

FOX

TCA PRESS TOUR
JULY 1999

FOX TCA SUMMER PRESS TOUR 1999

July 22, 1999

"THE X-FILES"

DAVID DUCHOVNY
Star

The Ritz-Carlton Huntington Hotel
Pasadena, California

All TCA Press Tour transcripts are prepared immediately following press conferences. They are provided for your convenience and are not intended as a substitute for attendance at press conferences. Due to the speed with which these transcripts are prepared, complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

DOUG HERZOG: Got something pretty exciting here. My mom always said, "Finish big. Give them a big finish." So, here we go. I'm actually very excited because I got to meet this gentleman for the first time today, which is a good thing because everybody back home keeps on saying, "So, have you met David Duchovny yet," and I say, "No," and they go, "Well, you better do that before they can you."

So, got my picture taken with him and everything, so you might want to get a hold of that, print that in your papers. It's going to be a collector's item. We do have Mr. Duchovny here, who is, of course, the star of the award-winning FOX series, "The X-Files." He's been doing so for a long time, and this season, he scaled some new heights when he wrote and directed an episode of the show called, "The Unnatural," and we've got a couple of clips here for you.

[CLIP SHOWN: "THE X-FILES"]

HERZOG: Ladies and gentlemen, the star of "The X-Files," Mr. David Duchovny.

[applause]

DAVID DUCHOVNY: Where's Jay? [laughter]

QUESTION: David, would you consider coming back for an eighth season of "The X-Files," and if so, what would the circumstances have to be?

DUCHOVNY: I really can't answer that. I mean, I wouldn't say "never" about anything, but as of right now, my contract is up at the end of this coming year, so I'm living my life as if this would be the last year, and I'd be fine if it were the last year. I'm really proud of the six years so far, and seven years is a long time to be doing one show, and I have other things to do, so – but then again, I don't know.

QUESTION: So, probably not?

DUCHOVNY: Is that what you just heard? [laughs][laughter] Whatever I just said, yeah.

QUESTION: David—

DUCHOVNY: Yeah, hi.

QUESTION: Hi. Now that it's been a year since the production has been moved to Los Angeles from Vancouver, did things pretty much play out the way you hoped they would this year?

DUCHOVNY: Well, it was just – it was a lot easier in terms of lifestyle, for me. I mean, I got to live at home. I got to live with my wife. My wife got pregnant, which probably wouldn't have happened if I was in Vancouver. [laughter] And if it did, I would have had a lot of questions to ask. [laughter]

So, it just – my life was a lot easier in terms of my life. My working life was probably harder. It was tougher to do the show, logistically, in Los Angeles just because of locations being further spread apart, and traffic, and all the things that we associate with Los Angeles. So, that was tougher, but not significantly, and you know, I miss Vancouver, in terms of shooting, and in terms of having relationships with a crew for five years. But it was time for me to make a change and have a change and I'm happy the way it worked out.

QUESTION: Mr. Duchovny, in terms of if this is, indeed, the last year for "X-Files," do you have any plans or thoughts about what you'd like to do, where you'd want to go from here?

DUCHOVNY: No, I don't really have plans or thoughts until that day comes. So, you know, I'm just looking to do the projects that interest me. I'm looking to write more. I'm looking to direct. I'm looking to act in projects that inspire in any way. So, I don't have a game plan, which may be a mistake, but I've never really functioned with one, so I wouldn't know how to make one. I wouldn't – you know, I'd love to cut a single of some kind, but I'm – you know, I'm not musical, so you know – [laughter] – there are things like that. I'd love to do lots of things.

I'm looking forward to having the time to do other things, and to get out and try some other things.

QUESTION: David, can you give us an example of how you like directing the episode, and was there any problems?

DUCHOVNY: How did I like directing it?

QUESTION: Uh-huh.

