebels, a vaccine for the black worms/oil, the appearance and disappearance of Cassandra Spender, Jeffrey Spender's outing as an abductee's son, Diana's sudden return, mass burning deaths at the damn, as well as Scully's worsening cancer. Oh, he thought, and Krycek was minus an arm and plus a kiss to Mulder's cheek. Mulder had had enough, he had thought that for a long time, but now he was galvanized to action. No more Mr. Nice Guy with a badge, he was going to play as dirty as the big boys. Mulder scratched his nose, he wasn't entirely comfortable keeping Scully in the dark, he wasn't at all comfortable using several years of accumulated leave to disappear and kidnap Krycek either. But, it had to be done now.

Scully and Skinner had understood, or thought they did. Mulder was unhappy with the addition of Jeffrey and Diana to the X Files, grateful and relieved that Scully had not been abducted or injured at the dam and all around in need of time to reassess his priorities now that Kersh was the new boss. Kersh, without bothering to hide it, was glad to see Mulder go away for a while. Skinner had signed off on his leave and asked him to keep his cell phone charged, just in case something came up. Scully had hugged him and gave him a bag of vitamins and herbal additives to try and also told him to keep his cell charged, although she would not call unless there was an emergency.

Thus armed, Mulder executed his plan. He caught Krycek getting into a rental car at LaGuardia, exhausted from a flight from Tunisia. He hadn't wasted any time on words; he simply came up to the car and shot Krycek with a tranquilizing dart in his ass before the man could turn around. He hadn't expected Krycek to flail around before he went under cracking his head on the bumper and then on the concrete, before he passed out. It had taken every one of his favors owing to get Krycek to a doctor's office, and an x ray to see if he had injured his head too badly for him to be of any use, done quietly. Krycek had a concussion, but no other cranial damage or swelling was evident.

A dead weight, Mulder had taken Krycek away, stowed in the backseat of the van the Gunmen had found. He stayed unconscious the whole way to West Virginia. The house was halfway up the side of a mountain, isolated and self contained. It had running water and electricity as well as a back up generator. Frohike and Byers had stocked the place the previous week, so there were ample foodstuffs and a handful of books, a deck of cards and a VCR with a pile of tapes that had gone missing from Mulder's collection several years before. The house had been rented under an assumed name and came with bedding, furniture, a TV that had no cable, and kitchenware.

Mulder had parked in the garage, levered Krycek's supine body into the first floor bedroom and handcuffed him to the bed. Mulder had rested for a few hours, one eye still on Krycek, before he had undressed Krycek, discovered the missing arm, taken off the cuffs and made him comfortable on the bed. Somehow, over the last few encounters, Mulder had mistaken Krycek for being taller and wider than he really was, so the clothes he had bought were too large. But, they were clean and since he did not intend for Krycek to leave the house, large underwear to sleep in were fine. The Gunmen had said Krycek would have a several hours of amnesia, possibly as long as a day or two, when he awoke and Mulder meant to make the most of that time. The fact that Krycek would have a hell of a headache when he woke meant nothing to Mulder. All's fair in love and war, Mulder rationalized, and this was war.

Mulder planned carefully. He had a tea tray ready, practiced a caring expression, planned his welcoming speech and waited. He was going to be the best friend Krycek ever had, his poor junior partner, thrown into a brick wall during an arrest and brought home to heal by Mulder, rather than left in a cold and lonely hospital. If Krycek wondered where they were, Mulder was going to tell him the house was a summer get-a-way, a place to fish and hike away from the city and the FBI.

Mulder nodded to himself, satisfied. He had another cartridge of darts as well his real gun and ammunition. Krycek was unarmed, weak and although Mulder did not underestimate him, he was sure he was in control. He fell to daydreaming that Krycek would not remember his name or that he was Russian, so Mulder could
call him Clyde or Cyril or Herbert, just for fun. After all, it was time he had some fun at Krycek's expense. Mulder intended to lead Krycek to the point where he would want to remember being his partner and an agent. Coming on as a psychologist, which was what he was at heart and initially by training, Mulder was going to suggest some dire reason to get Krycek to agree to hypnosis. Once under, the temporary amnesia would not interfere with his real memories and Mulder would finally learn all Krycek knew about conspiracy, the aliens and his father. Before Mulder brought him out of the trance, he would cuff him again.

Or at least, Mulder frowned, thinking how slippery Krycek had been in the past that was The Plan.

2) Dawn

Krycek woke with no memory of waking up previously. The room seemed strange to him and he was sure, although he didn't know how, that he had never been here before. He noted the details of the room, his body and the condition it was in and tried to get up. His cry of pain brought a man running in to help him. The man talked soothing nonsense, urging him to lay down and be still, promising pain killers for his head, tea for his throat, and expressing some mild approval for his strength and tenacity coming back so quickly from his injury.

Krycek did not speak, some inborn caution staying his tongue and all the questions building up behind it. The man seemed genuine and really, why else would he be in the man's care if he wasn't, but still, something kept him quiet. The man patted his shoulder, the one with the arm attached, and hurried out to bring the tea.

Krycek stayed still, he did not want a repeat of that fierce pain.

The man returned and eased him an inch at a time, up onto the pillows. He placed the tea and some white pills on the bedside table and helped Krycek to take the first few sips of the warm beverage. He did not insist that Krycek take the pills and something tight in Krycek's throat eased and trust began to bloom. The man fostered these feelings by how matter of fact he was about the help. He handed Krycek a urine bottle and said to keep it near by and left it at that. Krycek could hardly lift the teacup, but the man did not hover and pretended not to notice his clumsiness.

"What happened?" Krycek whispered from a sore throat.

"It's mostly my fault," the man said, shame coloring his cheeks pink. "I lost sight of the shooter and turned away at the wrong moment. His partner came up behind us and slammed you into the wall. He cold-cocked me, and when I woke up, you were unconscious." The man shrugged an apology. "I know how much you hate hospitals, so I brought you here. We have a couple of weeks leave while the lawyers and our chief look into the shootings."

Krycek hadn't known what to expect as an answer to his question, but a Dirty Harry rerun was a total surprise. Was he a cop? The thought made his head ache and he closed his eyes. The man rescued the teacup and pulled up his blanket a little higher, before he turned away and left the room.

Krycek felt sleep pulling at him, but he made himself think. The solicitude the man was showing was nice, but felt wrong, very wrong and Krycek did not know why.

3) Brunch
Krycek woke up and remembered, from his previous encounter with the man, where he was and his situation. The room had not changed and he still had a headache. Being careful of his head, he reached for the urine bottle and opened the top, positioning it without moving his head and with only one hand was a real lesson in frustration, but he was damned if he was going to pee on the bed. He managed to do what he needed to do and not make a mess, but he was exhausted again. He put the bottle on the floor and closed his eyes.

He smelled the pancakes and coffee before he opened his eyes. The man carried in a bed-tray and helped Krycek up onto the pillows again. Krycek heard his stomach growl and the man smiled, so Krycek smiled back. The man sat in the chair by the bed and took his own cup of coffee off the tray. "It's kind of late for breakfast," he said, that same pink flooding his cheeks. "But, I'm sure you're hungry. You've been out of it for almost two days".

Krycek took a bite of the pancake, it was buttered and already had syrup on it and fortunately, he was able to cut it with his fork one-handed. He wanted to know who the man was, hell, he wanted to know who he was, but he felt a great reluctance to admit to not knowing. Amnesia after a head injury wasn't all that rare, but he felt somehow weak or inept because it happened to him. Krycek realized he was full of macho posturing as he chewed the sweet pancake, but for all his flushing cheeks, the other man did not seem to be the type to either blush or fuss over an injured partner, if that is what they were. Krycek felt that this man was a puzzle and since he had nothing in his memory to rely on, he kept quiet and chewed and swallowed.

Mulder watched Krycek eat. He knew Krycek didn't know who he was or anything about their real relationship, but he was being careful not to admit it. Mulder, who admired inner caution and intuitively formed decisions, had to take his hat off to Krycek. The man was a tougher nut to crack than he thought. Mulder relaxed in the chair. Hovering was so out of character that he did not try to pull it off. He needed Krycek to come to him with his doubts and confusion, not the other way around.

Inspired, Mulder asked, "Do you want me to call your sister? She could come and stay a few days if you would like that. The semester ended last Tuesday and you said she didn't start her summer job until next weekend."

Krycek felt his head begin to ache more strongly. He had a sister and couldn't remember her name or picture her face. In a blurry sort of way, he did remember a photograph of a young boy and younger girl, maybe they were of him and his sister. He wasn't sure and that made his head throb. Anything to do with memory made his head hurt. If he told the man, maybe he would agree to let him rest for a while until things became clearer. On the other hand, if the man was out to trick him or hurt him, he was better off keeping his own thoughts private.

Krycek put down his coffee cup. "Thanks for the food, it was great. I think I need to go to sleep again for a little while, my head still aches." He closed his eyes and hoped the man would take the tray and leave him alone.

"Okay," The man said carefully, "rest is probably the best thing; you can call your sister later if you want to."

Mulder picked up the tray. Krycek had not taken the bait, and he was getting frustrated. He flicked the imaginary sister gambit out the window, he would have to think of something better. "Let me know if you need anything for the pain," Mulder said solicitously and walked slowly out of the room, Krycek did not call him back.
4) Four O'clock Tea Time

Krycek waited until the man was gone and opened his eyes. He didn't know why his heart was beating so rapidly. This was a typical adrenalin response to danger and why he thought the nice man was dangerous only made his heart speed up more. Krycek tried to place the man in his life, but all he got was more of a headache. "Okay, okay," He said to himself. "Right now things are unclear, but I know time cures almost all amnesia cases, so all I need to do is rest and wait." How he knew these facts was also unclear, but they seemed accurate.

He wished he could close the door and lock it. Something about the man's access to him was disturbing and Krycek felt that he was naturally more solitary than having a partner indicated. He shifted a bit and his head did not get worse. He felt his ruined shoulder. He was a young man, he knew this somehow, and such an injury was a very major thing. What was the police force thinking of to allow a one armed man to carry a gun and be in the field. Shouldn't he have been assigned a desk job and not out skulking around dangerous alleys with an armed partner? He did not think this was standard operating procedure. Nothing made sense. The T-shirt and boxers were not his, he had never been in this room before and he did not recognize the man who was helping him. All he knew for sure was that he was on his guard with the man, as if something out of reach, but tangible, was telling him to beware.

As the afternoon passed, he tried to catalog the man, feature by feature, his tone of voice, the flushing cheeks, and the changeable eye color. He had no breakthrough. Something at the edge of his mind was tickling him, but he could not grab it and hold on long enough to find out what it was. Late in the day, the smell of onions frying permeated his room and wondered what the man was cooking for dinner.

After his vigorous time cogitating, Krycek took a nap until dinner was served.

5) Supper Time

The man woke Krycek, helped him to sit up, the pillows at his back, and brought in the tray. On the plate was a large hamburger, covered in sauted onions and a large pile of mashed potatoes. There was a small bowl of salad and a smaller bowl of fruit cocktail. Two hunks of French bread and a large glass of iced tea completed the meal.

Krycek felt strong enough to feed himself and the hamburger posing as Salisbury steak, cut easily with a fork. The potatoes were instant, but lavishly buttered, so they were edible enough. "Thanks!" He said happily and began to eat. The man smiled nicely and went out of the room. He returned with a more recognizable hamburger in a sandwich made of the French bread.

After a while the man said, "Are you confused about anything, Alex? It would be natural, you know. You've had quite a knock to your head and have a concussion."

Krycek paused chewing and thought Alex sounded right, so far it was the most right thing he had heard. He swallowed. "I don't know what happened in the alley. You did say my injury occurred in an alley, didn't you?"

Mulder nodded, Krycek was still playing things close to the chest, "Yeah. We were on the tail of the two bank robbers and the traffic near Logan Circle was really bad. At a red light, they abandoned their car and began to run. We followed, leaving Paul to park the car and come after us. The robbers split up in the alley behind the Hilton and you took the left and I ran around the building, hoping to get one of them on the other side." Mulder took a long drink of tea. "You called for back-up when you saw the alley was empty, but one
of them was behind the dumpster and the other had climbed into a service cart. They came at you before I got there and slammed you into the wall and took your gun. I had one of them covered, but the other got me from behind. I was only out for a few seconds, but they got away and when Paul found us, he called the EMTs."

Krycek stared hard at the white wall, trying to find any of this story familiar. He had a flash of an alley, but otherwise there was no clue and the alley could be anywhere. "Did you get me from the hospital?"

Mulder smiled and laid it on thickly, "Oh, yeah. You really hate the hospital; I knew that from the time you were shot. I got Assistant Director Skinner to use his clout to get you discharged into my care. I thought you would do better with me than in there, after all, if I had been quicker or gone in with you, maybe you would not have been injured. We are out of the field until the investigation is over anyway. I knew we would get no peace at my apartment, or yours, so I brought you here. I'd mentioned this place a few times and you were interested, it seemed like a good thing to do. If you want to go back to DC, I'll take you in the morning."

