TOMORROW IS YESTERDAY | OCTOBER 2020

SFCQ2

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DIRECTOR OF FLEET OPERATIONS ADMIRAL MARK MITCHELL
CHIEF OF STAFF FLEET ADMIRAL SCOTT ARLOW



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AIM TO MISBEHAVE

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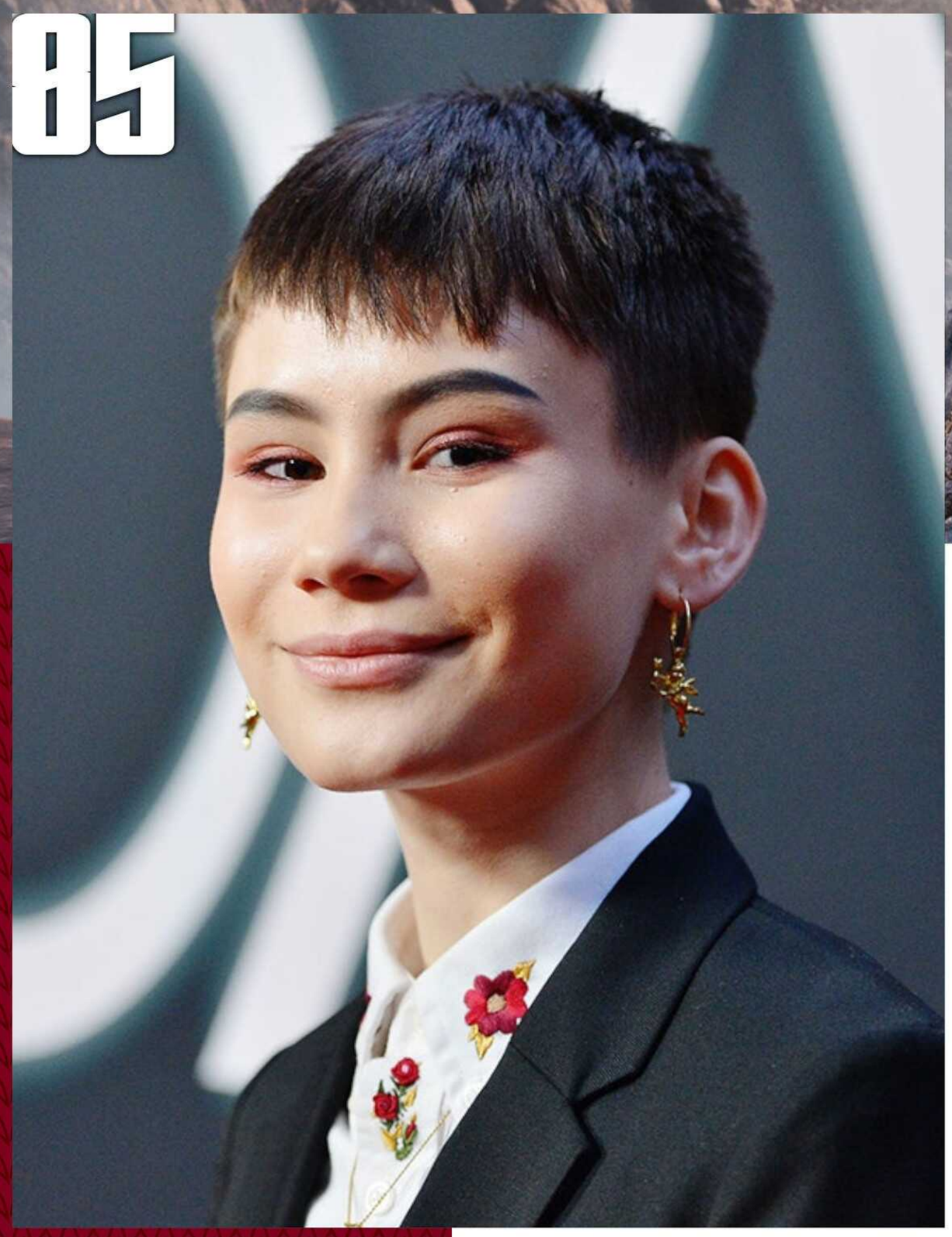
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Expanding it's cast for Season 3, Discovery welcomes the first non binary and transgender characters on board. Learn more about Blu del Barrio & Ian Alexander in our Boldly Go section!



This October Discovery goes where no Trek has gone before; far beyond any time we've seen as the crew take their ship and it's inherited ancient database to what they hope is a safe place. As the ship arrives in a new time, we're looking through the archive of time travel on screen, both in Star Trek and beyond.....

Time travel can always be a fun concept in sci fi and if used well, can tell an interestting tale. This issue we're breaking it all down with Star Trek's best time travel episodes, a look back at tthe most loved time travel movie - The Voyage Home - and celebrating the return of Bill & Ted while taking a retroactive look back at another 80's time travel classic, Back to the Future.

It's all came together as somewhat of an accidental theme as we look ahead to Disccovery's next season and wonder what they'll find on the other side of the wormhole.

Star Trek's flagship show hasn't been afraid tot take risks, from it's claustrophobic and tense first season, to the mystery of the Red Angel and rise of AI in it's second.

The third presents a new future, new challenges and a new sense of hope - and could be just what we need as we continue to live life in lockdown and seek new ways to help lift the heavy weights on our shoulders.

As we continue our new golden era of the Star Trek Universe, we'll also take a peek at Lower Decks' first ffew episodes ahead of it's highly anticipated UK release date and try to piece together the future options of the Kelvin Timeline segment of the franchise.

With the heavy burdens of real life, it's been a tough issue to put together. But with no end in sight for escaping "the new normal", the ever growing Star Trek world and the flurry of sci fi books, shows and games arriving help bring us a little bit of escapism in the world.

And as always we're filled up with as much escapism we can find as we look back on some favourite moments from the past, some new hits from tthe present and more to enjoy in the very near future!

COMMS RELAY

With the world in lockdown and our lives all going a bit weid, Comms Relay offers some insight to our current fleet life and plans!



GOING BELOW **2020**

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
ADM JAMES TYLER



Putting together Comms on a good month is unpleasant, stressfull and generally a time consuming vaccume from which there is no escape! Putting it together after months of lockdown? It's been fairly hard to focus for everyone involved and as such, we've run even more so than our usual "traditionally" late.

Things are getting tense and weird out there. And messages are mixed in some nations. It's all a bit chaotic.

I should say something more issue-centric; but as always, focus on you. stay safe. Protect family and be safe!

FLEET WIDE ALERTS & NOTICES

Cabin fever has well and truly setting in for most of us, even with some restrictions being listed in our nations. However the fleet rocks on. Though it's all a bit weird, isn't it?

PATCH JOB

After a stupily long wait and multiple supplier issues, fleet patches are now available. After issuing our pre-ordered supply and selling off a few more, the remaining patches are of our Discovery-style SFCQ2 patches.

This includes the standard Discovery era SFC crest; a Pride alternate and our all blue Tactical variant.

All patches cost £5 each - postage included - and £1 from each patch is going straight to charity. As always we don't actually make any money from the patches, and aim to provide them for as low a cost as we can.