DUCHOVNY: I – it was completely nerve-wracking. I mean, I woke up one morning and I just said, “I can’t do this.” It was about a month before, and I said, “I can’t do it. I don’t what I’m doing. I quit.” You know, even before I was starting, you know.

And then those days came fewer and farther in between, and then – the thing about directing is when – before you direct, and when you’re in prep, and when you haven’t directed before, you’re trying to contain the whole story in your head. You’re trying to have every shot you’re going to do in your head at one time. So, you’re head feels about the size of a beach ball, as you’re walking around. And you don’t really have to do that because when you’re actually on set, you just have to shoot one shot at a time, but I didn’t know that. I thought I have to have every answer, so I – nobody could really move me. I was walking around like this, and you know, was bumping into walls. So, it was terrifying.

But then when I got out there, it was like – it was really just cliché. You really can only do one thing at a time, and it was great. I had a great crew. I had a great D.P., I had a great 1st A.D., and they just – they really saved me, and they made it great. I mean, the D.P. got nominated for an Emmy today for that show. So, it’s – he did a fantastic job, and I just had – I just had people helping me. So—

QUESTION: Following up on that, do you – are you planning on directing or writing any more of the last 22?

DUCHOVNY: Writing would depend on whether I had an idea that was decent or not. I don’t have – I have a couple right now that I’m going to try and work up into a story or into a script, and if they turn out good, then maybe I’ll try to direct it. But the trouble with me directing a show is that it really entails me being out of two episodes, ostensibly, because I need to prep, and then I need some time to edit, so I have to be light on either episode that – what’s the word – as it comes on either side of the episode that I’m directing.

So, it really has to do with the generosity of FOX, and of the producers of the show to make a schedule where I can be written out of some shows, and to allow me to do that for what is really, you know, my own joy, you know. They don’t have to do it. So, if I have a show that I love and that I want to direct, then we’ll see if it’s worth it to them to, you know, let me out of a couple shows to do that.

QUESTION: David, over here on your right. Your right.

DUCHOVNY: I'm glad I'm not dyslexic today.

QUESTION: You're probably aware that a certain percentage of your fan base is obsessed with the relationship, or lack of a relationship, between your character and Gillian's. And some of them seem to think that you tipped your hand a little bit – how you feel about it – in this episode. We just saw a scene that, particularly, I think that made people think that maybe you think a little romance wouldn't hurt. You want to comment on that?

DUCHOVNY: No. No, that's not what I feel. It's – you know, when you're writing for a show that's been going for six years, as I was doing, you get to use relationships. You have a wonderful history upon which to draw, and you'd be an idiot not to try to use that to your advantage. So, I was just able to – what I thought – display what I thought these characters had. As far as my opinion on whether or not Mulder and Scully should have a romance—

QUESTION: Or whether they do already.

DUCHOVNY: Yeah. You know, I couldn't tell you how uninterested in that I am, really. [laughter] I could not make it clear enough. I don't mean to be rude when I say that, it's just not interesting to me in any way, shape, or form, and thankfully, it doesn't have to be because I don't have to write the show.

QUESTION: David, a question about the season that just ended. The critical response, and among some of the fans, has been mixed, and in some cases, negative, yet—

DUCHOVNY: “Oh my!”

QUESTION: Yeah. Chris Carter, this morning, said that he thought it was one of the strongest seasons that the show had had, and I wondered what—

DUCHOVNY: What did you expect him to say? [laughter]

QUESTION: What do you think?

DUCHOVNY: I thought there were some great shows. I thought “Triangle” was a fantastic show. I thought “Drive” was great. I'm very impressed that I remember two shows from last year. [laughter] It's going to sound conceited – I thought my show was great. I thought maybe four or five shows that we did were some of the four or five best shows that we've ever done. We did some clunkers. We always do. I mean, we have the kind of show that reaches further, in terms of story, and

in terms of execution, than in other show on television. So, when we succeed, we're better than any show on television, and when we fail, we can be worse than a lot of pretty bad shows on television.