Krycek smiled, the man seemed very friendly, having only his wellbeing in mind. Maybe he should trust him. "The assistant director?" He questioned.

Mulder smiled to himself, "Year, our boss in the Bureau, he's got all of violent crimes under his belt, but he always goes the extra step for his agents."

Krycek stared at the wall again, FBI agents, now that sounded right, if uncomfortable somehow. He sighed, he rather liked the idea of being a Federal Agent, it sounded brave and cool at the same time. Still, he was careful, "I can't remember anything about the alley," Krycek said. "I think I remember being a FBI agent and working with you. But, I don't know how long or anything." Krycek shrugged, trying to look as though the gap was not a big deal.

Mulder patted Krycek's shoulder. "We've been partners for a while. In addition to federal gigs like a bank robbery, we are the agents for the X File division, and do most of our investigating there."

Krycek choked, his heart was speeding again. The mention of X Files made him break out in a sweat.

"You okay?" Mulder asked.

Krycek nodded. "It sounds exciting," He said with gross understatement.

Mulder felt a spurt of power; Krycek was following his lead, trusting him and wanting to know more. "It is exciting." He said. "We investigate all sorts of otherwise unsolved cases that other agents have abandoned. A lot of them veer into the realm of the paranormal or supernatural. We follow up after the usual stuff has turned up no answers." Mulder saw Krycek was staring at him with huge eyes and a surprised expression. "You know," He said, "Telekinesis, ESP and other issues that spook the mainstay of the Bureau."

Krycek stared at the man and knew he was sincere about his explanation. Krycek thought it was insane and impossible that he spent his life looking into mumbo jumbo and hocus pocus nonsense. He laughed, "Next you'll be telling me we look into alien visitations from Mars!"

Mulder dropped his last piece of hamburger. He had never seen Krycek laugh before. He'd seen him smirk, grimace and look blank, devious or faux guileless, but he had never seen a genuine expression of good natured humor. It made Krycek seem a lot younger and impossibly clean. He coughed, "Uh, Alex, we do look into cases of alien abduction from time to time."

Krycek put down his fork, "You're kidding me right? Making jokes because I can't remember what we were
doing before I was injured? Come on, man!' He said because he did not recall the man's name. "Dirty Harry, Federal agents, hocus pocus and I do all of this with one arm and you as the only other agent?" Krycek blew out a rough "phooey" in disbelief.

Whatever Mulder had imagined would be part of his plan, a disbelieving Krycek who thought it was a joke was not what he had in mind. He stared hard at Krycek, he could see Krycek's pulse was very fast in his throat, but he could not discern any pretence or subterfuge. Krycek actually thought he was kidding.

Mulder sighed hugely. "Look Alex, I know it must sound weird to you, but that is exactly what we do. We have even found a great deal of proof of a conspiracy to delude the American public about aliens. You lost your arm on just that sort of mission." He ended brutally.

Krycek caught his breath and black specks flew in front of his eyes, he had a sensation of horrific pain, saw blood run over his face into his mouth and dark trees overhead. Violently he heaved the bed tray off his lap and sat up. The specks turned red and he passed out.

"Shit!" Mulder said and bent down to pick up the mess.

6) Midnight Snack

When Krycek woke, the room was dark and the hallway loomed as a darker shadow. He was very thirsty, but he did not want to call the man to help him out. A lot of things were not right about the situation he was in, but he had no way of knowing which parts of it were the wrong parts. He rubbed at the ruined end of his arm and moaned at the remembered pain he could not describe, but felt acutely.

He was an FBI agent working with the other man on weird cases that he was allowed to participate in with only one arm. He was in a safe place with the man, ostensibly to avoid hospitalization, which he hated. The man felt responsible for his injury and that was why he was taking care of him, although the role did not sit well on his shoulders. He had a boss named Skinner who was reviewing what happened in the alley. Somehow he knew that losing his weapon to a criminal, no matter what the circumstances, was a bad thing. FBI agents were not supposed to lose their guns.

Strangely, he had a flash of the man sitting on the floor of a messy apartment. They had kissed; no, that wasn't right, he had kissed the man. Krycek examined this memory, he had not kissed the man out of sexual attraction, he was sure of that. Then why? Krycek almost shook his head, but remembered not to do it in time.

Confused, but very thirsty, he decided to get out of the bed and find a drink. The bathroom faucet would do if that was the nearest source of water. As soon as he swung his legs over the side of the bed, he knew it was a bad idea. His head pounded and he felt cold sweat break out on the back of his neck, but stubbornly, he kept going. He wanted to be independent and take care of himself. He made it the one step to the chair and sank into it gratefully. He panted for a few minutes, hardening his resolve and stood up very carefully. Holding onto the back of the chair and then the wall, he began his slow trek across the room.

He held onto the sink and hoped his handless aim over the bowl was accurate, because he wasn't going to bend his head down to look. He washed his hand under warm water and stared at his image in the mirror. He almost found the man in the mirror familiar, but there were subtle things amiss. For one, there were dark circles under his eyes and lines at their corners and his face was worn, as if it had been scraped on for years, instead of shaven. He was glad to note his neck was still strong an unlined and that the slope of his shoulder and right arm were strong and muscled. He looked at his hand. It was also strong and long-fingered; he had
a sudden, desperate longing to be whole and unblemished.

He brought handfuls of water to his mouth and refused to look at himself any more. Thirst slaked and bladder empty, he made his slow way back to bed. The flush of the toilet must have alerted the man, because he was there, helping Krycek to ease onto the sheets.

"Why the hell did you get up?" The man asked angrily. "Are you a glutton for pain or maybe you don't remember that you should stay as still as possible when you are suffering from a concussion?" He said, with a nasty edge to his voice.

Wearily, Krycek closed his eyes. "I don't know," He said dejectedly, "I don't know anything."

Mulder rubbed a hand over his mouth to hide a victorious smile. He had Krycek where he wanted him to be now. He sat in the chair and cleared his throat. Calmly, in a soft voice he said, "You don't have to pretend to be tough for me, Alex. I know how strong and clever you are and so do Mr. Skinner and everyone at the office. You've had some bad things happen, but you have never given up."

"Bad things?" Krycek asked without opening his eyes, "Bad things?" He fought to keep the lump from forming in his throat. "I look like I get run over by a steamroller for kicks and I am a cripple and will be for the rest of my life, which seems to be destined to be a short one. And you call these bad things, as if I had a scrape on my knee and peroxide and a band-aid would make it all better?"

"Alex!" Mulder admonished, keeping the satisfaction out of his voice and seeming sympathetic instead. "Alex, come on man, in a day or two you will remember everything and your head will heal." Mulder waited and when he saw a tear ooze slowly beneath Krycek's right eye and down the side of his face, he said. "I'm a psychologist, although you don't remember it at the moment. I can help you relax if you want?"

Krycek opened his eyes, fighting tears had not made them red, and instead, they were a brilliant green, shining, luminous and vulnerable. Mulder caught his breath, he felt a small twinge of guilt, but he ruthlessly silenced it. Krycek's eyes, beautiful or not, always spoke lies, he told himself, only lies. He patted Krycek's good shoulder, "I'll help you relax, trust me," Mulder crooned and Krycek blinked agreement and stared at Mulder.

Mulder tucked the blankets around Krycek, covering his feet warmly. He turned off the lamp and waited until their eyes adjusted to the dimness. "We're going on a journey, Alex. We're walking along the beach at dawn, the air is cool without being cold and the sea is a deep blue..." Mulder spoke in a sing-song tone, lulling Krycek into a trance, beguiling him to trust him and only him. It was working and Mulder added soft white sand and pale pink shells and finally, the aroma of baling bread to the scenario. Krycek closed his eyes and relaxed.

"You are going back, Alex" Mulder whispered, "back to when you were in school and everything was possible." And Mulder began to question Alex Krycek and if he felt as though he were stealing the man's soul, he only had to remember Scully in a coma or his father's bloody head on the bathroom floor to keep going.

7) Darkest Before Dawn

"You're in school, Alex. Tell me what made you happy?" Mulder spoke with a touch of authority.

Krycek's mouth quirked, "Mrs. Denton's home room," He murmured, already lost in the memory. "The last
class of the day and she didn't even try to make us work as long as we were quiet. Julio sat at the desk beside me and we shared his Walkman. The music was so fine." He grew quiet.

"Good," Mulder praised, "come forward, Alex. Did you graduate and go to college, tell me."

"I was sixth," Krycek said and frowned. "I was sixth in a class of seven hundred and fifty and my dad was mad, "first," he always said, "first or nothing."

"Your father is gone Alex, he doesn't matter here, he's just a memory." Mulder crooned, hoping like hell that Krycek had some happy memories to build his trust.

"Mom came with me to rent a tux for prom, she joked a little with the salesman and he gave me the shiny shoes at no charge. I bought a pink rose corsage for my date, Shelia; she had said she was wearing a pink dress." Krycek smiled again, "When I picked her up, she was wearing a slinky black dress and the pink rose looked silly. But, she loved it anyway and pinned it to her shoulder. We took her car, because all I had was my dad's beat-up truck. She smelled like the rose."

"Good, Alex, you are doing so well. Did you go away to college? What did you do next?"

"I went far away," Krycek answered, "As far as I could go, all the way to San Diego State and then to Germany on a two year student exchange program. I studied languages and from Germany I was able to spend time in France and Spain. I loved Europe." Krycek sighed.

Mulder thought how coincidental it was that Krycek had gone to the Continent for college and he had also gone as far as he could to study at Oxford. "Further, Alex," Mulder whispered, let's move to your work; do you like your work? Tell me."

Krycek's head lolled on the pillow, he was shaking it, not feeling any pain, "No!" He gasped, "I'm scared!"

Mulder was startled and drew in a sharp breath.

"Stop it!" Krycek was agitated, "Stop the noise, I have to sleep, I can't go on!" And then, Krycek shrieked and Mulder put his hand back on Krycek's shoulder, but Krycek didn't feel it, he was too far gone into something from years ago and miles away.

"It is okay, Alex," Mulder said over and over, bending low over Krycek's face, willing him to calm down. Krycek opened his eyes and Mulder almost drew back, he saw such pain, pain and fear, so like the many, many, of the victims he had met, the raped, tortured, burned and slaughtered, and then as well as now, he was too late. He was always too late. He forgot his mission, his revenge and his questions in the face of such pain and he cupped Krycek's cheeks and murmured to him, "You're safe here, Alex, safe with me."

Krycek stared unseeingly into Mulder's eyes, gradually calming, slowly getting his breath back. Without thought or premeditation, he raised his head the bare inch of distance between them and kissed Mulder on the cheek.

Mulder didn't let go, although he wanted to run away as fast as he could. Instead, he brought Krycek's face nearer and cradled him against his own wildly beating heart and Krycek sighed and closed his eyes and Mulder felt like crying, felt like dying, felt like shit for what he had almost done to another human being. And he felt ashamed.

"Let's go back to the beach, Alex." Mulder said in a small shaky voice. "The day has dawned and everything is light. The water shines with golden sparkles and is a deep clear blue, the color of sapphires." Mulder chanted until he too, saw the beach and the sand and felt the sun on his shoulders.
Krycek slept and Mulder, exhausted, sat back in the chair. Scully's bright hair against the white hospital pillowcase, his father's slack face, his sister's final call, "Help me, Fox," he saw and heard all of them and he closed his eyes and didn't know what to do except to follow Krycek into sleep.

8) Day Two

Krycek woke to the blue and white room feeling as if he had been through a meat grinder. All his muscles hurt and his eyes and his throat. He rubbed his eyes and remembered that he had cried. Krycek gathered his reserves and sat up. The headache was not as bad as the day before and he was going to take a shower and shave if they were the last things he ever did.

Slowly, using the bed frame and the walls, he made his way to the chest of drawers. He found the top drawer full of new things, underwear, t-shirts, jeans and socks, and everything but the socks were a size too large for him. Surely, if the man was his partner and he made a note to actually get a name, then some of his own belongings should be here? Not knowing what to make of it, he took a set of clothes into the bathroom, locking the door behind him and easing onto the toilet seat to catch his breath.

He turned on the shower and waited until the water was warm, holding onto the wall, he stepped into the shower. There had to be a god, he thought, because warm showers were proof of a benevolent deity of some kind. He found washing with only one hand to be awkward, made more so because he did not want to let go of the wall. He leaned against the wall instead and aimed the shower right at his chest and managed. He was reluctant to end the shower, but he was beginning to feel hungry and hoped for a repeat of the pancakes.

He dressed, it took a long time to figure out how to button and zip the pants. He thought that the injury to his arm must have been fairly recent if coping had not yet become automatic.

He shaved very carefully using the cheap plastic razor he found by the sink next a new can of cheap drugstore shaving cream. He botched it a bit, but after the blood stopped and he dried his face, he felt better.

The man was waiting by the bed, from the looks of him, red eyed and strung out, he hadn't had a good night either. The man spoke in a clipped voice, "Think you can get to the kitchen on your own?" He asked.

Krycek went ahead and found that the hallway led to a boxy living room and eat-in kitchen combination, redeemed by large picture windows on each wall. There was a stairway at the other end of that hall, past the room he had been in, and he presumed it led to other bedrooms on the second floor.