To claim yours, just login to SFCQ2.com and visit QM Stores in the Membership Hub.

We'll have more patches available either towards the end of the year, or early next year, with a completely unique design to represent SFC Quadrant 2's core values and location.

MEMBERSHIP ID

One of the things we're excited about is our new membership ID cards. We haven't had those in a long, long time and ordered a batch for all our current members to enjoy.

The new membership cards are a simple affair: Business cards printed with SFCQ2 info which includes your site login/username, membership/service number (which all correspondance includes as a references) as well as your assignment and department info.

Some members have recieved example cards without any text along with their patch orders. We're hoping everyone else will recieve theirs soon.

We had planned to get them out for the summer, but with pre-printed templates, and all Admin's local print shops closed, alternative measures need to be used and so far.... it's not been a success! However, to paraphrase a weird man who once encountered a T-Rex, we'll find a way and we'll get them out ASAP.

AND ON THAT NOTE...

When it comes to sending things from Admin, or anything from SFC, we always refer to our membership database and the information we have on file.

That file includes department, ranking, awards or recognition, area/unit and most imprtantly when it comes to posting something - home address, which is always cross referenced.

With patches or QM store buys, we take any mailing address supplies through PayPal as gospel. But for anything else, such as member ID's or QM store sendouts if we don't have an address come through - we do use whatever address is in our database.

We know that with SFC not taking a fee and barely using anyones mailing address, it's easy to forget to keep us up to date. Let's be honest: Without any ▷



STARFLEET DATABASE
In an expansion of the Membership Hub, our database section is being updated with both essential and trivial info throughout the Summer months.

money changing hands or any financial commitment, there's usually no need to update any details or any reminder to do so outwith our trial confirmation period.

However, for reasons such as ID mailouts and other things, we do like to remid every now and then to keep your address and info up to date.

You can update your details directly through the membership hub by logging into sfcq2.com/hub - if you haven't registered for a Hub account, you can do so at ***https://sfcq2.com/register*** or email Admin at ***info@starfleet-command.co.uk***.

You can update your information with ease in the "Account" section of our Hub, as well as request a transfer, your personal files (Subject Access Request), download a full officers pack, make a unit application and soon - fingers crossed - download officer records such as promotion and commendation certificates in PDF or JPG format.

OFFICERS WRITES

Some may have noticed that our membership hub now includes an option to become a contributor to SFCQ2's website. This is an ongoing trial to essentially help both offer people a platform to give their views and opinions and to extend SFC's outlook from more than just one person.

There are some caveats and rules in place, but any member who wishes ton contribute to Comms online, rather than Comms in digital print, can do so directly.

Access won't be universal, but can be applied for by visiting the Membership hub and following the appropriate links in the dashboard.

Captains and SFCHQ Staff are also granted access automatically - however all posts will be approved and scheduled by the DoFC.

Further info is available in the Application/Submissions page of the Hub.

AND FINALLY....

We'd like to give a huge note of thanks to everyone who submitted for this issue; especially under these difficult and trying times thats seen even us hit a wall of frustration staring at blank pages and tapping a mug instead of typing!

It's important to us that Comms isn't just a benefit of membership, but a way for members to express their views and be part of the overall voice of the fleet: Offering a wider representation of us all and who we are.

Thank you to all! It makes a huge difference and helps make Comms a more varied part of Q2. ■



One of the questions that came up the most through our Confirmation program was about unit operations.

This is something we often have enquiries about, however the confition allowed us to clear out our fleet database of any and all inactive members so we could focus on establishing active hotbeds for activity and better identify areas where there was a good structure already in place.

Admitedly, right now isn't the best time to launch an active unit: One of the main requirements is a meetup to introduce each other, discuss any ideas and be comfortable going forward. And right now, we're advising against meet ups for some time (especially as different regions will have different rules regarding easing up of the lockdown).

But most of us are stuck at home, so there's nothing wrong with planning ahead!

Creating an SFC Unit allows you to carve your own identify within the support network of the Fleet, and for the CO, become an administrative voice through the Captains table upon confirmation. It also allows you to create a more intimate and connected community in the real world; atttend events as a group, meet up and meet new people.

In coming to the decision to start a unit, we do have a procedure in place and certain requirements. That's not a totalitarian law: It's just experience as we want o ensure the building blocks are there to launch a Tesla, rather than a Daring (which collapsed instantly due to poor planning).

The main key is to ensure there are enough people to continue - that could depend based on the size and scope of your plans - and then be certain those people definately do want to build the unit with you.

We do have a guide to unit startups that includes ideas, advice and the base responsabilities a CO would have in leadering their group - though everyone is different and our main concern is ensuring that there is an end goal, purpose and that you have all the support you need.

You can read these guides via the Members Hub at sfcq2.com and view the breakdown of a unit application in the Account section. ■

If you have any questions you'd like to ask the Admiralty Board or if you're having any issues with accessing the Membership Hub functions - as well as any concerns or comments on SFCQ2, send your questions and comments to comms@starfleet-command.co.uk

If you have any feedback on this,or any other issue of Comms please refer it to media@sfcq2.com