So, it happens. We're also in the sixth – we were in the sixth year of a show – a show that is story driven, and a show that's idea driven. And the fact that our show could get to a sixth year, I think, is impressive. And the fact that we were able to come up with some fresh ideas – I'd say at least half of them were fresh and good – is very impressive.

But, you know, you're going to run out, and fans are going to get hip to our tricks, and we're going to get old, and it happens. For a sixth year of a drama that's story, I thought it was fantastic. There are going to be shitty shows, and there were. It's always going to happen.

QUESTION: David, you mentioned that your D.P. was nominated for – received an Emmy nomination this morning. The show itself received eight nominations. Can I get your reaction to that, please?

DUCHOVNY: In what way?

QUESTION: Well, your reaction to having eight Emmy nominations – the show itself.

DUCHOVNY: Is that more or less than we normally get? I don't know.

QUESTION: I'm not sure.

DUCHOVNY: Yeah. Anybody know? Is that average, or what are we—

QUESTION: [overlapping] Half from last year.

DUCHOVNY: Down from last year?

QUESTION: Half of last year.

DUCHOVNY: Half of last year? Well, I'm really angry. [laughter] I don't live or die with the Emmys. I don't see how you can. I vote for them, so I know how the voting's done. It's an imperfect thing, and it's great to be nominated for those things because at least somebody's saying you're doing a good job, and – but, you know, I think of – what we're doing on "The X-Files" is not everybody's cup of tea, and I'm proud of what we do, and I'm proud of what I do, and it's not really that important.

I know that it probably sounds like a load of crap, when you don't get nominated, to say that, but – and it sounds like sour grapes when you do get nominated to say that, so there's really no time to say that, so—[laughter]

QUESTION: Just to belabor that one a little bit more—

DUCHOVNY: Oh, I'm so surprised. [laughter]

QUESTION: How does it feel to have your leading lady get nominated and you don't? Does that hurt?

DUCHOVNY: No.

QUESTION: No.

DUCHOVNY: No. I mean, it's – it doesn't at all. No. I don't know what else to say.

QUESTION: Okay. What I'd like to ask you really is about – if the show ends next year, have you any thoughts about how you would like for it to go? What you'd like to be – I understand there's going to be an arc leading up to the end.

DUCHOVNY: Yeah. Is there? Well, I imagine that the show's going to continue on in movie form, so I don't think that we'll have to have any kind of end. You know, we're not going to blow the place up, or we won't have it all be a dream, or whatever. We're not going to – I don't think we're going to have to do that. So, I imagine that the end of the seventh year will be pretty much as open ended as the end of every year that we do.

QUESTION: So, you don't think it'll be like that you two will get together and there'll be the final clinch or anything like that, huh?

DUCHOVNY: What a minute. Is that Frank Spotnitz? I can't see. [laughter] I don't know. There's somebody over there that maybe you want to talk to about that, though.

QUESTION: Well, you've been doing some writing for it, so you haven't come up with any ideas?

DUCHOVNY: No. No. I think that – you know, the nature of serial television is teasing. You know, there's rarely resolution until an actor has to leave, or a show has to end. So, we don't have to end the show, is what I'm saying, because I think

it's going to continue on in movie form, and the characters will continue on in the same capacity.

So, I think we'll just keep teasing, in that way. I think it's an unnatural situation to be in because we have to keep coming back week after week. I mean, you look at – the interesting thing about everybody's interest in the relationship between Mulder and Scully is that they want some kind of resolution with that.

But, you know, you look at our show, and each week, something happens to Mulder and/or Scully that is completely life changing, and yet we come back the next week as if nothing happened. And nobody ever comments on that because, you know, these are, kind of, lies that are necessary to serialize television.

You have to keep coming back, week after week, and you cannot have things change the way they would in real life, and you cannot have the kind of resolution that you want in life.

