

Sci-fi mama: *The X-Files* Gillian Anderson



In one short year, "Special Agent Scully" has become a wife, a mommy and a TV personality on the cusp of cult stardom. Talk about a woman who's waiting to X-hale!

BY SHERYL
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Fed fatale: On TV, Anderson plays an FBI agent. But off-screen, she devotes lots of time to daughter Piper.

Strange sounds are emanating from a dark corridor in an abandoned mental institution, and Gillian Anderson is on the case. Concealing herself in the shadows, the 27-year-old actress tiptoes from door to door, the floorboards creaking under her high heels.

"I know you're in here," she calls. As FBI Special Agent Dana Scully on the sci-fi series *The X-Files*, Anderson is accustomed to hunting ghosts, ghouls and assorted aliens with her partner in the paranormal, Fox Mulder (played by David Duchovny). But this time she's on her own. The cast and crew stand back as the petite redhead bursts into a room with a loud "Gotcha!" She scoops her 18-month-old daughter, Piper, into her arms and swings her in the air. "How's my baby?" she asks, showering the child with kisses.

Piper is a permanent fixture on the *X-Files* set in Vancouver. "She has lots of aunts and uncles here who dote on her," Anderson says. "To her, this is make-believe time."

Supernatural success story

The same might be said for Anderson herself, who jokingly asks a cameraperson to pinch her when an interviewer points out that she seems to have it all—in one year she's become the star of a top-rated series as well as a wife and mother. The show's appeal is cross generational; everyone from college kids to housewives sits glued to the TV set to watch it on Friday nights.

"Sometimes it doesn't seem real," Anderson admits. "If anyone had told me two years ago that this would be my life, I would have told them they were crazy."

At that time she was a stage actress with only a few TV bit parts under her belt. She auditioned for the part of the female FBI agent on *The X-Files* assuming she ▶

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CELEBRITY CLOSE-UP

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wouldn't get it. "They were looking for someone leggier," she says. At 5 feet 3, Anderson hardly fit the bill, but the show's creator, Chris Carter, insisted on casting her anyway. "She simply was Scully," he says. "No doubt in my mind."

Though she may be Scully on-screen, off-screen is another story. While Scully is serene and deadpan, Anderson has an infectious laugh and slips easily into baby talk around her daughter.

"She's a completely different person once those cameras stop rolling," says John Bartley, the show's director of photography. "As Scully she rarely smiles, but she just lights up around that baby."

Her first-season stunner

Also, the real Anderson is full of surprises. During the show's first season, co-workers were amazed when she returned from a Hawaiian vacation married to ex-*X-Files* art director Clyde Klotz, 34. The other shoe dropped when she announced she was pregnant shortly after their honeymoon.

"It was a shocker, and I was worried that it would be the end of my role," she says. "Scully is supposed to be chasing bad guys, and there I was, big and bloated and barely able to stand on my feet because they were so swollen."

The show's creative team, however, rose to the occasion, covering her in bulky trench coats and writing a clever alien-abduction plot for Scully that allowed Anderson to take three episodes off.

During her pregnancy she gained 52 pounds, and the camera wasn't kind. "When you're pregnant your body goes through so many changes," she recalls. "My face looked so round! But I had to learn to let go of the vanity."

Parenthood, Anderson says, has changed her a great deal. As a teenager growing up in Grand

"David has always been there for me," says Anderson of Duchovny, her *X-Files* partner in crime. When they're not acting, their relationship is just like their characters'—trusting and teasing.



Rapids, Mich., she was a self-professed wild child who spiked her hair, pierced her nose and ran around with a rock musician.

"I'm much milder than I was before," Anderson says. "When I became a mother, something inside me shifted. I have a little person who looks to me and depends on me. That's a big responsibility."

Parenthood was also a major adjustment for Klotz, who now works on other shows and lives with Anderson and Piper in Van-

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cover. Their relationship turned rocky for a while after Piper's birth. "It was a hard period for us," Anderson explains. "Men don't have time during the pregnancy to connect with the child like the mother does. It's as if something comes between the two of you—suddenly there's this third party in the house." She shifts uncomfortably in her chair, crumpling a coffee cup in her hands; clearly this subject touches a nerve. "I can understand what he was feeling," she says. "I was giving so much attention and love to this child, more love than I've felt for anyone in my whole life. But if you stick with it, things eventually do change. One day it's no longer the mother and child with the father off to the side. It's a family."

Living in the limelight

Anderson is fiercely guarded about her family, especially since the show has generated an unusual fervor among fans. For example, thousands of adoring males have banded into an on-line Gillian Anderson Testosterone Brigade.

Other fans recently met her at an airport arrival gate, asking her to sign dozens of autographs.

"I've gotten much more protective of myself and my boundaries," she says. "I can't go places without people recognizing me. Sometimes it makes me want to hide."

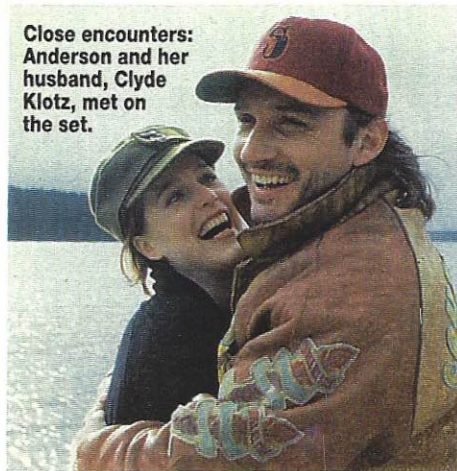
But there's no hiding from her responsibilities, or from her grueling schedule. Today she will be filming until 4 A.M., putting in a 14-hour workday with only a few breaks between takes. She and Duchovny are supportive of each other, instinctively knowing if the other is tired or stressed out. When asked to describe their relationship, Duchovny wisecracks, "She's the best Scully I've ever worked with." But he lays a consoling hand on her shoulder when a scene has to be reshot a dozen times; Piper has a cold and a slight fever, and he understands Anderson is anxious to wrap and to join her daughter in the trailer.

"I feel like I owe it to the people I work with to be professional," Anderson says. "But I won't lie and say it isn't hard for me. Sometimes

it's very frustrating. Today I have to film my scenes when all I want to do is be with Piper and hold her."

Bouncing the baby on her lap later, she admits that her character might not understand the life Anderson has chosen. "She's so career-minded, so serious," she explains. She places a colorful sticker on her nose, and Piper laughs. "Scully would probably think my life's a little, well, weird." ■

Close encounters: Anderson and her husband, Clyde Klotz, met on the set.



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