He went to the counter and picked a mug off a hook and poured coffee in it from the coffee maker, there were cream and sugar on the table along with a pile of toast and a jar of jam.

"Do you want some eggs?" The man asked and Krycek shook his head, glad that he only felt a small twinge.

The man joined him at the table after pouring his own cup of coffee.

Krycek took a bite of toast and after he swallowed asked, "What is your name?"

The man raised his eyebrows and smiled wryly, "Mulder," he said. "My name is Mulder."

Krycek mouthed the name `Mulder' silently to himself; the name rang no bells of memory.
Frowning, Krycek spoke, "Do I need to get a check up soon? How bad was the concussion and was it the only injury?"

Mulder looked out the window, "The concussion is the only injury, your head was X-rayed and there was no other cranial damage. You'll have to be certified before you go back on active duty, but the doc said that other than a few days of partial amnesia, you should be okay."

Krycek lavishly coated the toast with the jam, "Don't I have a prosthetic arm?" He asked, "How can I do my job with only one arm?"

Mulder grimaced, "You manage well enough." He said shortly and Krycek left it at that. Intuitively, he gathered that Mulder felt some strong emotion about the loss of his arm and wasn't willing to tell him more about it.

They munched toast in silence as the day brightened outside and the windows let in the light.

After breakfast Mulder said, "I think you should probably rest for a bit. The doc said I should see that you rested as much as possible."

Krycek wanted to argue, but he did feel more tired than a shower, shave and some toast should have made him feel, so he got slowly to his feet and went back to the bedroom. Mulder did not follow him, and in a few minutes, as sleep overtook him, Krycek heard the sink running and the dull clank of coffee cups knocking against one another.

9) Coffee Break

Krycek slept for an hour or so and woke up feeling better, almost normal, except for his memory. He got up and began to explore his surrounding thoroughly. He found a beat up pair of shit-kicker boots in the closet and an equally beat up leather jacket. He put them on and felt even better. The scent of the leather teased him, but he could not get a clear picture so he moved on. He went into the hall and looked in the closet there; he found towels, wash cloths and bed linen. Under the bathroom sink were a variety of cleaning supplies and extra toilet paper, behind the mirror only provided extra soap, a large bottle of aspirin and an unopened box of condoms, almost at their expiration date.

He ventured into the living room; he could see Mulder sitting on the porch, asleep in a rocking chair. The living room offered nothing of interest. Krycek headed up the stairs and hit pay dirt. The smallest of the three bedrooms had been made into an office. There was a complete and sophisticated computer, printer and fax machine setup on a large desk. On the desk were several dozen floppy disks, Krycek looked at the labels. The labels revealed that the disks were standard FBI issue and the descriptions yielded headings, letters and numbers of codes starting with X-File. So, the X File thing was true. He searched Mulder's bedroom, there was not much there; a few pairs of jeans and shirts, a good suit and dress shoes and a gun loaded with tranquilizers. He wondered if that was standard issue for X Files. Maybe they stunned aliens and ghosts, he snarked to himself.

He went downstairs to the kitchen and started another pot of coffee. He opened a package of cookies and set them on the table. Mulder must have heard him, because he stumbled in and sat at the table. When the coffee was made, Krycek poured two mugs full and brought both to the table. Mulder muttered, "Thanks."

"I feel better," Krycek said, drinking his coffee.
Mulder shot him a hooded glance, "Good." He said.

"Should we go see a doctor? Maybe a doctor could help with the amnesia." Krycek pushed on.

Mulder shook his head, "I told you, the doc said it was normal and I am trained as well. We will stick it out here a few more days and if your memory doesn't improve, we'll go see the FBI docs."

Krycek sighed restlessly. "I need to do something," He said.

"You need to rest and stay relaxed," Mulder replied.

Krycek ate another cookie.

Mulder got up and went to the drawer in the end table. He came back with a deck of cards. "Gin?" He asked.

Krycek smiled, "what do we play for?"

Mulder grinned back, "penny a point? Who does the dishes?"

"I don't have any money." Krycek said and realized it was weird that his wallet wasn't around.

Mulder looked serious, "Wait a minute," He said.

He went outside and into the garage. He returned with a battered leather wallet and a prosthetic arm, wrapped in a towel that had blood stains on it.

Awkwardly Mulder said, "I was keeping these until you were better."

Krycek had a sudden vision of a Glock pistol fitted into the inside of his jacket, with extra clips in his right hand pocket. "Where's my gun?" He asked in a hard voice.

Mulder glared at him, "No gun until you remember who you are." He said firmly, but Krycek thought Mulder was about to say something entirely different.

Krycek stared hard at Mulder, he was sure Mulder was hiding something and it made him on antsy. "What's really going on?" He asked, a snide note entering into his voice as if he were baiting the other man. It felt good, normal even, and Krycek grinned.

Mulder shut down, Krycek could see it happen. The genial older agent persona went cold in a mili-second and became someone tougher, angrier and dangerous.

Krycek stopped smiling and rose. Mulder rose with him and they stood, as if they were antagonists, on either side of the table.

10) Lunch

Mulder had left the table in what Krycek thought was a huff, leaving the challenge unanswered. Making no secret of his intention, Krycek went up the stairs and into the office. He turned on the computer and put in a
floppy disc. A file about an encounter with a woman who seemed to be living the life of another person, in this case, a young girl who had been kidnapped and was missing. The weird part was that the woman, a waitress, had fallen and bled in the other person's blood type. Mulder had noted that he found out the woman had also been kidnapped as a child and he badgered her until she remembered enough about the place she had been kept for Mulder to go on a rescue mission to find her. It seemed his partner on this case was an Agent Dr. Dana Scully, who discounted what Mulder discovered as soon as he found things. She insisted that the blood from the waitress must be that of the kidnapped girl and that the waitress was the kidnapper, spilling a vial of the girl's blood when she passed out, although no such vial had been found. Mulder went to find the girl, regardless of Agent Scully's insistence. She followed with armed police officers.

Krycek shook his head. What a mess of a case, and well into the realm of hocus-pocus supernatural. Nevertheless, he read the rest of the file, touched in spite of himself when Mulder reported that saving the child from drowning had killed the woman in her stead.

Agent Scully had not been able to account for how the woman died, miles away and under guard, of pond water in her lungs. But she annotated that the woman must have escaped her guards unnoticed.

Krycek felt a swift impatience for Agent Scully's skeptical remarks and wondered how Mulder felt about it.

Fascinated, he went through half a dozen files, each one more bizarre that the next; cases about telekinesis, about a boy who communed with lightning and used his electrical power to kill, and a case about the regeneration of a murderous genetic pattern in an otherwise good police woman.

However, nowhere in any of the files was an agent named Alex mentioned or anything about ghosts or aliens. Halfway convinced that Mulder must be some strange kind of genius to scope out these cases, he wished he could ask the man questions. He rubbed his forehead, staring at the monitor had brought his headache back and he went downstairs to lay down with his eyes closed for a while.

He heard Mulder come to his bedroom door, but he did not open his eyes and after a few moments, Mulder went away. Krycek hoped it was to make lunch.

11) A Lazy Afternoon

Lunch was a frozen pizza and a salad from a kit, but it was hot and spicy and Krycek was fine with it. Mulder was apparently comfortable with the meal as well. They used paper plates and plastic forks and there were no dishes to wash. Krycek headed for the rocking chair on the porch, he wasn't ready to face more of the oddities in Mulder's files.

Mulder joined him, taking a seat on the wide steps of the porch and looking out at the mountain view. It was a hazy day and the mists covered and uncovered the trees, making them mysterious, even in the weak rays of sunshine.

Krycek stared at his boots; he had taken off the jacket to eat lunch and left it over the back of his chair in the dining room. He had attached the prosthetic arm after his nap and it chafed uncomfortably where it joined the real arm, but he felt a great reluctance to look at it or fiddle with it, so he stared at his boots.

"Have we worked together a long time?" Krycek asked.

Mulder replied without turning around, "Now and again," He replied with a shrug. "I work with a Doctor
Scully more often. You are still a fairly new agent and they have you assigned to be point man for cases that include raids and explosives. Since you lost your arm, you are mostly behind the lines, coordinating police involvement and agent assignments."

"How did I lose my arm?" Krycek asked, staring intently at his boots.

Mulder sighed, so many lies, and he was sure he would screw up soon, but he wasn't ready to tell Krycek who he really was, even though he didn't plan to try and force him to tell the truth anymore. "We went to Russia, actually." Mulder began. "You speak Russian. We were following the trail of a courier who had brought a toxic and unidentifiable substance into the US. We ended up at a labor camp where the inmates were forced to mine for the stuff. We were taken prisoner and made to labor there. They were also performing tests with the stuff on the prisoners. It was killing them slowly and after they had done it to me once, I planned an escape. The truck I grabbed had no brakes and on the side of a mountain, you jumped out and I crashed. We were separated in the woods and before we found each other, you ended up in a rebel camp. During the time we were apart, the men in the camp, thinking to protect you from the tests if you were recaptured, amputated your arm so the site where the poison was put in would be gone. They had all done it to themselves. I found a family who were going to do it to me, but I managed to bribe them instead."

"There wasn't like a hospital or a doctor, was there?" Krycek asked in an undertone.

Mulder shook his head, but didn't reply verbally.

"How did you find me and get help? I imagine I was very badly off, did you medivac me to the states?"

Mulder hunched over, "I didn't find you Alex. I got the family to get me safe passage to the city and contacted the embassy. Everyone thought you were dead, and since I hadn't seen you in days and I guessed that whoever found you would kill you soon enough, there was no official search made."

"I was simply written off?" Krycek asked, surprised.

Mulder hunched over further, playing with his shoelace. "There was no trace of you; I tried until my flight home was arranged. The man in the family talked to the peasants in the camp and they said you died from injuries when you jumped out of the truck and they'd buried you in the forest. The embassy would not send officials to the labor camp for fear of causing an international incident with the Russians, who were not supposed to have labor camps anymore. I had to take their word for it."

"You went home? You just left and went back to work?" Krycek was flabbergasted and he'd raised his voice.

Mulder shrugged again, "Now you know why I was so anxious to help you this time. I wanted to make sure you were safe."

Krycek got to his feet, "Well, thanks for nothing!" He spit out and jumped the steps and started walking down the mountain.

"Fuck!" Mulder said to himself, "fuck, fuck, fuck."

12) Sundown

About a half of a mile down the road, Krycek felt his head begin to ache and the prosthetic arm was heavy
and chafing. He slowed and found a handy log a few feet into the woods to sit on.

He had some money and there was an address on his driver's license for a John Artzen, but did have his picture, but his keys were missing and he had no idea where the hell he was in relation to a car rental or bus line or even another house. He was thoroughly pissed off. What did this Mulder guy think he was doing? Did he think penance would bring his arm back, or pancakes would bring his memory back? Krycek kicked at the leaves. He did not know how he knew, but he did know that FBI agents were not supposed to leave their partners in the field and go home safe and sound themselves.

The day had clouded over and the woods were suddenly darker and wind whistled through the tree tops. Krycek sat very still, viscerally, he recognized this scenario and it made him afraid, afraid and lonely. He could see the road a few feet away, but it seemed to be much further and he felt a leaden weight take hold of his body and he could not get up and get back to the road. He started to shake; a panic attack on top of amnesia was just too much. At least if he were going Section Eight, he should know what freaked him out so badly.

He tried to get up, but his arm was on fire and his head was woozy and his feet weighed a million pounds. "Krycek! Krycek!" He heard someone yelling, was that his name and what happened to Alex? He slid off the log onto his knees, but he could not answer and he could not move and it was so cold, so very cold that his bones ached and his eyes stung.

Mulder found Krycek on his knees by a log a few steps into the woods. Krycek did not acknowledge his presence. In the dim light, it took Mulder a moment to realize Krycek was moribund with fear, and shaking like a leaf. Mulder rubbed his forehead, dealing with Krycek was more complicated than he had imagined. He did not touch him as he sat beside the shaking man. He began talking, "Come on Alex," He said wearily, "It's getting cold and dark and we need to make dinner. I'll explain everything as soon as you've had something to eat. I know you think I'm a shit, but you're no angel either." Mulder sighed, wherever Krycek was, it was bad. Well, why not, Mulder said to himself, even murderous assholes could suffer from PTSD.

13) A Hasty Supper

Dimly, Krycek heard Mulder talking to him. Even through the fog of his panic, he could tell Mulder's voice was weary and resigned. Maybe it was hard for the other man to face he had abandoned his young partner. Maybe, but it was hard for Krycek to feel any sympathy.

Mulder joined Krycek, sitting closer so that his legs were up against his side and when that did not stop the shaking, he put his arm around him and hugged him close. Human contact and a calm voice, was the best he could offer.

It took some time, but Mulder got Krycek to his feet and keeping an arm around his waist, led him back to the house. He made tea and added a lot of sugar and a large drop of brandy, making Krycek sip it while he made sandwiches and a can of soup for their dinner.