So, I think – I have no idea what I'm answering. [laughter]

QUESTION: David, do you believe in supernatural? I'm here in the back. Do you believe in supernatural and--

DUCHOVNY: [overlapping] Oh my God. She's been asleep for five years.

QUESTION: --and before you started the show—

DUCHOVNY: [overlapping] Please, security, grab that woman. Do I believe in the supernatural? Yes. No. [laughter] What was the other question?

QUESTION: And how did your perspective change by doing "The X-Files"?

DUCHOVNY: Completely and not one bit. [laughter]

QUESTION: Mr. Duchovny, Gillian Anderson is contracted for another year beyond the seventh. 1) Has she fired the agent who swung that deal, and 2) Can you imagine—

DUCHOVNY: What was the—

QUESTION: Gillian Anderson has another season after this seventh. She's contractually obligated to do it if it exists.

DUCHOVNY: Right.

QUESTION: Can you imagine the series going on without Fox Mulder?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah, yeah. I mean, I could, for the same kind of windbaggy tedium that I got into over here. [laughter] It's a TV show. It's serialized. It's set up. It's a great show. It's got a great – partly because of me. I'll take credit for it. We've positioned it in a great place. People love it. They understand it.

Therefore, even if I was indispensable at one point, I'm no longer indispensable. Nobody is indispensable. It's a brand name. It's Crest. It's something like that. So – I mean, it's Menudo. [laughter] Look at "NYPD Blue." Look at – you know, I'd be an idiot for me to sit here and say, "Oh my God, you know it's not going to go on without me."

Of course it could, if the stories were good. If the writers were good. If the directors were good. I'm sure they'd hire a good actor.

QUESTION: David, what did you do on your hiatus?

DUCHOVNY: Why do you want to know? [laughter]

QUESTION: I understood that you made a movie.

DUCHOVNY: I mean, it's just the tone that I'm objecting to. [laughter]

QUESTION: Did you make a movie?

DUCHOVNY: I'm loosening up here, aren't I? Yeah, I did. I did. I made a movie called "Return to Me," in Chicago, with Bonnie Hunt, who wrote and directed it. Do you know who Bonnie Hunt is, most of you?

QUESTION: Yeah.

DUCHOVNY: Yeah. I worked with her in a film called "Beethoven," which you may or may not know. [laughter] And we've remained – because I actually did work before "The X-Files." I have a little secret. I didn't do anything good, but I did. [laughter]

And so we've stayed – that's not really true. I'm proud of it all.

We stayed in touch. We stayed friends, and she was one of these rare people that I met in – you just asked what I did, didn't you? You didn't want the whole story.

QUESTION: Well, are you finished? I have another question for you. [laughter]

DUCHOVNY: So, I loved Bonnie, you know, and—[laughter] I just always wanted to work with Bonnie, and she wrote this script, which was great, called "Return to Me." And, you know, they waited for me.

QUESTION: [overlapping] Thank you for the information. [laughter] How much does Chris Carter take you into his confidence about the conspiracy? Do you understand it? [laughter] Do you understand more than we understand?

DUCHOVNY: No. I think – I mean, again, without wanting to be rude, I care as little about that as I care about the relationship. [laughter] Which means, only, that, you know, as an actor, I approach each script with, you know, the questions that I need to ask, and if I need to – you know, the conspiracy is a – I've always thought that it's best if it remains unexplained. If it remains many different ideas, many different possibilities.

And I think that – you know, getting back to that other question about whether or not the show was weaker last year – you know, you get into the sixth year, people say, "We want answers. We want resolution. We want closure. We want—" – you know, all these words people think that they want, but then you try and you give answers. You try and say, "Okay, well the conspiracy is this Cigarette Smoking Man, who has a Canadian accent, we don't know why. And he seems to have killed Kennedy and a few other very important people in American history and he has a Canadian accent, and we don't know why."