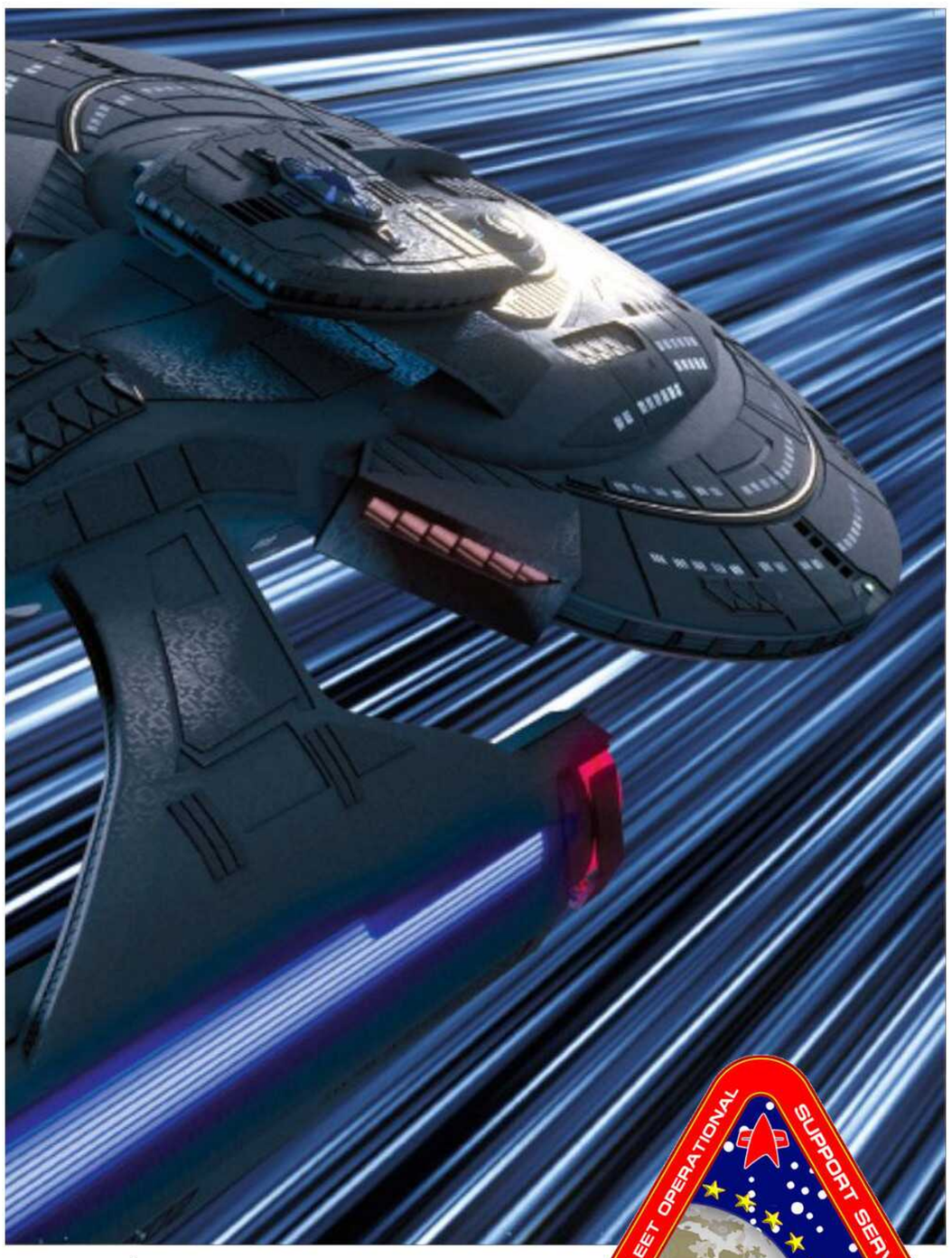
It's been a period of change for SFC Quadrant 2 as we welcome new commanding officers, revise SFCHQ Informational Guides and look ahead to a boild and exciting new era for the fleet!

ThChange is inevitable within a club like SFC, but thankfully with recent changes and restructuring efforts we're seen our teams grow and adapt to new Captains, new ideas and a new lease of life.

We won't beat around the bus on the topic. Not too long ago we had a breakdown in command structure and had to take action; one person stood down, and two of that persons closest friends followed.

This left two units - Sovereign and Invictus - short of leadership.

It was an unforetunate situation and not the outcome we wanted to see happen. However every cloud has a silver lining and in rotating commanding officers for the units, we feel that the silver lining was well worth the stress and disapointment.



SOVEREIGN

After cycling through three commanders in a matter of days, several people put their name forward to take command of Sovereign and offered several plans and ideas. Being next in line, and jumping straight into action, Second Officers Peirs Drinkall offered a beacon of hope and was elevated to Acting Commanding Officer.

Piers has been a breath of fresh air, coordinating witht he board, taking part in topic within the Captains Table and ensuring some members who had been overlooked or left behind with Sovereigns Northen-based approach in recent times.

Bringing his real life experience and a strong knowledge of leadership and structure, as well as a variety of other valuable skills, Piers has had a tremendous start which has included a unit restructuring, reaching out with new programs - a difficult task within an internet-based unit and even began Q&A and introductory sessions with the crew.

Backing up Piers is Daniel Adams, who stepped into the role of Executive Officer. Most on the convention scene will have likely bumped into Dan at some point as he's a regular at many events and has been involved with fan groups for a number of years; including having a strong history here in SFC.

With the team working hard, we're highly confident about the direction the Sovereign is heading in and excited for it's future.

WITH THANKS

Finding a new Captain is never easy and on this occasion, we did have several people expressing interest in the unit. While Piers was chosen due to his quick action and planning, we'd like to remind everyone who reached out with interest not to feel discouraged.

One thing that we did notice was that those who had ideas, had potential outlines fleshed out for localised units; some of which have begun moving forward into a pre-planning stage.

We'd like to offer a massive thanks to all those who raised a hand and we hope this isn't the end of your journey into a leadership position!

INVICTUS

Being a smaller local based unit, and the youngest of the current SFCQ2 roster, figuring out what direction to go next with Invictus was a little bit more difficult and one that took a bit more thought.

Built around it's CO, losing Justine was a major blow to morale and we had to sit back and calculate the odds of ensuring it's future was steady, which is often difficult to assess within the Board and extended SFCHQ team as we're all spread out far from that locality.

Another aspect was a reluctance to try and take control. The Admiralty Board is there to oversee, support and various other administrative ▷

STARFLEET OPERATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES
STARBASE EUROPA
SOL SECTOR

One of the most important parts of our job overseeing SFC is handling your personal information and data.
We use your personal information for obvious membership services, from verifying you're a real person to having a mailout address for anything that needs sent and for other activities such as ensuring you're assigned to the right unit now or in the future.
Always keep in mind that our Privacy Policy is available in our We Are Starfleet section of sfcq2.com and in our Membership Hub Database.

things which are extremely dull and boring. Within the Chain of Command it is the Boards role to appoint a new CO, however we also don't like being too heavy handed or forcing a unit in a particular direction.

Instead, with Invictus, we hoped to see someone take lead and step up to the plate; someone who was knowledgable and closer to the units membership than we were able to be, had an intimate knowledge of past efforts, local meeting points and who the crew knew was one of their own.

We're pleased to say Mark Barnham was very forthcoming in keeping up to date, making enquiries and in stepping up to take the chair.

We're extremely happy and proud to have have seen Mark's passion and interest as well as his hope and assurance that the unit would continue forth!

Invictus, much like our flagship the Tesla, does face an uncertain future, not in command or membership, butin restrictions put in place across our nations on meetups and activities.

With a solid team on board, we're pleased to see Mark and others on board begin unofficial non-event meetings in socially distanced enviroments.

Invictus has always been an exciting prospect in one of the most active areas. Heading up the North, we're keen to see where the ship goes with Mark at the helm!

OPERATIONAL GUIDES

As was noted previously ina SitRep, one of the goals we've had in recent times was publishing an Operating Guide for each role within SFC; from SFCHQ to Captains.

All these guides would be publicly available within the Membership Hub so everyone can check and be certain what each person should or should not be doing or is responsable for within our set up.

First to be completed was the Academy Operations Guide which has been stored within HQ members untilt he full batch is ready for launch.

Even before our reshuffle we had noticed one of two key elements of SFC's operations weren't widely known. Or in one or two cases, not communicated as well as they ould have been.