After they had eaten the simple meal, he asked Krycek to sit on the couch. He pulled up a chair and began his story. "I am the Agent in Charge of the X File Division, which is a sub part of the Violent Crimes Unit. Assistant Director Skinner oversees the X Files. He is not a believer in aliens or even in much of the paranormal things I find, but he is willing to support me as long as my solve rate is the highest in Violent Crimes. I have been a thorn in the ass of the FBI for a long time, but I had good reputation when I was a profiler and made contacts with important people. I used them to help me get the X Files once I found an entire room full of these unsolved cases. There was a previous agent who looked into them, seeing things the
way I do, but he retired long ago and the cases were pushed aside."

Mulder saw Krycek was listening so he went on, "When I was twelve my sister was abducted. I came to believe she was taken by an alien race that has been visiting earth and interacting with humans for a long time. My father, who was always a distant, short tempered man, was involved somehow. Even now, I am not sure how deeply. I came to the FBI with the idea that it was a place where I could look into my sister's disappearance more thoroughly. Once I started working with the X Files, I became a person of interest to a cabal of quasi-governmental organization with a lot of influence over the Bureau and the military. They did not kill me, instead, they have put up road blocks, which prevent me from actually getting in deep enough to prove they, as well as aliens, exist. I think my father was one of these men, who after a time, came to believe that working with the aliens meant helping them to invade the planet and kill millions of human beings. It may be that because I am his son that they do not murder me outright. A few years ago they assigned me a partner, Dr. Scully. She is entirely a skeptic, but she is willing to come with me on the journey to discover the truth. I think they assigned her, but if they did, their intention to debunk my work failed."

Krycek was staring at him with wide eyes. Mulder thought how young he looked, like he had after shooting Cole. "They closed the X Files down for a time and she went back to medical work at Quantico. I was given scut work to do as punishment in the meantime. Then, a puzzling case came into Skinner's hands and he was going to assign me to it regardless of pressure to keep me contained. But strangely, a young agent, you Alex Krycek, recently on board with another unit entirely, came in with an official request to investigate the case. Skinner assigned me as senior agent and off we went. I was resentful and you were eager and we solved the case. It was a case that proved the cabal had been running tests and projects, unapproved projects, using military personnel. Scully had a copy of all our findings and I had a file from a man that had started to help me from inside the cabal. At the end of our case, it all disappeared. The computers at the FBI were erased, Scully's medical findings were destroyed and you and my file went away as mysteriously as you had appeared."

"But, you came back a few months later." Mulder stared into Krycek's eyes. There was no trace of knowing in them. "This time it was a case involving a former agent who had had a breakdown. He believed he was a multiple abductee and had been subjected to tests many times. He took some hostages and I was asked, with you in tow, to go help the crisis team. The man, his name was Duane Barry, was shot. The doctors found strange implants in Barry and the agent in charge of the hostage crisis team gave them to me. I gave one to Agent Scully to run tests."

Mulder stopped, here's where it got bad and he had a moment's reluctance to destroy Krycek's clear gaze. "Barry got away, escaped from the hospital and kidnapped Scully. He took her to Skyland Mountain in rural Virginia. He knew the aliens were coming and he wanted them to take anyone but him. And, Krycek, she was taken. We were racing to stop him, just an hour or so behind. I took the tram to the top of the mountain to cut him off, but you stopped the tram from the control room. You murdered the tram operator in order to do this and delayed the tram long enough for me to be too late. When I brought Barry in for questioning, thinking you were still helping me and the operator had delayed the tram, you killed Barry before he could answer my questions. Before the investigation into the deaths could be held, you disappeared and I found evidence in your car that the man from the cabal, the same man who had stopped me so many times before, had been with you in the car."

Krycek gaped at him and he was shaking his head in disbelief. "Yes," Mulder said emphatically, "Yes, you were and you did."

"Several months went by; there was no sign of you or Agent Scully. Even her family had given up. Then, she was returned in a deep coma. It looked bleak and I had to fight someone who wanted to steal a vial of her blood. Some friends of mine tested her blood and there was evidence of unknown and possibly, alien DNA in it. She eventually woke up and seemed okay, within a year however; she developed a cancer in common with many other female abductees."
"A few months after that, a DAT tape purporting to have proof of the aliens and the cabal, came into my hands and all protection of me went out the door in a fierce race for them to get it back. You came back on the scene, this time not as an agent but as a thug working for the cabal. You shot my father in his home, just as he was going to tell me the truth." Now Mulder was shaking, all the rage and the hate boiling in his veins.

"Scully and I were on the run," Mulder spoke bitterly now. "Thinking she might have the tape, after she returned to DC, you and a man named Cardinale, shot her sister in her stead and killed her too. And when that was discovered, you went after Skinner, who was keeping the tape, and beat him up to get it." Mulder got to his feet, pacing and swinging his arms to contain his rage.

Krycek sat back in his chair, plastered with disbelief and trepidation.

"My dad was dead, I was almost killed, Skinner was attacked, and Scully was dying, although I did not know it then, when you came back once more. There was a lead, which showed that alien activity had been found by a French salvage operation in the Pacific while trying to recover a lost WWII submarine. I followed the lead to Hong Kong, where I found your salvage-selling partner and you. You had kept the DAT and were selling off its secrets in acts of treason and greed. You were on the outs from the cabal, because they had tried to kill you after you got the DAT from Skinner. Your partner was killed by the aliens and I caught you. You promised me the DAT in exchange for your life, but it was in the US in a safe place. We came back together."

Here Mulder faltered. How to tell Krycek he had been a carrier of and for the aliens? Mulder stopped pacing and shook his head as if to clear his thoughts. He sat and faced Krycek, "You were taken by the aliens. I don't mean taken away, I mean they or it, inhabited you. I saw no trace of this and did not know until later. When we got back, we were followed by the cabal and we were in a car accident caused by them. The alien inside you killed the men and because the alien's mission was to find one of its ships held by the cabal, you went back to the Smoking Man and traded the DAT for the information. I was in the hospital, and so was Skinner who had been shot by Cardinale for continuing the investigation into Scully's sister's death. When I got out I went to NYC because one of the cabal seemed to know what was going on and was willing to tell me. He told me nothing, but I learned you were missing. Scully had caught Cardinale and he said you were the one who killed her sister."

Krycek had jerked in his seat at the mention of the smoking man and started to shake again.

"We followed the Smoking Man to a North Dakota SAC base, the ship was buried in one of the silos. We were caught and taken out before we could find anything or you. The Smoking Man had put you in with the ship. I have no idea how you really escaped, but months later you fed me leads to a domestic terrorist group in the hopes that by doing so, I would help you expose the cabal and you could have your revenge on them."

Mulder got up again and saw Krycek, who was already pale, was as white as a ghost and looking sick to his stomach. "We followed a new lead, like I told you before, from a courier with the toxic substance. We went to Tunguska in Russia and found the camp and the experiments using the substance. I really thought you were helping me, I believed you against all the evidence, but you betrayed me again. You knew the commander of the camp and got out of the cell, leaving me to be experimented upon."

Krycek was shaking his head no, no no.

"Yes," Mulder said angrily. "I escaped and forced you to come with me. The truck went off the road and you ran away. I was found by the family and you were found by the rebel peasants who cut off your arm. I returned to the states and you stayed in Russia. I really didn't know if you were dead or alive until a few weeks ago."
"You came to my apartment," Mulder began, but Krycek had risen from his chair and run to the kitchen sink. He vomited several times and sank to his knees beside the cabinets, pale and sweating.

Mulder felt no pity; he pulled up a dining room chair and blocking the door, went on. "The aliens have been staging mass abductions and burnings. They are a new group of aliens, the same race, but seemingly against dealing with humans like the others. They are, however, willing to kill off any of the former abductees who have survived until now. You escaped Russia with a vaccine against the alien substance. You in turn, were betrayed by a woman named Marita. She took your test subject and tried to bring him to me. One of the other men in the cabal found you and forced you to give him the vaccine and work for him and the cabal once more. Marita was infected by your captive and never made it to me, but the man used the vaccine on her as a test. This vaccine and the presence of the alien rebels to ruin the collaboration with the cabal and coerce the other aliens off the planet, offer the best hope for the future. One of these alien leaders was in trouble at Weikamp Air Force Base, the British man sent you to tell me and I went there. The leader got away, but I was affected by the aliens and was mind wiped by the encounter. I wasn't willing to wait anymore to find my answers, so I arranged to snatch you and make you tell me the truth about the cabal, the aliens and everything else you know about them."

Krycek was staring at Mulder and although his breathing was still erratic, Mulder could see a change come over him. His face became bland, his eyes hooded and his lips were pressed in a thin line. "He remembers," Mulder thought, not knowing if he was relieved or not and wishing he had had the forethought to have his gun handy.

Krycek found a well of cold strength deep inside him. The list of crimes Mulder attributed to him was vast and horrible. Although he did not remember being the man who was capable of them, but he found he resented being accused. He realized his eyes were dry from staring at Mulder for such a long time without blinking, but he saw trepidation in Mulder's face and didn't blink. Instead, he rose to his feet, no longer cowering by the sink.

"I think you're insane." Krycek said coldly. "You have imagined or hallucinated a world in which you are some kind of ultimate victim as well as Sir Galahad and you blame me for all the horror and terror in that world. None of what you have said makes any sense at all, aliens, several kinds of aliens, cabals of evil men, abductees who are implanted or poisoned, and murder, murder everywhere. I saw the files you left out upstairs. You have let all the paranormal, spooky shit go to your brain. All I know is that I am stuck here with you, at your design and behest and that you have a huge chip on your shoulder. If what you have just said is all a fantasy, then it is you who are guilty of kidnapping me and I want out right now!"

Krycek blinked and turned the faucet on in the sink to rinse the smell away. He found he was almost vibrating with anger and also, with severe disappointment. He'd liked Mulder and had appreciated being looked after by him. He'd liked the idea of being a FBI agent who was useful regardless of his arm. He'd even begun to think that what Mulder was holding back from him was that they were lovers or had had an affair or that Mulder had seen the opportunity to start one while they were isolated. He'd understood he was gay naturally and hadn't given it another thought, except to come to the conclusion that Mulder was gay too and that's why he'd made such an effort for them to be away alone together. Otherwise, it would have certainly been easier to help him in the city with doctors and pizza delivery available.

Krycek shoved Mulder and the chair out of his way and picked his jacket off the back of the chair. He struggled to get his prosthetic arm into it, but managed eventually. He turned the collar up and put his hand
in his pocket, making sure his wallet was inside. "If you won't drive me back, I am going to walk until I find a way back. Don't follow me; after all, if I die in the woods this time, it's no skin off your nose."

"Don't even try it, Krycek." Mulder ground out. "You're not going anywhere until I say you can. I don't buy your falsely accused speech at all. You are a guilty, evil, conscienceless son of a bitch and you will answer my questions sooner or later."

Krycek didn't stop; he opened the door and went out to the street, walking down the mountain the same way he had started before. Mulder could rant and rail at him all night and he wouldn't stay there with him anymore, he'd rather take his chances, memory or no memory.

Mulder ran to get his gun and the gun with the tranquilizer darts. He was enraged at how coolly Krycek had brushed off his own culpability and blamed him for everything, including being crazy. Maybe the man had not remembered the past, but some of what Mulder had said hit him where it hurt. Mulder ran to the van and started the engine. He left the lights off, the moon was enough to see the road, and went down the mountain. He saw Krycek practically running ahead of him in a rather uneven gait. He got close to Krycek and Krycek looked over his shoulder, saw him and dived into the underbrush by the side of the road. Mulder turned on the van's brightest lights, which lit up the underbrush, Krycek, in his black jacket, was a dark shadow, but identifiable. Mulder jumped out of the van and yelled, "Come out showing your hands or I'll shoot you, Krycek!"

"Fuck you!" Mulder heard Krycek shout back and saw him try to crawl further into the woods.

"Bastard!" Mulder hissed, took aim and once again, shot Krycek in his ass and the man fell flat on his face in the leaves.

15) Approaching Dawn

Mulder dragged Krycek into the van and he wasn't too careful how he did it. He'd been wrong to have any thoughts of humanity or conscience about Krycek, he'd let his big soft eyes and the memory of the kiss, distract him. Not any more, he was back on track and he was going to get his information if it took torturing the bastard. Back at the house he dragged him into the bedroom. He stripped off the jacket, boots, pants and arm and cuffed his good wrist to the headboard. He pushed all the furniture away from the bed so Krycek would not be able to reach it or kick it. He looked at his handiwork and was satisfied. In his suitcase he had a first aid kit prepared by the Gunmen. There were a variety of useful drugs of doubtful legality in it, including Sodium Pentothal*, combined with the Ketamine** based relaxant from the dart, Krycek wouldn't stand a chance.

Mulder made a large pot of coffee and a sandwich to carry him through the night until Krycek woke up. He pulled up the chair, kicked off his shoes and waited. Krycek looked rather worse for wear after his escape attempt. His face was dirty from the leaves and earth, and he had scratch marks all over his hand. His beard had started to grow back after his morning shave and he looked as rough and as tough as any pirate. The only incongruity was his long eyelashes, resting gently on his dirty cheeks.