So, once you start pinning the conspiracy on certain people, and then you say, "these aliens are black oil, and then they're gray, and then they're purple, and then they're green," and you start saying, you know, very specifically, giving people resolution, giving people answers. It becomes more of just a science fiction show, which I think weakens it. But, you know, Chris and the writers are in a catch-22 because people want answers, and when you give them answers, they go, "Well, that's just not as exciting as not knowing. Why did you tell me?"

So, I think that's – you know, and I think – you know all, without lumping you into a group, I think you know what I'm talking about because you're probably somewhat guilty of that as well, from time to time, are you not? [laughter]

QUESTION: Which fans do you find scarier? "X-Files" fans or "Red Shoe Diaries" fans? [laughter]

DUCHOVNY: I love "The Red Shoe Diaries" fans. I just love that they have the nerve to actually come up to me and say that they're fans of "The Red Shoe Diaries." [laughter]

QUESTION: Did you learn something about Mulder because you did the character six years? Do you have similarities with the character?

DUCHOVNY: I'm sorry. One more time.

QUESTION: Did you learn something about the character during the TV series? Did you learn something about the character?

DUCHOVNY: Did I learn something from the character about myself?

QUESTION: Yes, yes.

DUCHOVNY: Oh, sure. I mean, you know, any actor does learn about themselves, not always things that they want to know or enjoy knowing when they play a character, especially, you know, when you're playing a character for this long. So, sure, there are - there are—

QUESTION: For example, one thing you learned.

DUCHOVNY: Well, no. [laughter] I don't know. It's so - it's removed so far from me, and so close to me at the same time, it's hard to say. I mean people, of course, think that I am Mulder, and that's a pain in the ass. So, you know - so, whenever I'm asked a question like that, I always want to distance myself from that character. But, you know, it's a job that I do. A job that I work really hard at, and a job that I enjoy, for the most part. So, I have lots of feelings and lots of thoughts about Mulder.

But again, like me answering questions about the relationship, I think, you know, my opinion or my thoughts on Mulder are the least important in the world, and I don't exaggerate because, you know, it's not for me to enjoy, or to know. It's for other people to. That's why we do the show. Thank you.

QUESTION: David, I got to admit that I don't remember you in "Beethoven." Could you do two things? I'm sorry. Could you do two things? First of all, tell us what you did in "Beethoven," and second of all, just characterize what your roles were before "X-Files."

DUCHOVNY: In "Beethoven," I played a yuppie scum kind of a cartoonish – you know, it's kids' movie. It's not the musician, Beethoven, it's the dog, Beethoven. [laughter] So, I played, you know, very cartoonish villain, and it was one of the first roles that I did, and the funny thing about it was, at the same time I was doing "Beethoven," I was doing a movie called, "Ruby," which was about Jack Ruby, and said to my manager – you know, when we took "Beethoven," I was like, "Oh my God. I'm going this kids movie. This is like death, but I need to eat."

And she said, "Oh, it's okay. You're doing 'Ruby' at the same time," which was this kind of prestige project. And the great thing is is that "Beethoven" is like – you know, I see it every Christmas because it's kind of a – it's a real successful kids' movie, and "Ruby" – I mean, you know, I don't think you can even get it at Blockbuster, you know. [laughter]

So, it's funny the way life works out. And then I actually – you know, "Beethoven" is a fun movie to be associated with.

Other work that I did – "The Rapture," "Kalifornia," couple of Henry Jaglom films, "Venice, Venice" and "New Year's Day," and "Julia Has Two Lovers," and "Red Shoe Diaries," which was so kindly mentioned earlier. [laughter] Couple other things that I don't remember.

QUESTION: "Twin Peaks."

QUESTION: [overlapping] Weren't you a cross dresser on "Twin Peaks."

DUCHOVNY: Oh, "Twin Peaks." Yeah. I think, yeah. I think my television history – sometimes I think it's really cool because I did "The X-Files," I did "Twin Peaks," and did "Larry Sanders," and those are three great TV shows. So, I'm happy with the television.