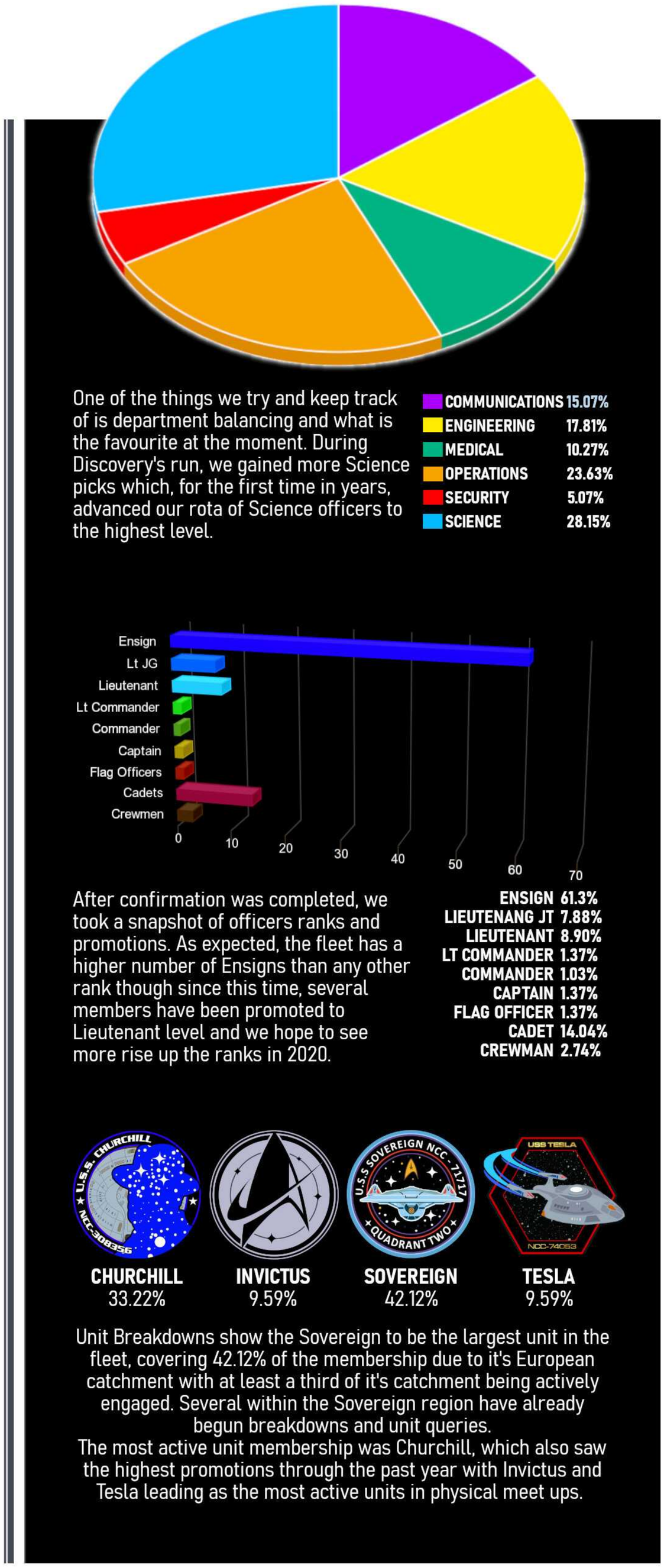
We hate giving everyone big blocks of text to filter through or throwing a huge rulebook at them. We like to keep things as simple as possible; After all, we're a fan club at heart. Rules only exist because, at one point or another, someone did something silly and we had to make sure it didn't happen again.

One of the hardest to complete has been the Captains Guide. Just as our goal is to streamline and not make it a huge overwhelming rulebook. Also, as Captains do act as limited data controllers - a fact we regularly remind and ensure everyones aware of (as detailed in our Data & Privacy policy,, available in the Members Hub and our Information sections) - we want to ensure that information is even more clearer than we outline now, has no wiggle room and is legally accurate ahead of any changes we may make or impliment in the near future.

The Captains and Academy Operational Guides will be available in September for download in the Membership Hub once all in Captains Table have had a chance to review in advance.

Further guides will also be made available expanding on the roles and responsabilities of all key SFCHQ Staff including Europa CO and the Admiralty Board Roles.

If at any time there are doubts or questions, please keep in mind that we are always open and that contact information for SFCHQ & CO's are always available in our Contact Sheet.



NOTICE BOARD

BULLETINS, NEWS AND NOTICED FROM AROUND THE FLEET

Attention All Hands! Focusing on the lockdown changes, recent announcements and more, the latest news and bulletins from around the fleet for your attention!

POTENTIAL CHANGES

After a long review of our current data and privacy policies, we're considering a bit of a change to extend database accessibility to CO's certified in GDPR laws and regulations.

While still just in the proposal and planning stages where we weigh up pros, cons and define all legalities, the proposed changes would allow CO's more direct access to promotions, awards and information in a crisis without having to go through Admin.

Whether we go ahead with training and helping CO's into the system as “processors” to Admin's Controller role, the database will still be going through a massive upgrade allowing us to attach and tag any files and information such as certificates, awards and more to ensure an ease of access.

If the policy goes ahead, all information would be provided in advance on site, in email and social groups with a one month period before the system goes live.

STAY UP TO DATE

Some may have noticed our refreshed members hub and seen a glimpse of some of the new options we're adding to the section.

We are running a bit late with implementing everything – just as it's a huge workload between Comms and Site maintenance and we have to choose our windows of opportunity! - though the full system should be complete by October 14th with one exception; Officer File Access (a record of rewards, commendations etc) is still causing some issues so may take a touch longer to impliment.

All members should see, or have access to add themselves, a bar with brief membership information, such as current rank, assignment and service number, which is used for all correspondences.

Any and all feedback is welcomed and can be sentt to media@sfcq2.com or by using the site contact form.

DOWNLOADABLE

Following in the footsteps of the Sovereign, Invitus' new CO Mark Barnham is opening his own membership newsletter to keep everyone updated and active through some trying times while we're all going through the lockdown blues.

Members of Invictus can get involved by contacting Mark directly with full information within the Invictus group.