Strangely, those eyelashes gave Mulder pause; they'd brushed his cheek when Krycek had kissed him, like delicate wings. Mulder felt a throb in his abdomen and decided it was because he hated that even such a small feature of the man should look innocent or beautiful.

He took a swallow of his coffee and was glad it was hot enough to burn his lips.
Mulder's long wait ended as the first fingers of dawn lit the window and sent diffused light into the room. He had not slept, but he was not tired. Krycek stirred, trying to moisten his lips with a dry tongue. Mulder did not offer tea; he took a plastic mug from the bathroom with a small amount of water in it and shook Krycek's shoulder. "Wake up!" He ordered.

Blearily, Krycek opened his eyes and Mulder poured a drop of the water on his lips. Krycek licked it up, but otherwise, stared mutely at Mulder.

"Do you know where you are?" Mulder asked.

Krycek tried to concentrate and answer the man with the water. He was afraid of this man, although he did not know why. He shook his head 'no'.

In quick succession, Mulder threw out questions, "Do you know your name? Do you know what day it is, what month, how about what year? Do you know how you were injured? How did you get here?"

And to all these questions Krycek shook his head and looked uncomfortable. Mulder handed him the cup of water and Krycek discovered his hand was shackled to the bed frame. He could reach his mouth, but only by an inch or two. He drank the water and tugged on the cuff. He looked at Mulder, still not knowing who he was, but certain that he was not a friend. He squirmed a little bit and the man smiled nastily, hesitating before he handed him a urine bottle. Krycek looked at his hand and the bottle and felt despair come over him. There was no way he could reach his hand down to below his waist, but some spark of stubbornness made him refuse to ask for help, instead he stared at the man mutely and waited to see how far the abuse would go. Mulder actually considered not helping Krycek, and let the man have to fight his bladder until he lost and stewed in a soiled bed. But, he would be the ultimate victim if he had to change the bed as well as Krycek. He unlocked the cuff and backed up to the door of the room, "Do not get up," Mulder warned, "You'll fall on your face and I'll leave you there." He turned his face away and waited until he heard the stream into the bottle end and the rustle of underwear and sheets. He came in and the cuff.

No pussyfooting around this time, Mulder began, "I am Special Agent Fox Mulder of the FBI. You are Alex Krycek, my prisoner. I am going to ask you questions and you are going to answer them, despite the temporary amnesia you are currently experiencing, older memories of your criminal activities are just below the surface. You are very weak and I will endeavor to convince you to answer and answer truthfully. If you do so, I will reward you with food and freedom within the house. If you attempt to stall or lie, I will punish you severely."

Krycek licked his lips, he was still very thirsty, but the less he drank the less he would have to need Agent Mulder's help or suffer his abuse. "I think what you are doing is illegal, Agent Mulder. Coerced confessions are inadmissible in court."

Mulder smiled cruelly, "Do not assume facts not in evidence, Krycek, and we will get along much better."

Krycek felt a shiver of fear down his back, was this Agent Mulder insane? Had he gone rouge and was willing to go to any lengths to get what he wanted? It seemed that was the case.

16) High Noon

Mulder pulled a small table into the room and proceeded to set a video camera on it, with several extra cartridges of tape piled beside it and aimed it directly at Krycek. He went out and returned with a plateful of sandwiches and a pitcher of iced tea. But, there was only one plate and one glass, so Krycek understood that
it wasn't for him. With deliberation, Mulder donned his body holster and placed a gun in it. Thus fortified, Mulder sat in the chair and began to talk.

Krycek was surprised to hear Mulder begin to talk about baseball until he realized the beguiling tone of voice and the agreeable questions were a warm up, softening his resistance to whatever else Mulder might ask. He was so tired and woozy and Mulder's voice in its mild monotone was soothing, besides, Krycek felt no burden of guilt in himself, maybe Mulder had the wrong guy. He couldn't stop the pictures of Sunday at the ballpark from filling his mind. He could taste the hotdogs and smell the peanuts and hear the crowd. He saw a middle aged man sitting beside him, a box score pad on his lap and a worn pencil behind one ear and a cigarette stuck behind the other, and realized this was his dad, but long ago, before the troubles had come to their lives. Krycek frowned and Mulder barely paused, he was describing the final inning in a playoff game which the Yankees would win. Krycek's father was talking to him, he was a White Sox fan and the Yankees were beating the crap out of them on the field. His father's voice and Mulder's voice began to overlap, telling each side of the game, relishing the day and the players. Krycek relaxed, his dad was here and everything was all right. He closed his eyes and the tension in his shoulder's eased.

Mulder kept up his litany and turned on the video recorder. "What was your favorite team, Alex?" He asked softly, adding it naturally to the sentence he was already saying.

"Cub fans are the most loyal in the country," Mulder murmured back, "When did you meet the Smoking Man, Alex?" He threw in.

Krycek frowned, his father smoked cigarettes, but never inside the apartment. His mother wouldn't stand for that. The Smoking Man was not his dad, he was a bad man, an evil man and he did not belong in a ballpark anywhere near him or his father. Krycek's hand curled into a fist, and he cursed in Russian, startling, if only he had opened his eyes to see, Agent Mulder.

"Was it at the Academy?" Mulder asked, not waiting for Krycek to finish his thoughts.

Krycek felt a pain in his head, the words he heard, 'The Academy', made him anxious. More words followed, Suborned, Volunteered, Willing, Pay Offs, Spy, Mole...

Krycek burst out, "Alexander Pavel Kerchikov, Army Intelligence, 226-74-8811, Sir!"

He heard Mulder say, "What the fuck!"

Krycek let his mind go back to the ballgame and his father. It had been so long since he and his father had been to a game, they always had the cheapest seats, but that never mattered. His father was a handsome man, his mother always said, with eyes as green as grass and hands as big as anvils. He worked for the City of Cleveland Parks and Recreation, doing yard work and picking up debris after weekend events, but he had been proud of his work and loved being outside, even in mid-winter. He was a severe man also, insisting his children, especially his eldest son, be the best at anything American society threw at them, holding the Soviet system as the bench mark for forced excellence in their faces and comparing it to how good they had it growing up in America. Krycek's mother had been a city employee as well; a fully trained doctor in the Ukraine, all she could get in the USA was a part-time job as a school nurse, checking poorly dressed kids for lice, or chicken pox or handing out band aids. His father always introduced her as Doctor, despite her
job, and she had always told Alex that was what someone who loved you did, acting proud, acting happy, despite the circumstances.

Alex was always excited to go to a game, his sister and brother were both too young to go and behave for several hours, so it was what he and his father did together. His father would let him buy the subway tokens and put them in the slot and he would always let him find their seats, reading the numbers carefully from the tickets.

Although he knew how to do it, he always asked his father to help him fill out the box score, and his father, knowing that Alex knew it already, cooperated, grinning at his son with his wide white smile. Once in a while, his dad had saved enough change for peanuts and they would break the shells with their teeth and spit the husks between their feet. Alex remembered pretending he was a ball player, spitting out tobacco juice as he came to the plate.

Mulder's voice began to intrude on his recollections and Alex tried to brush him away, but the voice was compelling. "You were in the Service, Alex?" He asked, admiringly. "What was your rank? Did you look good in your uniform?"

Krycek licked his lips, he did not want to answer the questions and who the hell cared how he looked in his uniform as long as it met regulations and was perfectly ironed, "Alexander Pavel Kerchikov, Army Intelligence, 226-74-8811, Sir!" He answered curtly, but the ball game faded and the sounds of submachine gun fire and tanks crushing old cobbled streets in Qandahar, Afghanistan, took its place.

Mulder watched Krycek's face and knew he was gone somewhere in his memories. The standard military POW response had shaken Mulder. He had never imagined Krycek as being in the military, let alone the US Army, and on top of that, Intelligence. Maybe he had been older than his FBI record stated. The whole military connection, given what he learned about Krycek's Russian relationships, shone a new light on how, possibly, Krycek had come to be a spy recruited by the Smoker.

Mulder stopped the military questions and asked instead, about Krycek's family, "We're your parents proud of you when you served in the Army? Did your girlfriend write you a letter every week?"

Krycek frowned and it was obvious he was resisting the questions. "I was assigned overseas and my family was worried all the time. My brother joined up a few years later and was killed by roadside bomb in Mogadishu; it almost killed my mother to lose him."

Krycek stared at Mulder, but Mulder, remembering his training, knew he wasn't seeing him at all. "Is your mom all right now?" He asked solicitously.

Krycek made a shoo-fly gesture as if he could flick the question away, but he was deeply under the influence of the drugs and Mulder's voice and he answered. "Mom died in ninety-five, she had an aneurism. My sister handled the burial, I saw if from a thousand yards away through a telescopic lens. I never said good-bye."

"Why were you hiding?" Mulder asked, sweet and low, careful not to disturb the mood and Krycek's obvious sorrow.

A tear ran down Krycek's cheek and was ignored. "I had been under deep cover for almost two years by then and I wasn't given permission to attend the funeral. I have not seen any of my family since ninety-three."

Mulder gaped; he couldn't help it, whose orders had Krycek been following, the Smoker, the FBI, the military, the KGB? He was beginning to get a headache. Krycek had a family and siblings and was
American born. It was a lot to take and try to fit into his preconceptions.

"Your undercover assignment, Alex, what was it?" Mulder asked, deeply interested.

Krycek fought against answering. Something wasn't right, something just out if his reach, but his head was swimming and he felt compelled to answer. "CIA Bureau Chief Colin Humphrey was attached to my unit in Afghanistan; he was there to trace the heroin pipeline from Qandahar to Ankara and then to the US. He was there when I was interrogating an NCO who was selling military supplies on the black market. He liked my style and I was assigned to a joint DEA-CIA undercover operation as a liaison between the Army anti-drug task force and a major cartel connection in the US. I went in as a small time dealer who wanted to become more important in the cartel and was willing to do whatever it took to get there, including killing his rival dealers. When my mother died, I was in Columbia making a large purchase and getting to know the Columbian connections. I went AWOL to get to the funeral, but I realized I would be putting my sister and my dad in danger if I broke cover and showed up, so I watched from a distance.

"I'm sorry you couldn't be there," Mulder crooned, "What happened next?"

Krycek tugged at the cuff, but seemed to run out of strength, "I was brought up on charges of Dereliction of Duty and my JAG lawyer knew this man who could help get me cleared. So, I met him and he did get me cleared, but then he demanded repayment. Oh, he didn't put it like that, of course, but I was assigned to his Black Ops team soon after the trial. He was very high up the food chain; I didn't even know his name for a long time because it was classified. Everyone referred to him as The Smoker, because he always had a cigarette in his mouth. When my Tour of Duty was up, I wanted to get out of the service and away from my assignment." Krycek's breath caught in his throat and he knew he was about to start sobbing or something equally embarrassing.

Mulder egged him on, "What did the Smoker make you do, Alex. He forced you, didn't he?"

Krycek shook his head yes, "He sent for me when I was on the last step of Exit Paperwork and talked to me about my sister. She was working for a company in which he had influence. She loved her work and had married a nice guy, my dad was living with them and he was in the first stages of lung cancer. The city retirement health care sucked, but my sister had him covered through her job. If I insisted on going home, the Smoker assured me she would lose her job and the health insurance. He could arrange for her or her husband to have an accident at any time too. I did not go home."

Mulder sighed; it was an old, old story, blackmailing someone trying to protect their family. But, like so many suborned people, Krycek had fallen into the trap the Smoker had laid and been in too deep from the start. While Krycek got his breath back and started to doze off, Mulder thought about his first meeting with Krycek and the few cases they had worked together. The young agent had seemed normal, if cocksure and had taken the lead when they had faced danger, protecting Mulder when he should have been behind him instead. Obviously, Krycek had had a lot of hard training in the service; he was used to doing whatever it took, long before he had become a faux FBI agent. Although he was loath to acknowledge it, had Krycek told him the whole story back in the day, neither he nor Skinner could have changed anything. The Smoker had influence in the FBI too. Mulder knew enough men his age that had a different view of the world after being in the military and unlike him; they had fewer regrets when they had to kill in the line of duty. After all, they had already done so wherever they had served.

Krycek's attitude made sense in retrospect too. He had felt superior to Mulder in many ways and had probably thought Mulder was a naive dreamer for believing he could expose the Smoker and his organization or put a stop to the project with the aliens. So, when Krycek had been ordered to delay him, or kill his father or take him to Russia and hand him over for tests, he had obeyed, goading Mulder to refuse and go the other way. But, Mulder thought, he had never gone the other way, he had fallen into Krycek's plans because he had wanted to know what Krycek knew about the Smoker and the aliens, refusing to look
at why an obvious traitor and mole was simultaneously offering bait and trying to turn him off.

Mulder looked at the dozing man, his mirror image in so many ways, trying to save a sister whose enemy was overwhelmingly strong and who was already lost to her brother, no matter how many years he paid in sweat and blood for her return.

Mulder had a million more questions, but his long night and day without sleep was catching up on him and he yawned. He threw a cover over Krycek and turned off the light, it was a gray afternoon and they had been at it for hours. He picked up the video recorder, his plate of half full of uneaten sandwiches and left the room. If he had the energy and the will, he could dose Krycek again and continue later. Right now, he was going to shower and take a nap.