QUESTION: David, do you and your wife ever talk about doing a joint project as far as film or stage?

DUCHOVNY: No, we just did a conjoined project on April 24. [laughter]

No, she's says, you know, write me something, write me something, write me something. And I say I wish I could and I hope I do one day. In terms of working together, I would – you know, if I was looking at her objectively as an actress, I would love to work with her before anybody else out there in a second. But when

you're married, I think you really have to be careful if you're going to work together. I really think you have to be.

So, again, like an eighth year, I would never say never, but life has a way of offering up things that you never expected, so we'll see. But we're not actively looking for anything, though.

QUESTION: David, you said if you don't do another season – would you still want to do the movies? “The X-Files” movies?

DUCHOVNY: Well, yeah, I feel really proprietary of the character, you know, and of the show. And when I said that the show could continue on without me, I do believe that's true. I wouldn't want it to. I mean, there would be a part of me that would be sitting at home wishing fervently that it would fail. [laughter] And, you know, I feel like it's mine. I feel like, I made this, or whatever. “I made it, too” – you know, it says it at the end of the show. So I want to take care of Mulder.

You know, you asked that question about me learning anything from Mulder. I don't know if I can say what I learned, but I do feel like I want to take care of the guy and make sure that he's not misrepresented. I want to do right by the character that I've lived with and helped create for the last six years. So, yeah, I would want to do that. I would want to be there on set making sure that he got taken care of, in many ways.

QUESTION: David, what was it like—

DUCHOVNY: [overlapping] Ah, I hate it when actors talk about characters as if they really existed, but it kind of does to me in some weird way.

QUESTION: What was the writing process like for you? Did you agonize over it?

DUCHOVNY: You know, I would love to say that I did, but it was really, really easy. [laughter] You know, it's terrible. I mean, I know. I've tried to write before and I've never actually wrote anything that got done, so I know how hard it is and I know how agonizing it can be.

But this was so easy. Either I've really gotten smart recently or this was an idea that was kind of perfect and fully formed from the get-go. So it was a joy. It was so much fun to write and you know, I would just pray that all my experiences would be that way and I know they won't be.

But no, there was very little rewriting except for budget constraints. You know, two days before I started shooting, they said, "Okay, we've got to cut \$300,000 out of it." And I said, "Well, then, you know, I quit." [laughter]

QUESTION: During the previous years then of the show, did you sit there and say, "Oh, I could write a better line than that"?

DUCHOVNY: Oh, yeah. Oh, line?! [laughter] You know, I mean sometimes you just go, "Jesus."

But yeah, I mean, no disrespect to the writers, but as I said before, I do believe it's the harder show on television to write. And when I say that, I don't say it's the best written, or the best show. I just mean that it's story-driven, interesting story-driven, plot-driven, you know?

And character-driven shows, in my mind, are easier to do, because you're just dealing with the human condition, and you have life and death and marriage and sex and love. If you're a good writer, you're going to have fresh, new ways of looking at that and you're going to be fun and you're going to be tragic and you're going to be sad and you're going to do it.

And when I watched, you know, Jimmy Smits dying on "NYPD Blue," I thought that's great writing. But it's not the hurdle that "X-Files" writers have to deal with every week, because they have to come up with a whole world and a whole imaginative scheme that it is quantitatively different from any other show on television.

So the question was, did I ever think I could write a better line? Sure, and there were scripts that I thought that I could have done a better job with. But more power to our writers. They have a very tough job.

QUESTION: David, since the birth of your child, have you seen any difference in the way you look at life, or look at jobs, or look at anything? Has it changed you dramatically?

DUCHOVNY: I think it does, but I don't think it's something that you can really put your finger on. I think it must. I think that you – you know, I think that things that might have bothered you personally might not be so important. You know, petty things, ego-driven things. You know, I think you just start living – not that you become unselfish completely, but you do start living for another generation in a way. And that's a wonderful thing. You know, not just because you get to say,

"I'm now an altruistic individual," but because you really – your eye is now on the long run, which is a gift.

