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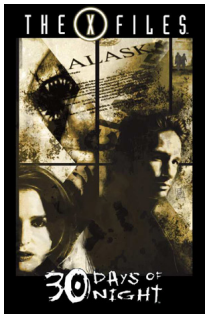
THE X FILES/30 DAYS OF NIGHT is a topnotch crossover event between two popular franchises this writer never would have thought possible. This is a stylish showdown between the two iconic paranormal investigators from the modern-classic TV sseries and the parasitic vampires of Steve Niles and Ben Templesmith’s creation.

When a snowplow driver accidentally veers off the road, he stumbles upon a gruesome murder spectacle: At the bottom of the snow covered hill lies a vast cemetery of vehicles and drivers. Someone or something has ripped the heads off the unfortunate truckers and gathered them into a tall, bloodsoaked pile. And then, for all to see, the decapitated bodies have been hung 40 feet in the air on a pole.




FBI Special Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully soon arrive at the crime scene to investigate, but the lack of substantial clues leaves the duo with very little to follow. Fellow FBI agent Robert French crudely denounces Mulder as a walking embarrassment, undeserving of his badge and gun, and believes his manhunt will lead to a human adversary. Consumed by his personal vendetta, French is determined to demonstrate how useless Mulder is by capturing the serial killer first.

During the mid-’90s, Topps Comics published an X FILES series in which artists Charles Adlard and Gordon Purcell went for a realistic approach in their visualizations of Mulder and Scully. Their artwork never caught my attention, because the designs were intended to directly translate the televised format onto the illustrated page. The great thing here is how artist Tom Mandrake (THE SPECTRE, numerous BATMAN titles, etc.) works in his own style, bringing the familiar characters into his artistic landscape. Mandrake’s images capture the dark, cold setting

well, and cinematic angles bring life to the dialogue-driven panels.

Author Niles joins the ranks of other literary giants, such as Stephen King and William Gibson, who have written their own fan fiction. What Niles and co-writer Adam Jones (guitarist for the metal band Tool) achieve perfectly in X FILES/30 DAYS OF NIGHT is a focus on characterization. They keep Mulder and Scully’s banter and quirky personalities in sync, presenting the two as detectives first attempting to solve a murder, which eventually leads them into the supernatural. The writers don’t strictly abide by the mythology created by Chris Carter, but adopt the history as a guideline.

The duo are the center of the first issue, leaving the vampires to take the stage in the next installment. This is the second week of darkness in Wainwright, Alaska, and it’s clear events are bound to get worse before the end of the month. It will be interesting to see how Scully, a person of science, will react to these violent bloodsuckers as the six-part miniseries continues. Usually, it’s tough to tell early on whether this kind of crossover will work (BATMAN VERSUS PREDATOR) or strike out (ARCHIE MEETS THE PUNISHER), but this one is definitely worth sticking around until the end. This debut is one hell of a page-turner; the only thing missing is Mark Snow music. It goes on sale July 14th, with variant covers; if you’re a fan of MAXX, you should definitely pick up the one drawn by artist Sam Keith.

{jcomments on}