Being as conscienceless as the bad guy was wearing on the body and the spirit, he wondered how Krycek had retained any humanity at all. Then he remembered he had thought Krycek had none. Shaking his head, he tossed the sandwiches in the trash, left the recorder on the kitchen counter and went upstairs to his room. The walls were thin, if Krycek called out, he would hear him, but he doubted Krycek would wake anytime soon, he'd been dosed to the gills.

17) Hazy Sundown

The two men, separated by a few rooms and a million miles in experience and attitude, slept the afternoon and early evening away. Krycek woke first, he had only some hazy recollections of the interrogation, but his mouth tasted awful and his right wrist and arm were bloodless and sore. He tried sitting up so he could bring his arm down a little from where it was secured above his head. The few inches made for no relief and when the blood started to flow again, the pain was amazingly sharp. He got onto his knees and brought his arm to his chest, rubbing it against the t-shirt to stimulate more blood flow. He gritted his teeth while he watched the light outside his window turn from mauve to purple and then to a dark gray. Night had fallen and he had no idea what was going on.

Mulder woke to a hazy, but intense aftermath of a bloody dream. He checked the room around him in the dim light of dusk and saw he was safely in bed and there were no monsters in the room. He rose and caught sight of his reflection in the mirror and paused, he was a mess; hair standing on end, two days of stubble on his chin and bloodshot eyes. He quirked his eyebrow at the image and reconsidered, perhaps there was a monster in the room after all.

Mulder showered quickly, resisting the urge to check on Krycek first. Clean, shaven and dressed in an old pair of jeans and a faded Bureau sweatshirt, he went into the kitchen and started a new pot of coffee. Before he went into Krycek's room, he packed up the computer, his discs, clothes and other stuff and took it to the truck. He emptied the garbage in the kitchen, tying it in a double layer of trash bags and put that in the truck too. The Gunmen would send someone to clear the place of anything identifiable and erase all possibilities of detection, including DNA and fingerprints.

He regretted that he had not brought his cell phone with him, despite the reminders from Skinner and Scully. He had not wanted it within reach if Krycek had overpowered him and contacted the Smoker. It seemed a stupid decision now, because he really wanted to talk to someone besides Krycek and get centered again. He'd tried two times to get Krycek to talk about the Smoker and he'd failed both times. Krycek simply wasn't behaving as Mulder thought he would. Easygoing, trusting Krycek, the young Fibbie, had grown insulted when Mulder had accused him and run away. On his guard, ex-military Krycek had been more forthcoming, but again, it wasn't what Mulder had expected to hear.

As Krycek's crimes had piled up, Mulder had dismissed the possibility that the man had been suborned or
forced and had decided Krycek was purely a coward and one hundred percent evil. To find out that the Smoker had indeed forced him, blackmailing a young recruit with his family's life, had left Mulder with a bad taste in his mouth. Knowing that neither he nor Skinner, or for that matter, anyone in the chain of command at the FBI could have helped Krycek once the Smoker had his claws in him, was a very bitter pill. He wanted to think that he would have refused, choosing death instead of dishonor, but looking at the situation pragmatically, he realized he would have chosen to protect his family and kept his secrets. If these conclusions were right, what was Krycek, who was Krycek? Mulder put some bread in the toaster, automatically making four slices, two for him and two for the enigma in the bedroom. He shrugged and poured a second cup of coffee too.

When Mulder came in with the tray of coffee, toast and orange juice, Krycek had a flash of him doing this before, but he couldn't place exactly when that was. He remembered enough to know this man hated him and was his captor. "Is the OJ poisoned?" He rasped from a dry throat.

Mulder almost smiled, "Nah," He replied, "It's in the coffee."

Krycek nodded, "Good to know. I think I'll drink the juice."

Mulder decided to go for the direct approach this evening. Krycek was more alert, but the drugs that remained in his system would affect his ability to lie, not as surely as when he was tranked to the gills, but it should be enough. "Why did you shoot William Mulder in his bathroom almost three years ago?"

Krycek carefully swallowed his sip of juice. The OJ, like most made from frozen cans of the stuff, had a slightly bitter aftertaste. He stared at the man whose name was also Mulder. His instincts, which had not been altered by the drugs, were on full alert. "The Smoking Man ordered me to kill Mr. William Mulder. He said William Mulder had become a threat and a liability to the project and completing the project's goals. I knew he was an old man who had distanced himself from the Smoker's circle years ago. He was as much of an asshole as the Smoker, but he had dropped out, if not recanted. He had contacted his son, who I am assuming is you, Agent Mulder, in order to try and clear his reputation and conscience. He did this on the same day as the Smoker visited him and warned him that you had a potentially explosive tape of the project's liabilities and plans that would mean the end of all of it. William Mulder, in the face of his knowledge about how the Smoker acted, as well as knowing he was monitored for leaks, contacted you anyway. When I overheard him welcoming his son and mouthing platitudes, but still putting off an actual confession, I felt he had knowingly chosen suicide by assassination. He couldn't help but know that someone like me would be sent to insure he told you nothing of worth."

"He was my father," Mulder said hopelessly.

"He was my target and I have a father too, whose worse crime was being a severe disciplinarian. If I had not obeyed my orders, he would have died that night too. Believe me, Agent Mulder, I was not sent alone. If I had been unwilling or unable to fulfill my orders, William Mulder would have been killed that night anyway." With that clear, cold explanation, Mulder surprisingly felt the knot of anguish and hate, loosen. He had always assumed that Krycek had done it with a personal motive or as a personal blow to him. Hearing the soldier relate the event, somehow, made it different, less personal and more objective.

Krycek had been watching Mulder closely. "I am sorry you lost your father," He said. "I was following orders, which sounds like I am a shit without morals, but I had to choose and I chose so that my father, and probably I, would live."

Mulder nodded, he was exhausted despite the long nap. He pressed on for just a little more, "I need proof of the conspiracy with the aliens, which means I need proof that the aliens exist. Nothing less than this will do to stop the Smoker and the rest of them. Do you know any way I can obtain this proof?"
Krycek closed his eyes, he saw images behind them, images that were blurry and frightening and impossible to explain to anyone, except perhaps, this man. "Their ships are virtually undetectable. They have force fields that no human device can register. Sometimes they do tests with human scientists present, but otherwise, they are careful to move around and not even let the Smoker or his teams, know where they are. They have always been careful and the interactions between the humans and them have been sparse during all these years, although to hear it from the Smoker, they are regular visitors for afternoon tea. They have never trusted the human collaborators and now with the more aggressively distrusting rebels in the mix. I do not know where you can find the proof you need. I have never been privy to any of their timetables or scheduled visits."

Mulder considered what Krycek was saying, he believed him because he was open and clear and Krycek without drugs had never been either in the past.

Mulder picked up the tray and took it back to the kitchen. He returned with a satchel, in it was the prosthetic arm, the leather jacket, a pair of disreputable black jeans, a white tee shirt and a gray pullover sweater. He put the satchel on the end of the bed. "I am going to give you the key to the cuffs. It will take you a while to figure out how to twist your wrist and unlock yourself. These are the things you had with you when I snatched you. I have thrown your guns into the Hudson River. There will be a set of car keys on the kitchen table to an old clunker in the garage. The license plates are fake and there is no insurance, so once you are back where you can get around, lose the car. I am going first. I thought I might kill you rather than let you go, because I have no way of prosecuting you for the crimes you have committed. The Smoker, whatever else he is or has done to you, cleared your official record and there is nothing to charge you with that can be substantiated. I strongly suggest that you rest for another twenty four hours or more so the drugs can vacate your system and your amnesia will end. You will be safe here; no one knows where you are except for me. I find I cannot kill you in cold blood, but be warned, if I encounter you again, I will kill you. If you drop the key to the cuffs, a contact of mine will arrive in forty eight hours, you will be very uncomfortable by then, but I could care less."

Mulder put the key into Krycek's hand, despite what he had just said, he looped a string around Krycek's finger that was attached to the key, which was awkward, but not impossible, if he lost hold of it to get it back.

Mulder walked to the door and turned around, "if you can ever tell me how, when and where I can get my proof, I will be grateful." He made an aborted gesture resembling a salute and walked away.

Krycek held the key fast in his hand. He had the utter conviction that had their roles been reversed, he would have killed and buried the body so deep in the woods that wolves could not find it.

His mouth quirked, an evil bastard or not, he wanted his memory back. He wanted to know the extent of his relationship with Agent Mulder.

18) Alone in the Night

It took Krycek almost an hour to get the cuff off. By then, he was sweating and frustrated and had cursed Agent Mulder to oblivion and back many times. He went to the kitchen and drank the rest of the OJ from the carton. He looked around again, the house was utilitarian, but the water ran hot and the freezer made ice and there was food in the fridge and the pantry. He put on his jeans and went to see the car in the garage. It was a Ford Taurus several years old, but not noticeable enough to call attention to it on the road. It started right up. Krycek began to relax. He could try the address on the bogus license, but chances were it was a bogus address too. He would wait until he remembered everything before he left. If he were as bad a man as
Mulder had indicated, maybe Mulder wasn't the only dissatisfied asshole after him.

He explored the whole house again, this time spending a while in the bedroom Mulder had occupied. The sheets and blankets smelled like him and the small master bath held the scent of his shampoo and shaving lotion. Mulder was a good looking man, Krycek thought, although the chip on his shoulder and obsession with his quest probably made him hard to be around. Probably the Dr. Scully he had mentioned so warmly put up with him at the office and most likely, in the bedroom too.

Krycek turned off the light and lay in the bed. He had locked the house upon his return from checking out the car. He felt like he'd been run over by a Mack Truck, but he was conscious of being alone in the house and for miles around the house too. He tried to guess if he was nervous of being alone normally, but he couldn't tell, since he did not know what the hell he usually did or how much time he spent alone.

He turned his face into the pillows, they smelled like Mulder too. He fell asleep and woke a few hours later with a kaleidoscope of images chasing him through a frozen wood. He was sweating and decided to get up and shower. He would get ready for when his memory returned.

He made the shower last as long as he could, but when the water ran cold, he got out, shaved and dressed. It all took a long time and he cursed the fact that he only had one arm. He studied the stump. It was a mass of scar tissue, some of them still red because they had not time to fade into skin tones. During the last few hours, which distance of his memory loss allowed him, he reviewed what Mulder had told him about himself and what he had told Mulder about following orders, the loss of his family and being on the inside, at least in a small way, with the obscene project the Smoker managed. He looked at himself in the mirror in the bathroom. He was pretty worn looking for the thirty one or two years of age he thought he must be. He looked at though he was using up his chances pretty quickly and as far as he knew right now, he had not accomplished a hell of a lot with his life.

He made himself a vow to remember this moment when he was back to normal. He would remember these thoughts and see if he could change his fate and make something of his life instead of collecting scars and enemies who wanted him dead.

He made coffee and sat at the kitchen table with the lights off. As he listened to the crickets chirp outside the window, he came back into his memories and his life. He had been sent to Tunisia by Edmonton, the British elder. He had met with Edmonton's foreign counterpart, Strughold, and gotten the latest update on the pollination experiments. Strughold had been chary of sharing very much, but Krycek had gotten the idea that the pollination mechanisms could work either way, infecting the population with alien poisons or with an immunization against the aliens. The Brit had always been hard to read. Maybe he remained loyal to the cabal, maybe not. He remembered Tunguska and Mulder's escape, his trip back to the states with the boy and the vaccine, his betrayal by Marita and subsequently being captured by Edmonton. He had been sent to warn Mulder, and Mulder had listened. He sympathized with Mulder; no wonder that the man never knew what to believe of him and the cabal. He had been lied to and set up time and time again, with some help thrown in for good measure, muddying the waters.

19) East and the Rising Sun

Krycek felt energized with his life intact for the first time in ages. Mulder had been very clever, grabbing him at LaGuardia. He wondered how his flight from Africa had been traced. He shrugged off Mulder's lucky guess and secured the house, got in the car and began his drive down the mountain. DC was closer, but Edmonton would want his report and Edmonton was in NYC. He took highways that led him to the PA Turnpike, the New Jersey Turnpike into New York and on to the city. He dumped the car behind a housing
project in the Bronx, leaving the keys in the ignition. It would be stolen within a few hours and good luck to whoever got it.

He took a cab to his tiny efficiency apartment in Manhattan, changed into a good pair of pants and a shirt and tie. Edmonton preferred that he did not dress like a thug. He called the number and left a page. Edmonton’s assistant called back right away and he went to meet the man at a hotel. He reported Strughold’s progress and explained his absence due to Mulder's interference. Krycek did not like the grim smile on Edmonton's face, or his subsequent comment as Krycek was walking towards the door, "How interesting, Alex, that Mr. Mulder should hold you in such regard, risking his life and career kidnapping you."

Krycek kept walking; it would never do for Edmonton to know that he had a similar fixation on Mulder.