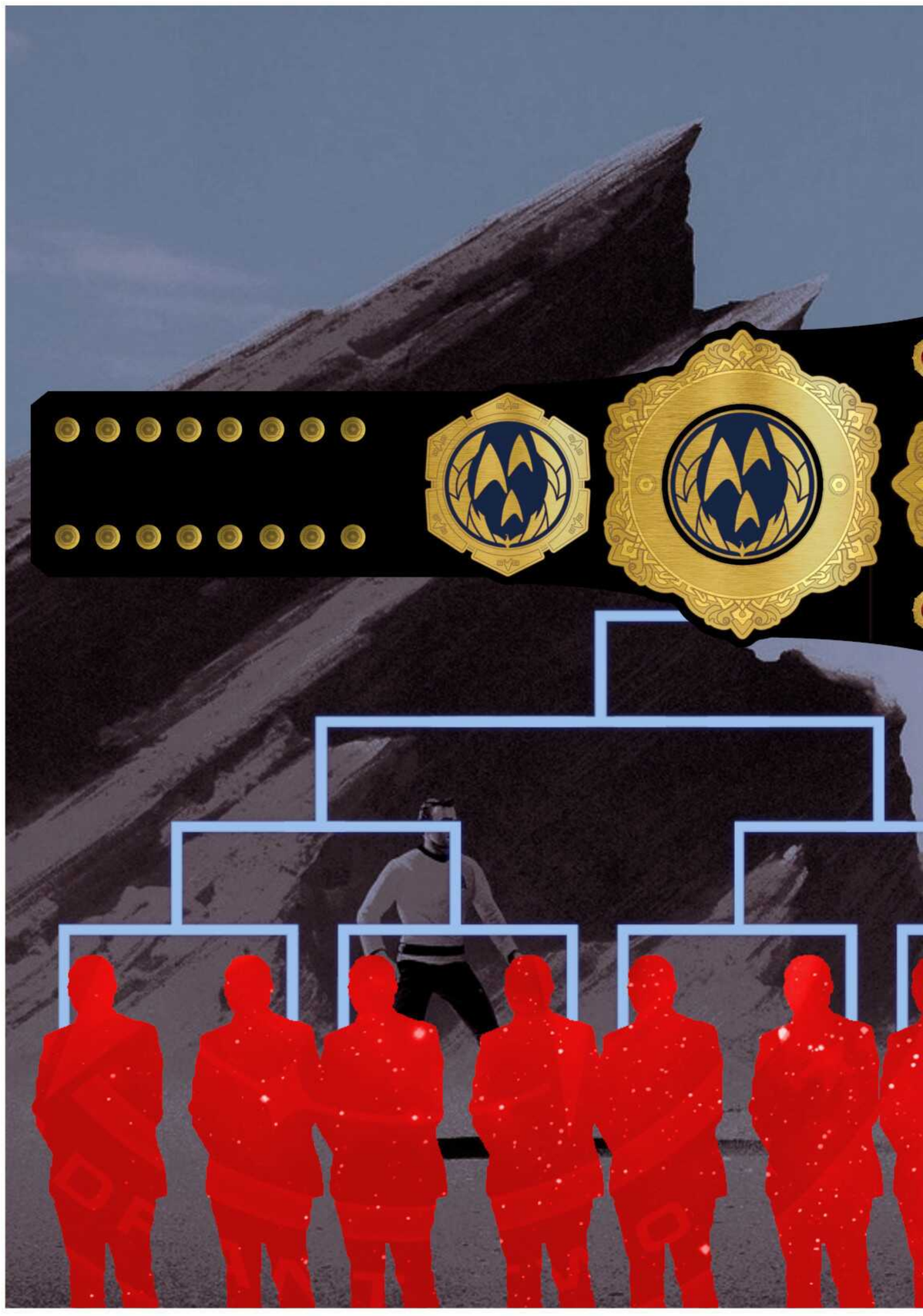
As always members of Sovereign can continue to contribute to their edition with further info and a schedule for upcoming issues available on the Sovereign group.

FIGHT CLUB

For no particular reason other than lockdown boredom, the DoFC is bringing a seasonal game back with a twist.

A long time ago in another universe, the crew of the Battlestar Galactica put aside rank and title to release their tensions and frustrations in the ring. Now it's Starfleets turn....

For decades Star Trek has delighted in showing brains over brawn, but every now and then our heroes have had to get their hands dirty. From the birth of Kirk Fu, to Seven in the Tsunkatse, to brawling with Klingons boarding DS9 – the



While the Fight Club is a new concept, the vote game isn't a new idea for SFC. When our current Chief of Staff stepped down from the role of Director of Operations, he started the first game with it's own twist; members could guess who the overall winner was in a "Best Episode" tournament and whoever guessed right got a promotion.

world of Trek's seen many a fighter show their tougher side to the point where even Tyler Durden himself picked William Shatner as his dream fight.

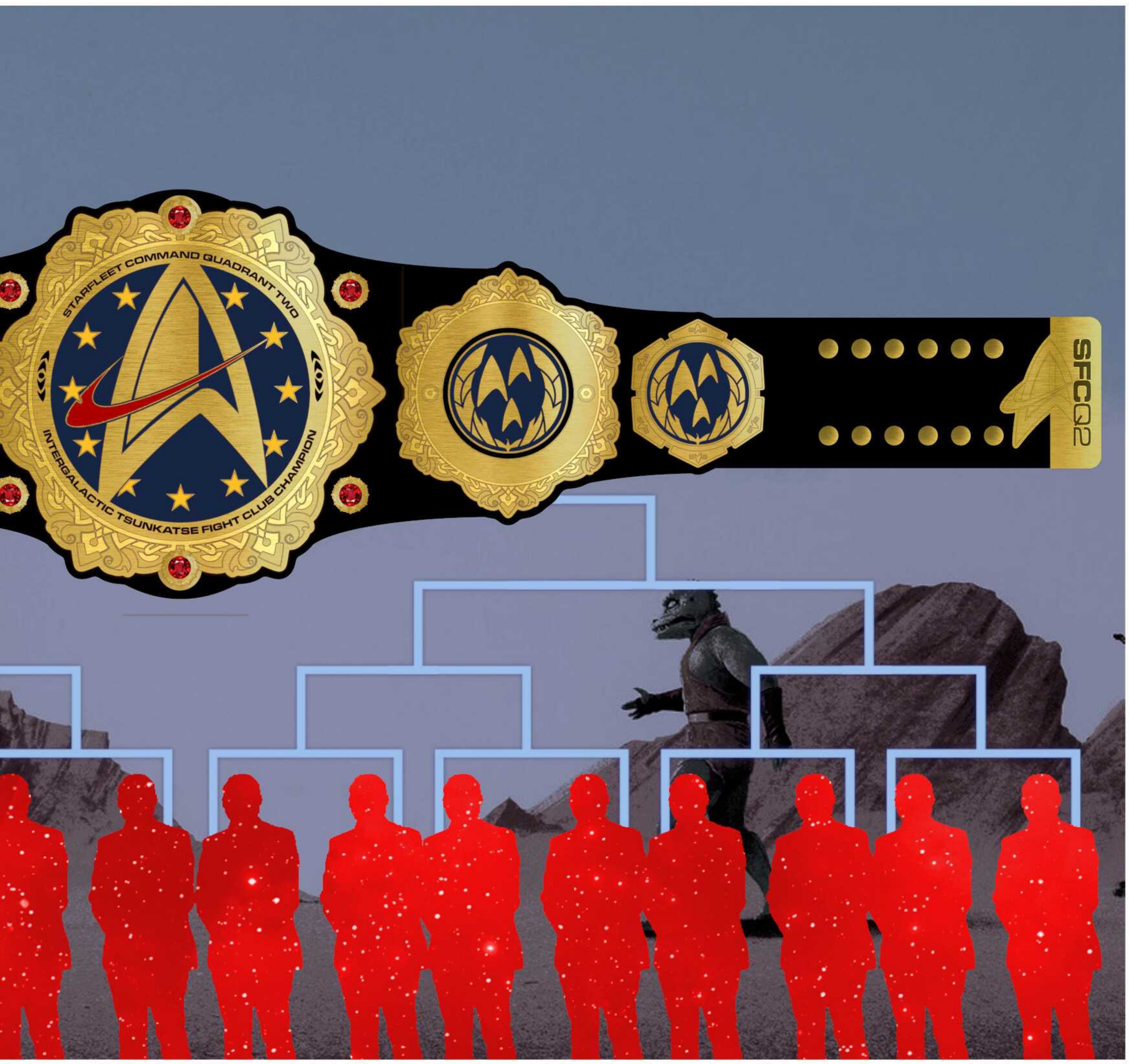
But who's the toughest of them all? Is it Sisko and his unbridled rage? Worf and his warrior ways? Or Wesley and.... wait, no...