QUESTION: David, you mentioned a lot of the credits that you've done before "X-Files" earlier and there was some really good work in there, things like "The Rapture" and "Kalifornia."

DUCHOVNY: Thank you.

QUESTION: Now, when you do things, whether it's "Playing God" or—

DUCHOVNY: I forgot about "Playing God."

QUESTION: They'll get, probably, more attention now because of the fame you have from Mulder.

DUCHOVNY: Yeah.

QUESTION: Minus the paycheck, do you miss those days when you could do so many things that were off the beaten path?

DUCHOVNY: Oh, sure, sure. I mean, it's always, like, when you're starting out, you have this wide open road of potential in front of you. And, you know, you're playing every role. You're Bottom in "A Midsummer Night's Dream," where you're saying, [snaps fingers] "I'll play that and I'll play that and I'll play that and I'll do that role Cher just did. I can do that, you know" [laughter]

You know, it's fun. It's fun to sit in your -- in your hole -- and think of what you will do and what you can do. And then when your career works out the way it works out, it's much more – it's limited. It's not just in your imagination and it's not just chances that you'll take.

So I look forward to it, because I do have more power in terms of the business, or whatever, that I can pick and choose things. And I certainly know more about what I want to do, and how I work, and what kind of an actor I am. So, you know, I miss it like I miss college, in that same sense. There were no responsibilities and just a – you know, the future.

But I wouldn't change anything, I don't think. I mean, I'd change a lot, but it's all ridiculous to talk about those things. [laughs]

Who's taking pictures? What is that about?

[silence]

Is that it? Did I shut everybody up with that – [laughter]

QUESTION: David, I have another question.

DUCHOVNY: You want to know what I did last summer? [laughter]

QUESTION: [laughs] No, I'll pass on that one.

If your show does end this coming season, a lot of us will have to write pieces about what the show means. You remember the "Seinfeld" experience.

DUCHOVNY: Yeah.

QUESTION: I wondered if you'd tell us what you think the show means? Help us sum up--

DUCHOVNY: Oh, in other words, can you do my job for me? [laughter]

QUESTION: Yeah.

DUCHOVNY: [laughs] You know, I think the show means – I don't know. I've been asked why is the show successful for a long time now, and I think I always give the same answer unless I'm being self-destructive and saying stupid things that will come back to haunt to me, like right now. [laughter]

I also say it's because it's a good show. And, you know, that doesn't do your job for you, because you're going to get fired if you say, you know, "The 'X-Files' shows that good television can stay on television." But I really think that's what it is. You know, aside from questions about the zeitgeist, which I pity you all, you have to write things like that. You know, you have to talk about how we're in the age of conspiracy and entering the new millennium and all these things that I'm sure you're just as sick of writing as we are of reading it. [laughter]

And I think you know that at its heart, at its base, at its core, it was just a fucking good show, you know? [laughter] And it was fun and it was exciting and it was well-written and it was well-acted and it was well-directed. And sure it had some kooky elements that might have been, you know, end of the century oriented. But in the end, it was just cool and it was good and it was different.

So I'm sorry, you're going to have to come up with that millennium stuff on your own. [laughter] What do you think?

[silence]

[laughter]

QUESTION: I guess we're having a personal conversation, is that what we're doing. [laughter] I think you're right. I think it's a great show.

DUCHOVNY: All right! [laughter]

QUESTION: David, one difference this year a little bit was that there seemed to be more episodes that were kind of whimsical and wacky and sometimes even a little bit more goofy sense of humor than in previous years.

DUCHOVNY: Yeah.

QUESTION: Did – it seems to match, in some ways, your sense of humor in real life. Is that a change you were glad see and did you do any suggestions in that direction, or anything?