Krycek settled into as much of a routine as he ever had, which wasn’t saying much. He was sent out almost everyday to deliver one thing or another, or to intimidate someone who thought they could quit their assignments and leave without trouble, or to spy on some asshole the cabal wanted to put pressure on. In between, he rented movies and caught up on the sport's teams he followed, collecting bets from the cabal's thug class bookie. He did not venture very far from home; he knew he was being watched too. Edmonton, even if he had believed him one hundred percent, would back that up with a long look into his life. Krycek had no doubt Mulder was being tailed much more carefully than usual.

Although he varied the times he came and went from his apartment and the routes he used in the city, he did one thing routinely. Every Saturday he was in NYC, he made his way to a shabby neighborhood in Brooklyn and watched his sister walk her young son to the recreation center. While she took a Jazzercise class, the boy played in the playground with a teenage babysitter watching several kids for that hour and a half. The kid was a skinny, wiry six, with several front teeth missing, messy black hair and startling green eyes. He was always the first to climb to the top of the Jungle-Jim and play King of the Mountain.

Krycek had checked out the man his sister married. He was a regular Joe, working for a large bakery, delivering flour and supplies all around Brooklyn. They got by, the insurance money from his father's near fatal car crash, had bought them a small house in a row of similar small houses. His sister cared for their father, who lived in their house. Krycek, who knew that half the money was put in a trust for him, his father refusing to believe he was dead, often wished his sister could have the money. He watched the kid from the second floor of the neighborhood bodega’s storeroom. No one came up there on Saturday mornings and Krycek had perfected the art of getting in the back door unseen.

He was well aware Edmonton knew where he went, and knew he was giving the bastard ammunition to use against him, but he needed this small thing to keep him human. All in all, he was glad they had moved here from Cleveland after the accident. In Cleveland he would have had little chance of seeing them. When he did go to Cleveland, he visited his mother's and brother's graves. There was another adjoining plot for his father waiting there.

Five weeks passed since Mulder's abduction and Krycek no longer had headaches. He thought about their time on the mountain a great deal. It had been such a farfetched idea for Mulder to put into action and he worried that Mulder had reached a breaking point and was risking himself without any regard. He would be dead soon if he was, the Smoker, who was missing himself, no longer had the clout to protect him. Krycek did not dare ask questions about Mulder, he did not want Edmonton to get any ideas.

20) Mad Dogs and Englishmen Go Out in the Noon Day Sun

Krycek found that despite holding his tongue, Edmonton did have an idea. When Krycek heard it, he
decided it was as rash and idiotic as Mulder's had been. He tried protesting, Edmonton sneered. He said Mulder would shoot first and ask questions later, Edmonton touched the corners of his mouth with a pristine napkin. He said Scully would cut his balls off if he did what Edmonton asked, and Edmonton smiled. Krycek thought the smile looked like a death's head, but there was nothing else to do, but go.

First, he went to an very expensive barber and had his 'dumb ass' haircut trimmed, went and bought some new jeans, scowling at how the price had gone up since the last time he bought any. Just before he got on the shuttle to Richmond, he shaved, brushed his teeth and made sure he had the necessary supplies for a seduction; although he was sure he would never get the chance to enact it.

Edmonton had arranged for Mulder to pursue a case of telekinesis just outside Richmond, Virginia at an old, abandoned plantation. The place had a long standing reputation for being haunted by a Confederate woman and children killed during a Union raid at the height of the Civil War. That any number of derelict plantations had the same stories told about them would not preclude Mulder from showing up like an eager beaver. Edmonton had his best engineers wire the house to seemingly throw items off the walls and ceilings, including an insane cackle-like laugh emanating from the attics. Scully would see through it and refuse to stand watch all night. That's what Edmonton was hoping and Krycek was counting on. If Scully stayed attached to Mulder, Krycek would have to wait until they returned to DC.

Once Krycek was on the property, he was supposed to flick a well hidden switch by an overturned urn that would disrupt cell phone service so Mulder could not call Scully. Krycek hoped he wasn't gut-shoot and bleeding to death when he needed to call an ambulance.

The root cellar was supposed to be the most private and comfortable space in the house. Knowing this from Edmonton, Krycek had no intention of bringing Mulder anywhere near the room. If any part of the seduction worked, he would rather Edmonton and who knew who else, did not watch.

Krycek was supposed to reach out to Mulder as if he were helping him. He had a whole stash of documents in a briefcase that he was going to allow Mulder to read. Krycek made sure that there was real information among the crappy fakes. It would take Mulder a few weeks to verify things, during which Krycek was going to be available nearby if Mulder wanted to confer with him. Obsessed and hopefully, a bit grateful, Krycek was supposed to cement a more intimate relationship with Mulder. Edmonton, playing both sides of the cabal as usual, wanted Mulder in the loop if he chose rebellion. Krycek thought the old man was getting senile to believe Mulder would ever want a relationship with him of a sexual nature. But, on the other hand, it would be fun to try.

21) Some Enchanted Evening

Mulder spent the weeks since the botched kidnapping in a black mood. Scully, Skinner and the Gunmen had all had enough of his sulks and attitude and were blacklisting him from anything but the most basic help. Kersh was seen to actually rub his hands in glee to see Mulder on the outs with his loyalists and sensed the day was coming when he could get rid of him for good. He had fantasies about Mulder begging to stay with the FBI wherever Kersh would condescend to send him and imagined him sweating his ass off on border patrol in the Texas desert country.

Diana Fowley and Jeff Spender reported that Mulder was feverishly checking and rechecking old files, but not arguing with them or pushing his weight around. He was completing the security checks that Kersh assigned him, minimally, but still an acceptable number and he shaved often enough to look professional, if borderline scruffy.
When the leads came in about an abandoned plantation near Richmond, Skinner was relieved to have somewhere to send Mulder and Scully. Since Richmond was barely a hundred miles from DC, he did not authorize per-diem expenses. Mulder and Scully would have to return home each night or pay for motels themselves. He felt sorry that Scully had to go with such an irascible partner, but it was better than letting him go alone and get into God knew what trouble.

Knowing he wasn't about to drive home each night and miss whatever was haunting the plantation, Mulder suggested he and Scully each take a car. She was agreeable and packed a Styrofoam cooler with her current diet foods and as a concession to Mulder, cans of iced tea. She brought bug spray and a fan too. The place was as hot, humid and derelict as she expected and Mulder was just as enchanted with it as she had known he would be. She toured the place with him, slapping at her bare legs to discourage the mosquitoes and yellow jackets, which were attracted to the scent of her body lotion.

There was no evidence of any kind of paranormal activity. The only things that were disturbed looked like teenage vandals performing dares with pellet guns, spray paint and sniffing glue. She tried, as she usually did, to get Mulder to acknowledge that nothing was there. And, as usual, he pooh-poohed her logic and insisted they needed to hide and observe the house all night.

She pulled a high tech video camera from her trunk and set it up. She said the Gunmen had furnished it to record anything she wanted. Mulder, who recognized the camera, didn't saw a word and she set it up and said she would be back early in the morning and to call if he actually saw anything of interest.

She left and Mulder roamed around the house again. The outbuildings were beyond derelict, a few heaps of dirt and bricks were all that was left. There were vague outlines of what must have been a kitchen garden years ago, overgrown with brambles and weeds. Beneath the sagging veranda he saw a huge growth of mushrooms and wondered if the Gunmen could tell him what kind they were. If, as he suspected, they were hallucinogenic ones, the nighttime activities were more easily explained than by poltergeists indulging in mischief.

He called the Gunmen, but all he got was a Roaming No Signal message on his phone. He walked to the end of the drive closest to the back road that had led him here, and got the same message. He shrugged, it was still worth observing the place and better than going back to DC and reporting to Kersh.

He went to the house, took a seat on the veranda's steps and wished he'd brought sandwiches. Scully had left him a couple of rapidly warming cans of tea; he drank one and set up his equipment.

As dusk approached, a late model Toyota Camry came up the drive. Mulder watched as Krycek got out of the car, grabbed a large picnic basket from the backseat and came towards the house and he thought how he could shoot Krycek and still eat the food in the basket.

Mulder waited behind a column and as Krycek walked towards the main entrance, he came up behind him, "Stand very still, Krycek." Mulder ordered.

Krycek, who had been on the property earlier that day and switched on the cell phone scrambler as Scully drove away. He knew Mulder was behind the column, but he figured Mulder would either shoot him outright or, feeling that he had the drop on him, would be willing to converse, or at least, exchange insults before he shot him.

Krycek extended his arm, the basket hanging from his hand. He felt stupid and wondered if Mulder would guess he had been so careless on purpose.

Mulder thought no such thing, he genuinely believed he had superior skills to Krycek and that Krycek had walked in expecting a welcome he wasn't going to get.
"Talk," Mulder ordered, and knocked the basket out of Krycek's hand from behind.

"In the basket are a couple of folders you might be interested in, they are originals so if you kill me they will know you have them and kill you too." Krycek answers, that's all he says, for all of Mulder's brazen, idiotic heroics, Krycek does not believe the man really wants to die.

Mulder is silent for a long while, sighs and comes closer. He pats down Krycek for weapons and finds none, so one must be hidden where he hasn't reached and he'd rather not test his resolve by trying. If Krycek thought he was feeling him up he might kill him sooner rather than later. "Okay," He says gruffly, "Pick up the basket."

Mulder leads the way back to the veranda, at least some air flows there, inside the house the heat presses on him without relief.

He motions for Krycek to sit on the old cracked plaster steps, when he does; Mulder joins him on the next step. He puts his gun away and opens the basket. He can see the manila files are on the bottom, beneath several wonderful looking cellophane wrapped chicken legs, a French bread and a bottle of wine. There are deli containers of salads too, and several pieces of baklava. He's almost hungry enough to eat first and ignore the files, but he reaches for them, his stomach protesting his actions.

Krycek sits quietly; sweat slowly dripping at his hairline, making the brown hair black, highlighting his long lashes and amazingly green eyes. Mulder gives himself an internal shake and opens the first file; maybe the heat is what's making him crazy.

The light begins to fade before he has finished reading. Krycek moves and opens the wine, unwraps the food and fills a paper plate for Mulder. He puts it beside Mulder and makes a plate for himself. Absently, Mulder mumbles, "thanks." He chews on a hunk of bread and keeps reading.

Krycek relaxes. Moonlight and roses is not the way to seduce Mulder. Mysteriously obtained files, a hint of danger and a haunted house are the best tools he could ever have to do the job. He grimaces. Of course, it's not really a job. He's wanted Mulder for damn near ever. He wastes a minute wondering if Edmonton had guessed this fact, but even if he has, so what? Krycek has never hidden he goes both ways, although the Smoker was always too prissy to refer to it or make him use it on anyone. The Brit is not prissy, the Brit is a pragmatic and ambivalent man who has survived several wars, every secret agency in the western world's attempts to arrest him or hire him and dozens of coup-d'tats from inside the cabal. He wanted to rule when the aliens did their thing, but he is pragmatic enough to realize it aint gonna happen that way and now plans to survive them too. If that means Krycek gives Mulder blowjobs, so be it.

Krycek grins, Mulder is not watching so he does not see it. If he had, he would wonder about it. Krycek moves closer, under the guise of loading Mulder's plate again, he brushes his shoulder and spills a little wine on his arm. Mulder shakes it off, but Krycek takes a napkin and pats the place gently, blowing on the skin to dry up the last damp sheen.

Mulder shivers and Krycek can see the gooseflesh rise on his arm and the back of his neck.

Mulder tries to break the spell Krycek is weaving, "Are these files for real? How did you get them? When do they have to be back? Is this list the code words for the various projects or the various laboratory locations?"

Krycek takes a long drink of wine, leaning his head back so Mulder can watch him swallow it. Soothingly, his voice pure, husky syllables, he answers, "I have to deliver them by noon tomorrow. I have a flight out of Richmond at nine tomorrow morning."
Mulder nods, but before he can return his attention to the page, Krycek hands him a newly filled glass of wine. When he takes the glass, Krycek reaches across him and flips the folder closed. He's right up close to Mulder now, breathing on his neck while Mulder drinks his wine. He has not protested either the wine or the closeness, so Krycek kisses the side of Mulder's face, near his ear. Mulder shivers some more, puts down the glass and licks his lips. Krycek is so hard he thinks he could push Mulder down, willing or not and consume the man.

Slowly, a look of intense concentration on his face, Mulder turns his head. The next kiss is initiated by both of them at the same time and squarely on the lips. It goes on for ages. The wine has made their mouths fragrant and piquant. They duel with their tongues lazily, as if after four years and all the troubles they have had with one another, blamed on one another or suffered from the other, are not important any more. Only the taste of their mouths, the slide of their tongues and the gasping of air exists between them.

22) A Waning Moon

Mulder has never kissed another man on the lips before and the sensation is heady. Krycek's lips are surprisingly soft, and Mulder tells himself he never thought about Krycek's lips before, which accounts for the surprise. But, he can only lie to himself for a minute, because as he and Krycek touch tongues, an explosion goes off in his gonads and his brain. The past, the present, all wash away in the conflagration of lust that boils the blood in his veins and makes the top of his head float way above the brain that's supposed to be in control. It makes a strange sort of sense to him, in those last seconds of self judgment, who else but the enemy, the enigma would be the focus of his desire, the one to take him, lead him, out of bounds? After all, he's followed Krycek into danger before and the whitewater ahead of him now is the greatest danger of them all. He wants to rush in and consume Krycek, but Krycek holds the pace, keeping it lazy and exploratory and not either pushing or passive. Mulder, between one gasp and the next kiss, concedes.