We'll find out in the Intergalactic Tsunkatse Fight Club Championship Tournament!

Nominations were late in late July on Starbase Europa and a selection of fighters have been chosen! The full brackets will be posted Early October with week one offering a chance to vote through a winner from the first stage.

TAKING NOTICE

As another year rolls round, we're close again to the regularly scheduled DOPS address where the board takes ▷



the oppertunity to end the year on a high. This has beena bit of a rough year all round, so if you feel someone has deserved the recognition that we may have missed, recommendations can be passed directly to Admin or your CO's.

We'll also be hosting out not-s serious awards again this year for Comms; recommendations can be made directly to the DoFC.

STAY SAFE

Most importantly: In these troubling times we urge everyone to stay safe, stay updated on localised news and updated, stay connected and look forward to better days.

If you have a new bulletin or message for the fleet, you can get in touch by using our fleet contact form or by emailing media@sfcq2.com

For members who have Facebook access, all are welcome to join our active fleet-wide pages, free for all members to join!

SFCQ2 MEMBERS FACEBOOK GROUPS

STARBASE EUROPA	http://facebook.com/groups/starbaseeuropa
QUARTERMASTERS	facebook.com/groups/sfcfqm/
COMMS RELAY	facebook.com/groups/SFCQ2CommsRelay/

SPOILERS & DISCUSSION GROUPS

STAR TREK DISCOVERY	facebook.com/groups/SFCQ2Discovery
STAR TREK PICARD	facebook.com/groups/SFCQ2Picard
ST LOWER DECKS	facebook.com/groups/sfcq2lowerdecks/

Another potential change coming is to the SFC crest. Since the launch of Discovery we've been using a new style based on the show in celebration of a new era of Trek. Things have however went a bit beyond our expectations...

While the Discovery style is a bit of a gimmicky one, and not really tthe official look, we've been looking at ways to creatte a new and unique emblem tthatt both represents a modern SFC Quadrant 2 and the current Star Trek Universe.

The current front runner is a Europa-inspired design that aims to merge styles from both the flagship show and as we've always aligned with up-to-date Trek, the era of Starfleet that mirrors SFC's in-fantasy timeline.

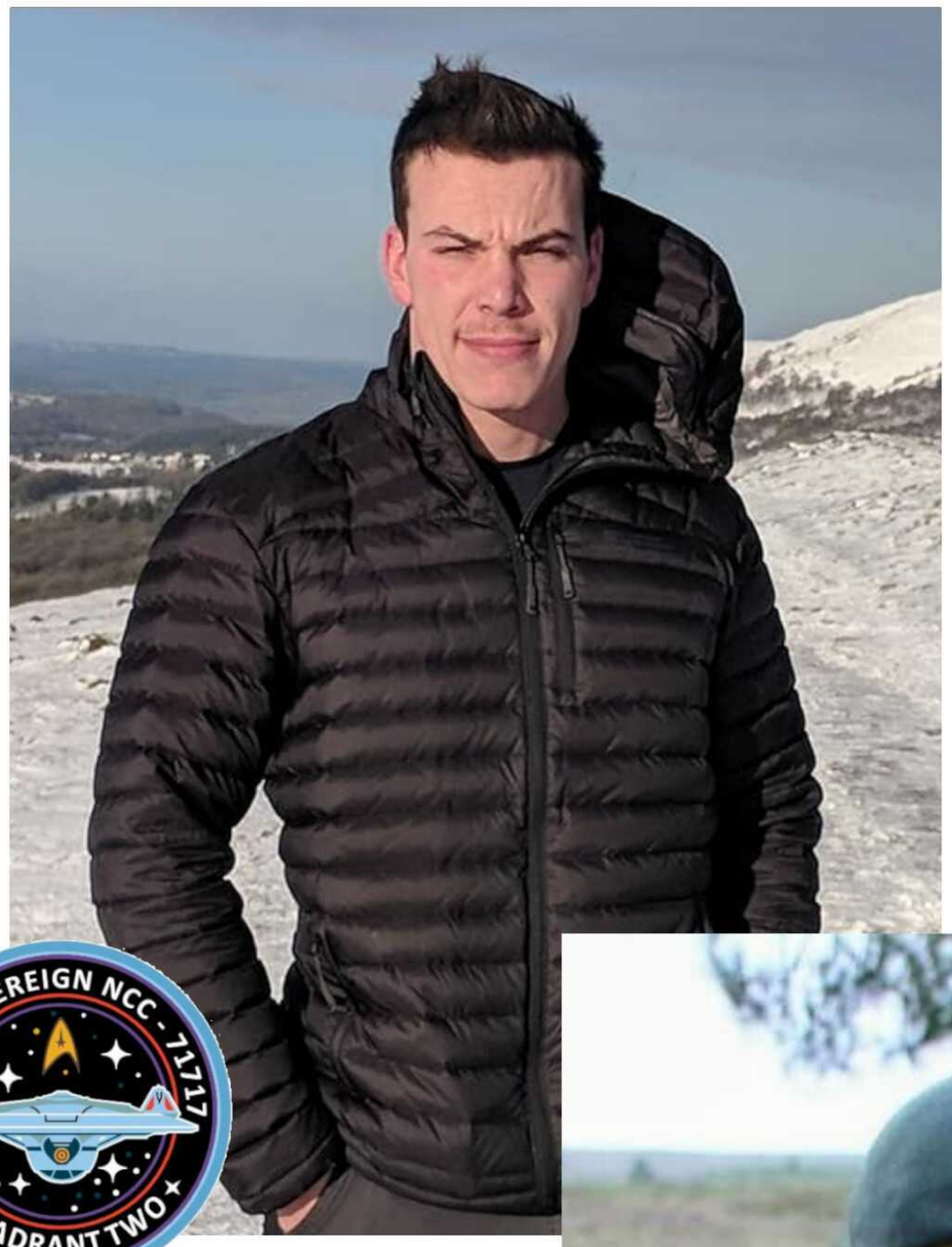
This resultted in a Picard-era Sttarfleet delta being tthe focus, with the right hand side removed much like the Discovery era version. We've also added the Discovery swoosh, retained most of the original SFC colouring and emphasised that Quadrant 2 is a European wide club witth the same stars seen on both the EU flag and historically on all Starbase Europa patches.

With standard dark and formal white designs in place, tthe logo's set for some further refinement before tthe approval stages and departmental offshoots.

MEET THE FLEET

PIERS DRINKALL

CO, USS SOVEREIGN



Joining SFC can sometimes be a whirlwind and sometimes it can be tricky getting to grips with who's who within the fleet administration. As such, we're shining a spotlight on our HQ staff and with a lot of new incoming members, we're focusing a veteran members at the top of the chain of command...