DUCHOVNY: Well, my position on the show is that humor could work in it. Not necessarily that it was supposed to be a funny show, but that humor was an indispensable part of the character, therefore of the show. Scully not being a barrel of laughs – [laughter] -- I thought Mulder was the way that humor was going to enter into the show.

And when we had Morgan and Wong, who are writers -- and when we had Darren Morgan and we still have Vince Gilligan [sp] and Jeffrey Bell from last year -- who seem to be able to carry on -- to be able to hold both a humorous, whimsical element and a scary, supernatural element. And I think that those shows are really successful. And when they fall flat, they fall flat because they're too whimsical, or they're trying too hard to be funny.

But I think what happened last year, just by coincidence, we came up with -- we? I didn't -- the writers just had four or five whimsical, funny shows in a row, and it didn't come down from on high, you know? [snaps finger] "Be whimsical." It just kind of happened and it didn't have anything to do with moving to L.A.

I think it probably has something to do with being in the sixth year of a show. You become self-referential. You start to wink at the audience, in some way, just because you have a history with the audience. So I think for the most part, it was really it being the sixth year of the show that lent to the whimsicality. I think that

people got scared because they all happened to occur in one spate there, like five or six in a row, and people went "Oh, my God, it's 'Ally McBeal.'"

And it never was, and it never was meant to be. But, again, I keep coming back to how hard this show is to write. I think when these writers have an idea, they just thank the Lord. You know, they don't say, "But could you send me one that wasn't whimsical?" You know, they just go, oh, my God, I've got an "X-Files" idea that I can write and it will work.

So I think if I was to tell you my sensibility, it really was just my show, which was, I think, whimsical. But I also think it was very emotional and it was very serious on, what to me, was an allegorical and meaningful level. So I think when "X-Files" functions at its best, it functions on all those levels, and isn't just scary, or just whimsical, or just conspiratorial. But, at its best, which I think makes it the most intricate show out there, it works on all levels. And when it doesn't, it doesn't.

QUESTION: David, is it a wrong assumption so that there are probably a lot of outtakes, a lot of screw ups, within the framework of the show in six years? Because with the sense of humor that you've displayed, both on the show and off-camera, I'm assuming that you could kind of have a reel of the funny outtakes of "The X-Files"?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah, well, I mean, any show has got things that are funny, and the funniest parts of any outtakes show are when the actors are totally, you know, out of control, laughing, or props going wrong or things like that.

But I – you know, to be honest with you, I'm a professional, and I go to work to work, and you know, I'm trying to get home as early as I can, you know. And I'm not there to make anybody laugh. I'm just there to do my job the best I can. So, I'm like – I'm not thinking like, "Oh, what gag can I play today?" [laughter]

Because, you know, when I'm like – it's 3:30 in the morning, I'm thinking, "That fucking gag has made me here at 3:30 in the morning."

So, it's not the gaggiest set because we work too damn hard, you know. If I was working 12 hours a day, I'd guarantee you, I'd have the fart cup and everything. I'd be going – you know, I'd be gagging all the time, but, you know, when it's 14, 15 hours, you're not thinking about gags. You're just thinking about, "Let's make the show the best we can, and we'll laugh later."

QUESTION: David, how was it to direct Gillian on "The Unnatural"? Did she take direction well from you?

DUCHOVNY: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, she only had two scenes, so we didn't – you know, but I think she – I think they were really nice scenes for her, so I think, you know, what happens in the course of the series – course of a six-year series like this, a lot of the time, scenes are written away from you. Scenes are written, you know, to the plot, or to the guest stars that have to be established so that their story can run its course. And I think what I did was I was able to write two scenes that were kind of interesting for the Scully character.

So, in that way, you know, when that happens for an actor, for any actor, they come alive, you know. So, yeah. I think -- yeah, she listened.

HERZOG: Well, I think that is about it for the formal session. I think – hopefully Mr. Duchovny can hang around for a little while if any of you have anything additional to discuss. And that wraps our sessions for the day, and for the Press Tour.

*