After a while, Mulder finds he is grasping Krycek's waist, digging in with his fingers so the man can't slip away. Krycek doesn't seem to mind and his right arm is looped around Mulder's neck, keeping it tilted exactly right for kissing. Mutually, their heads grow heavy and they ease down onto the cracked floor. For all either one of them notice, it could be a feather mattress. Krycek pulls Mulder's neck and Mulder rolls closer and then half on top of the other man. The musculature feels different. He is not crushing soft breasts, but the heat and the scent of Krycek makes any other issues moot.

They are kissing as if they invented the art. Mouths are free to open wide without inhibitions. Mulder feels so free, as if all the constraints he always felt by being bigger and stronger and more aroused than his partners, is a thing of the past. He is kissing his equal and there is no more need to hold back from being the randy animal he always was in the back of his brain while making love with women. A brief recollection goes through his mind, he remembers his first orgasm with a girl, they were kissing and she let him use his tongue. She shifted and her knee had pressed on his erection and he was gone. She broke off the kiss, giggled and lisped, "Fox are you okay?"

Mulder knew with an absolute conviction that he was as close to losing it now and he had been then. But this time, his partner would understand and follow him down. So he wriggled his lower half against a hard hip bone, because he needed to, and Krycek moaned, which made Mulder smile.

Mulder ran his hand across the hard chest and over the belt buckle. He cupped Krycek's hard heat in his hand and Krycek pushed up sharply into Mulder's hand. Mulder squeezed back and at the same time, rubbed himself against Krycek's hip.
Krycek began to groan with the certainty that he was about to come in his jeans for the first time in fifteen years, pushed Mulder away a few inches. He had been shocked to feel Mulder kneading his cock. He didn't think Mulder would take the initiative that way. Mulder was something else; his face was flushed with heat and passion, his breathing was labored and his erection was trapped and leaking through his jeans. Krycek threw plans for a slow seduction out and rewrote the script with them fucking their brains out on the aged plaster and stone steps.

He took his hand out from beneath Mulder's neck and unzipped his jeans, pushed aside his underwear and freed his cock. The air was so warm; he didn't shrink in temperature shock. He tugged on Mulder's zipper next, but Mulder was already halfway done. He pushed his pants and shorts down, palmed his hard on and sighed gustily. They lay there, each slowly pumping his cock, totally comfortable with the moment and perfectly understanding one another.

Krycek murmured, "Oh, man." He rolled onto his side, battèd Mulder's hand away and took Mulder's penis in his hand. This time, Mulder jerked sharply.

"Big boy, hard as a rock, you're gonna taste delicious," Krycek praised as he slithered down to waist level, pulled at Mulder's hip until he was laying on his side and licked the head of Mulder's cock.

Mulder went wild, leaking quickly and squirming as he yelled aloud. Krycek used his forearm to hold Mulder in place and took more of him in his mouth. It was only going to take a second or two, and Krycek longed for his other hand so he could jerk himself off as he sucked Mulder. As Mulder swelled, Krycek felt his dick grow heavier, the scent of sex permeated the air and Mulder lifted his hips hard against Krycek's arm and came in a rush.

Krycek swallowed as Mulder went boneless. Krycek did not bother to shift his body up to be equal with Mulder. He lay on his back and grasped his own cock. Mulder hissed out a protest, but Krycek wasn't about to stop. Mulder rose and pried Krycek's hand off. Holding it firmly, he waited until Krycek opened his eyes. He liked the way Krycek looked, flushed and frenzied. Mulder knew he had done that to Krycek and this was the way he finally made the man let go of all of his pretensions and become one hundred percent real. Feeling bold, hot and curiously empty, he was ready to keep going. Mulder said, as he looked into Krycek's green, green eyes. "Wanna fuck me with that?"

Krycek stopped breathing and Mulder grinned. He kicked off his shoes, pants and shorts and crouched, knees bent, which made his ass available and his crack open. He didn't know how he knew what to do, but the feeling to bare his vulnerable asshole was overwhelming. He wanted Krycek to plunder it, to stretch it and mauil it and 'hurt' him so good that he was panting again.

Krycek went pale with arousal, he was gonna fuck Mulder, oh yes he was. He knew what Mulder wanted, even if Mulder didn't. He'd been there when he was younger and his first lover, a man in his late twenties had pushed him on his face, lifted his ass and talked about how perfectly filthy it was going to be breaking into his cherry ass. Krycek knew how it felt to melt inside and want it filled and filled until he split open like an overripe peach.

Staring at Mulder, he ran a finger down the valley of his ass, when he got to the hole, he did not pause. He pushed a finger inside up to his knuckle and watched Mulder's cock fill again and Mulder's thighs tremble. Once inside, he quickly pulled his finger out and forced two back in. He wasn't feeling gentle and Mulder didn't want gentle either, he wanted it hard.

Krycek rubbed his fingertips against Mulder's prostate until Mulder was moaning and near tears and unable to balance enough to crouch anymore. Mulder lost the battle with his thighs and plopped down, forcing Krycek's fingers all the way in. He yelped and Krycek laughed. "Beautiful, Mulder, what a beautiful cunt you are. Roll on your side." He ordered.
Mulder found he did not care what Krycek called him, or how many orders he needed to obey. If it got Krycek's more than good-sized cock in him faster, that was all that mattered. So, he rolled on his side and Krycek's fingers came dislodged. He heard Krycek rustling around for some reason, but he couldn't wait. He put his own hand between his legs and fingered his own anus, playing with his fingertips against the already sore rim.

Breathlessly, Krycek said, "Yeah, man, that's right. Stretch it for me or it's gonna hurt more."

"I want it to hurt," Mulder cried out softly.

Krycek lined up behind Mulder, "I know baby," He crooned. "It's gonna hurt so good, I promise."

Dimly, Mulder realized Krycek had donned a condom and that his cock was thickly covered with lubrication. He felt the head of Krycek's cock begin to enter him and something inside him, which he did not know was even there, let go, and he had the sensation that Krycek wasn't pushing into him so much as he was sucking him in, like a vacuum.

The stretch and the burn were perfect in Mulder's strange place beyond sense or sensibility. The huge hard prick in him was something that was always meant to be. That he had not known this even a few hours ago was immaterial. He knew it now and whoever and whatever he was going to be and going to do in the future came down to this truth.

23) Dark Side of the Moon

It had turned into full night as they sucked and fucked and drank the bottle dry on the veranda, which had become their paradise. As Mulder came for the third time, which he hadn't done in more years than he wanted to count, he was inside Krycek. Krycek's ass was a thing of beauty, rounded and sleek. Mulder had taken his time when it was his turn. He had smoothed his hands over that ass as Krycek laid on his belly with his face resting on his arm. In all their encounters, including the recent kidnapping, Mulder had been aware of a kind of humming energy in Krycek. He had supposed it to be his life force, a special kind of awareness that had kept him alive when everyone was out to get him. As he had petted Krycek and played with his body, Krycek had calmed internally and Mulder felt it. Even with no experience, Mulder could tell Krycek's ass was unused to being fucked. He liked the idea that he would wound Krycek the same way Krycek had wounded him, leaving him empty and sore and owned. It was right for them to be equals in this private world of sex. Mulder tried multitasking, trying to figure out if there had to be a sub and a dominant in male sexuality, but Krycek's ass was much too much bounty for him to think of anything else.

He's urged Krycek onto his knees so he could have more access. Krycek balanced on his one arm, Mulder knew it would hold him for a while and Krycek's only comment was, "Use the lube, Mulder."

So, Mulder had coated his fingers, doubtfully eyeing the tiny pucker with both lust and uncertainty that he could really breach it. Gently, he stroked the pucker, making no move to open it, and that's when he noticed Krycek's lack of intensity. At first he was almost insulted, did Krycek fuck so often that it was old hat no matter who he was with? But then he realized it was the highest compliment, the ultimate golden ring. Krycek was giving it all up, his paranoia, his anger, his cleverness and cunning. There were absolutely no games here, just pleasure. Mulder felt like a king, like a sex god. He was the one to tame the beast and capture the castle and no one else had ever made him feel this way.

He got on his knees and pressed a finger into Krycek. The immediate heat and wetness was beyond
description, although Mulder thought that if this were a woman's vagina it was more than ready to be fucked hard. He went with that and lined up his dick against the opening, he had forgotten a condom and didn't want one anyway. He wanted that intensely tight ass to squeeze him beyond reason.

Krycek felt Mulder make his move and tensed just a tiny bit. Mulder was huge and he wasn't wearing a condom and it had been years since Krycek had let anyone near his ass. He knew he was clean and Mulder must be clean, for men who lived like monks had no opportunity to be anything else. So, he took a deep breath and let Mulder breach him, split him open and make him feel like it was the first time and he was loved.

Krycek arched his back, helping Mulder's angle as he dove in. And he did dive in as if he were going home after a journey of a million miles, as if his atoms were firing at last and he loved it, loved the feelings and loved the man.

Krycek cried out and Mulder heard it. "Yes," He whispered into the back of Krycek's neck, "take all of me, lover. Give it all up to me and I will be so good you won't ever forget me."

Krycek let himself cry out, he was through with silence and the mask it forced him to wear. He cried like a boy, newly discovering sex and pleasure. He cried like a woman on her wedding night, because she had her man at last and he cried for himself and the heart he had had broken time and time again on worthless pursuits for petty change. Before he was consumed by the rush and thrust of his orgasm, he had a final thought, 'Dad, no matter what you thought of me, I am a man, and you can't take that away any more.' He screamed as he came, and swore the old stone sizzled when his come splattered across its cracked surface.

They lay in the dark, these mates in sex and secrets and were content. The air was warm and humid and the mosquitoes buzzed somewhere else and magically, gave them a pass.

At length, Mulder moved, gathering up his discarded clothes and dressing. Krycek did the same. They ate the last of the food and Mulder was pleased to share the last can of warm tea. They didn't talk much, everything was too new and if not exactly fragile, a great deal had been uncharacteristically exposed by them both.

Refreshed or at least, rehydrated, they resumed their seats on the veranda and watched the fireflies play hide and seek among the tall weeds. "Hey Alex," Mulder said with a humorous note in his voice, "When does the haunting commence."

Krycek snorted, at first Mulder wasn't sure if it was because he called him Alex or guessed what was on the menu. "I'm supposed to switch a lever on over by the storm cellar. Then all hell will break loose." He choked back a laugh, "When did you guess?"

Dryly, Mulder replied, "It wasn't that big a leap, you know. When I saw you sashay down the drive with a picnic basket, I knew I'd been set up or at least," He leered at Krycek, "had." Krycek laughed and butted shoulders. Then, he got serious, "The Brit, Edmonton, is trying to play both sides against the middle and he wants you in the wings if he chooses rebellion. He knows of my keen interest in your fascinating self, so he sent me to reconnoiter and fish you in with the documents."

"Ah," Said Mulder wisely, "Keep your friends close, but keep your enemies closer." He quoted Machiavelli.

"Are we friends or enemies?" Krycek asked.

"Hell if I know what to call us," Mulder answered, "Except that we are an `us'!"

"Yeah," Krycek sighed out the word, "Look at that moon."
Mulder tore his gaze from Krycek's profile, leaving the thought of possibly coming four times in one day aside and looked up. The moon was at its very last edge, fading into a new moon in a day or so. In the dark semicircle of the absent moon, he saw a shadow. It looked like wings, maybe from an eagle or an angel. "We're being watched," Mulder whispered.

Krycek smiled and Mulder saw his teeth flash in the darkness, brighter than the moon could ever be, "Let him watch," He said. "Let him get an eyeful. That old man in the moon can't harm us ever again."

Mulder leaned into Krycek's shoulder and Krycek put his arm around Mulder, holding him close. "Yeah," Mulder said and yawned, "Let them all look." And he closed his eyes.

Krycek looked at Mulder's serene face, and didn't sleep. He knew his new role well enough, and it wasn't vain and it wasn't worthless. He kept watch through the dark night and was, for the first time in his dangerous, swaggering life, content.

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Sodium thiopental, better known as Sodium Pentothal, thiopental, thiopentone sodium, or trapanal, is a rapid-onset short-acting barbiturate general anaesthetic. Sodium thiopental is a depressant and is sometimes used during interrogations not to cause pain (in fact it may have just the opposite effect) but to weaken the resolve of the subject and make him or her more compliant to pressure.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sodium_thiopental)

Ketamine produces effects similar to PCP and DXM. Like other dissociative anesthetics in low- to upper-middle dosages, its hallucinogenic effects are only seen against a background lacking sensory stimulation, such as darkness. Unlike the other well known dissociatives PCP and DXM, ketamine is very short acting, its hallucinatory effects lasting fifteen minutes or less when insufflated or injected, the total experience lasting no more than one or two hours.
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ketamine#Psychological_effects)

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