Over the years, or decades, we've seen many a unit come and go. One of our longest serving, the USS Pendragon, was over twenty years in service by the time it was decomissioned during our massive re-jigging of SFC alongside others such as the Northumberland and Valkyrie.

However, as one era closed to allow for a new, fresh rebuild of SFC, one unit remained; The USS Sovereign.

Spending most of it's time as a "Catch All" unit for any member who joined the ranks of the club without a local base of operations, the Sovereign has always been one of the most challenging and intriguing to operate; often times members aren't close enough to each other to hang out or meet up, and with varying locations from the Midlands to the North, Germany to Russia, even when South England and Wales were represented byt he Sovereign and Scotland by Tesla, it's core continued to be one of vast diversity with members coming together through electronic means; out first internet unit.

Connecting era's within SFC, the Sovereign is the only legacy unit left within the fleet; taking on it's long history and adding his name as the latest Commanding Officer is Piers Drinkall, former Second officer turned Captain.

Joining SFC back in 2014 at just 17 years old, Piers has always been a core part of the group holding several eclectic roles such as Armory Officer, Science Officer and Chief of Security before becoming Second Officer of the unit.

When disaster hit the ship and it was left without a Captain or First Officer back in July, Piers took command as Second Officer and was placed in command, officially, on Jul 13th in large part due to his efforts to maintain activity and morale within the group; quickly making sure to select a new command ccrew to help lead the Sovereign to greater things.

Aside from being a credit to the uniform in SFC, Piers is a credit to a whole different uniform in real life. Not too long after enlisting in SFC, Piers enlisted in the Armed Forces, signing up to the Army straight out of school at 18.

Gaining a huge range of experience and skills, Piers has been deployed all around the world including Germany, Canada, Cyprus and the Baltic States to name a few.

Currently assigned as an Armoured Infantry Corporal, Piers leads a team of six fellow soldiers where his role see's him focus on Army outreach and recruitment events; making him a key asset for the Forces and offering a lot of face to face experience in his role here in SFC at the Captains Table.





ALEXANDER RICHARDSON

One of the founding members of the USS Tesla and an incrtedibly talented graphic designer, Sandy is an invaluable part of his crew and a key adviser to his Unit CO.

A life-long Trek fan - as well as a fan of all things geeky - Sandy joined SFC in September 2017 alongside close friend Fraser Stevenson as part of a proposal to launch an all new Scottish unit within the club to represent not only a leading force in Scotland, but a calm and relaxing place where people could hang out and enjoy themselves free of the usual headaches of club life!

Unlike everyone else who participated in our old Academy program, Sandy did his exams in a unique way; in the DoFC's living room being fired questions and answering one by one in an afternoon of live trivia testing! (and passed with honours!).

Since then he's been an interal part of the group, helping to put together the building blocks of Tesla and providing the ship with it's own MSD graphic; a talent he specialises in through his hobby and commissioned work which has been used by fans and fan films for a number of years.

Sandy has also helped with logistics within the group at event stands and within transportation as well as being a vocal and supportive voice for the units presentation and overall theme.

Always there to lend a helping hand, Sandy is an invaluable memebrs of the team; a fact that we're proud to see him rewarded by as this September he was awarded a Special Commendation for Outstanding Physical, logistical and emotional support to fellow fleet members beyond the scope of his normal duties.



To find out more Sandy's work with LCARS style graphics and master systems designs, you can visit his personal site at;

lcarsgfx.wordpress.com

...and remember,, commissions are always open!.



Congratulations are due to the follwing members who've survived tthe provisional Cadett term of membership and been upgraded to full Officer status!

Kimberly English, USS Invictus
Paddy Ocallaghan, USS Tesla
Oliver Lewis, USS Churchill
Mark Deer, USS Sovereign
Louise Laws, USS Sovereign
Catherine Tait, USS Sovereign
Tracey Tait, USS Sovereign
Dave Spence, USS Sovereign
Alan Raw, USS Sovereign

Congrattulations Ensigns! If any one of you didn't recieve your Certificates, please contact Admin!



We'd also like to offer congratulations to Boyd Halliwell of the USS Sovereign & Alexander Richardson of the USS Tesla for being recommended to the Admiraltty Board for SFC Commendations!

SITUATION REPORT

ADMIN NEWS & UPDATES

VADM JAMES TYLER, DoFC

AS THE WORLD FALLS DOWN

Months after the world fell to a global pandemic, things aren't quite normal. And they likely won't be for some time to come. As we look ahead to whats being called "the new normal" we have to think about how it effects us, and where to go next....

It already feels like an eternity that we've been in lockdown. There may be easing restrictions, spikes in rising cases and a lot of nonsense surounding our Governments varying approach. But at the heart of it all, it's something thats not going away any time soon; and something that's hit a lot of people hard.

I'm someone who take spride in doing multiple things at once; I seem to thrive over stressing myself out to the point where I'm absolutely exhausted but can't resist the dozens of idas circling throug my head. Holding two positions within SFC, that should in theory be ideal for me. Both Comms and Admin come with a significant amount of stress and time and even with the benefits of merging them temporarily, it does feel like a full time job.

Over the past few months, however, my productivity's been fairly low. Personal and work projects are lagging behind. There are times when I've opened my Admin diary and realising how much I've got to catch up on, and on August 8th - the day I'd hoped to have as a deadline for Comms, I wasn't even half way done planning out the issue.

I know I'm not alone in struggling



with the currently weird world, nor the only person to have gone through the weird experiences lockdown life brings.

For me it's been a generally weird ride. And one that has, unfortunately negatively effected a lot of my workload. A lot's been delayed, pushed back and lagging behind. From the time it's taken for this issue to get put together, to the pause I've made in progressing our new members hub.

LOSS AND STRAIN

Back in Apirl, I made a private note on the Captains Table that I'd be on lighter duties and taking some time to myself while doing some SFC stuff in the background.

I actually felt a strong sense of guilt about it. Both Comms and Admin are such an integral part of SFC that I felt like, and in large part still do, that I was letting people down in lagging behind.

It wasn't until one person started making extra requests, putting on extra work and another had to outline why they should stop that I realised I might need more time than I thought.

A few weeks before lockdown happened, I took two of the kids to see my mother. They didn't know it at the time, but I was aware it'd be the last time they'd see her. After a short battle with cancer, she was told she was terminal early January and hospitalised a month later. I tried not to stop it effecting anything on my to do list, completing work on my phone while travelling.

On that last day we saw her, I'd promised to be there every week until the inevitable. Lockdown happened and it turned out to be a lie. Three weeks later I got the phone call, poured myself a very large glass of whiskey and generally felt miserable ever since.

I'd often credit my dad as the person who started my sci fi obsession. Which is true. But I'd always credit my mother for encouraging me in ways he didn't. As I scribbled down ideas for magnificent Starships, she'd look over them even if she didn't know what she was looking at. She'd read through my English homework and eventually help me get my first short story published when I was 15.

That support ran for years; through a bi-polar related breakdown, through getting into the wrestling world, where she'd often be in the front row cheering me on even when she knew I was the career baddie. And when I told her we wee having a costume wedding, she sighed, rolled her eyes and spent weeks excitedly making an Original Series uniform because she'd always wanted to be Uhura (though she prefered Chekov, being a Monkees fan).

Looking back now, it's funny thiking that at my age she was an office Administrator for her local church who'd run their magizine and sew costumes for any plays of performances. An odd parralel.

That was the first big hit for Lockdown. A good chunk of us within Q2 are extroverts who were suddenly cut off from friends, family and just going to Asda. Many others are introverts, like myself, who you'd think would be living in paradise. But being introverted by choice is one thing; being stuck indoors unable to even see people is another.

That's also a huge hit thats been universally felt. Not being able to see our friends or family. Not having someone randomly drop round to talk nonsense, or seeing my firstborn for months to

FLEET COMMUNICATIONS

Starfleet Command Quadrant 2 has several social media accounts to help distribute news,announcements and information throughout the fleet. You can follow our official channels at;

- Facebook: http://facebook.com/SFCQ2
- Twitter: http://twitter.com/SFC_Q2
- Instagram: http://instagram.com/SFCQ2
- Tumblr: http://sfcq2.tumblr.com

Registered members are welcome to join our private fleet wide social media platforms and Facebook groups.

Moreinformation on these groups can be found within the Membership hub at SFCQ2.com and in the Membership Handbook.

ensure containment. And then the more domestic issues.

For some, it's having to adjust from working from home. Or no longer working at all. For me, and not just me, it was trying to balance work life with suddenly never being alone; my wife is studying for a degree, which takes precidence over being an unpaid fake-Admiral, and with no school we'd be constantly around children without any other outlet than us; even going through the motions of home schooling while balancing a normal life schedule.

All of this stuff really takes a toll. I can only reall speak of my experiences and my strains of being trapped in that bubble; as well as the guilt of feeling as if those strains have effected my performance here in Q2.

But as time has gone on, it's been important for me to remember that SFC is supposed to be here for fun. For community. And I've been overwhelmed with the support from that community, from Stephen Lester being a shoulder to cry on, particularly for my wife in these trying times, to Fraz and Sandy from Tesla being magnificent people who not only escorted me to my mums house (masked up, of course!) to begin clearing, but helped what was a somewhat overwhelming task in a world in which my sisters and I can't even hug each other for support.

For many of us SFC can be that friendship and support. And it's one of the many things we've been cut off from; and I've seen and heard from other people who feel as if they can't or arent contributing enough while some are more reserved, some are struggling and some are just cut off from the geeky bubble of going to events and meeting up with people.

As a mental workaholic, I've really struggled to come to terms that with the pressure of our global situation, and the personal pressure cooker I've been in, that it's a lot harder to focus. A lot harder to be social. Even a lot harder to keep on top of little things we take for granted these days, like scrolling through Facebook and keeping on top of everyones updates. As someone who seems to have accidentally fallen into the routine of being "Full Time SFC", it's taken a long time to try and get back into a routine; and even as I write this, my heads not quite in the game.

And I'll say again; I'm not alone. We've all been sufffering through a lot of things in our own way and dealing with a new world with no clear light at the end of the tunnel.

NEVER ALONE

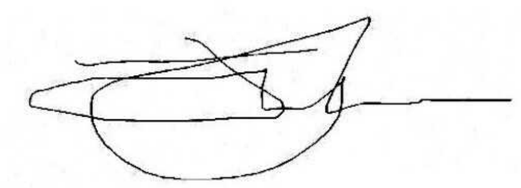
Thankfully SFC's internet hubs are still online and active, allowing people to keep up to date, reach out and of course just be silly and vent when needed. And that's been a bonus. Some have even began to meet up in small numbers according to their local social distancing rules, which has also been welcomed - and encouraged for those who need it.

I know some of us like to stay active. But right now, no one is holding it against you if you need or want to relax, sit back and need some space. Right now we're all going through a difficult time and a difficult transition; and your health and wellbeing should come before absolutely anything within SFC.

We always say the best way to get noticed or gain award or acclaim is to be active. However, if this is effecting people who have little to no choice but to deal with the day to day, it's going to be even harder to find a reason to jump in when things are in such a lull on a national (or even international) scale.

If you need us, reach out. Whether that be a shipmate, a CO, or anyone here at HQ. We'll always be here for you in any way we can be.

If you need to sit back, relax, and just take care of yourself; please remember that real life always comes before all else. Always remember to look after yourself, take care of yourself and stay as healthy and happy as can be in these maddening times.



VADM JAMES TYLER
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
(AND TEMPADMIN)

Director of Communications Does What?

Serving on the Admiralty Board, the Director of Comms is responsible for disseminating information within the organisation, the DoFC is responsible for ensuring that members are aware and informed of fleet matters and supported projects as well as managing and editing official communication tools, Comms Quarterly and sharing admin duties.

email: comms@starfleet-command.co.uk | **SFC**Q2 username:revstjames

Contact for:

- Fleet Communications
- Fleet Notices & Alerts
- Comms Quarterly
- Site & Tech Support
- Media Enquiries

UNIT OPERATIONS

QUADRANT 2 OPERATIONAL UPDATES

In spite of offline eventts being on hold nationwide, and meet ups still encouraged to be delayed on a temporary basis, the fleets remained active and alert; finding ways to connect within the restrictions sweeping through the nations.

Keeping the fleet up to date, we've collected a quick roundup of highlights from each corner of Quadrant 2

After some delay, the Admirals finally had the time to get together for their long awaited "Ask the Admirals" Q&A within Starbase Europa.

Expecting a grilling, we had a change to share our philosophy and how we see Q2, why some rules are in place, how to advance for those who are ambitious and what we hope going forward.

The chat is still available on the Europa facebook group and a transcript is expected for the members are of the site soon.

With us ensuring all members of Q2 feel they can express themselves and ask questions, a further Q&A may occur again in the future if theres interest!

GROUP FUN

We may not be able to meet socially as we had in the past, however many have found new ways to connect with each other throughout the pandemic restrictions.

On board the fleet flagship, the crew of the Tesla have been keeping busy with some taking part in regular games nights and others with some group chats. With events being off he table for the moment, and them being core to Tesla's operation, it's been more difficult to meet and properly welcome recent new members on board.

Through group chats the team have been able to introduce crew who haven't yet had a chance to meet each other, and a chance to have some light hearted fun from the comfort of their own phones!

Other units have followed similar routines, with one highlight being the USS Churchill hosting virtual pub quizzes by utilising their Facebook Group room functions.

Captain Lester is aiming to bring more scope to the quizzes with seperate events on the Europa group, which is worth keeping an eye on! (He notes the answer is often "Bob").

UNIT PROJECTS

Keeping busy with most of us spending more time at home, we've seen several group projects take flight.

On board the Sovereign, Captain Drinkall has began the Command Training Program; a group activity where ambitious members who either look forward to taking their own unit one day, or just learn and contribute more, engage witht he senior staff (and special guests!) to learn and discuss the unit and fleet operations in both understanding and improving.

Using a mix of fleet history and real world experience, the unit's group project began as a mirror of Burnham's oversight of Tilly's training in Discovery and has since become an educational and insightful endeavour!

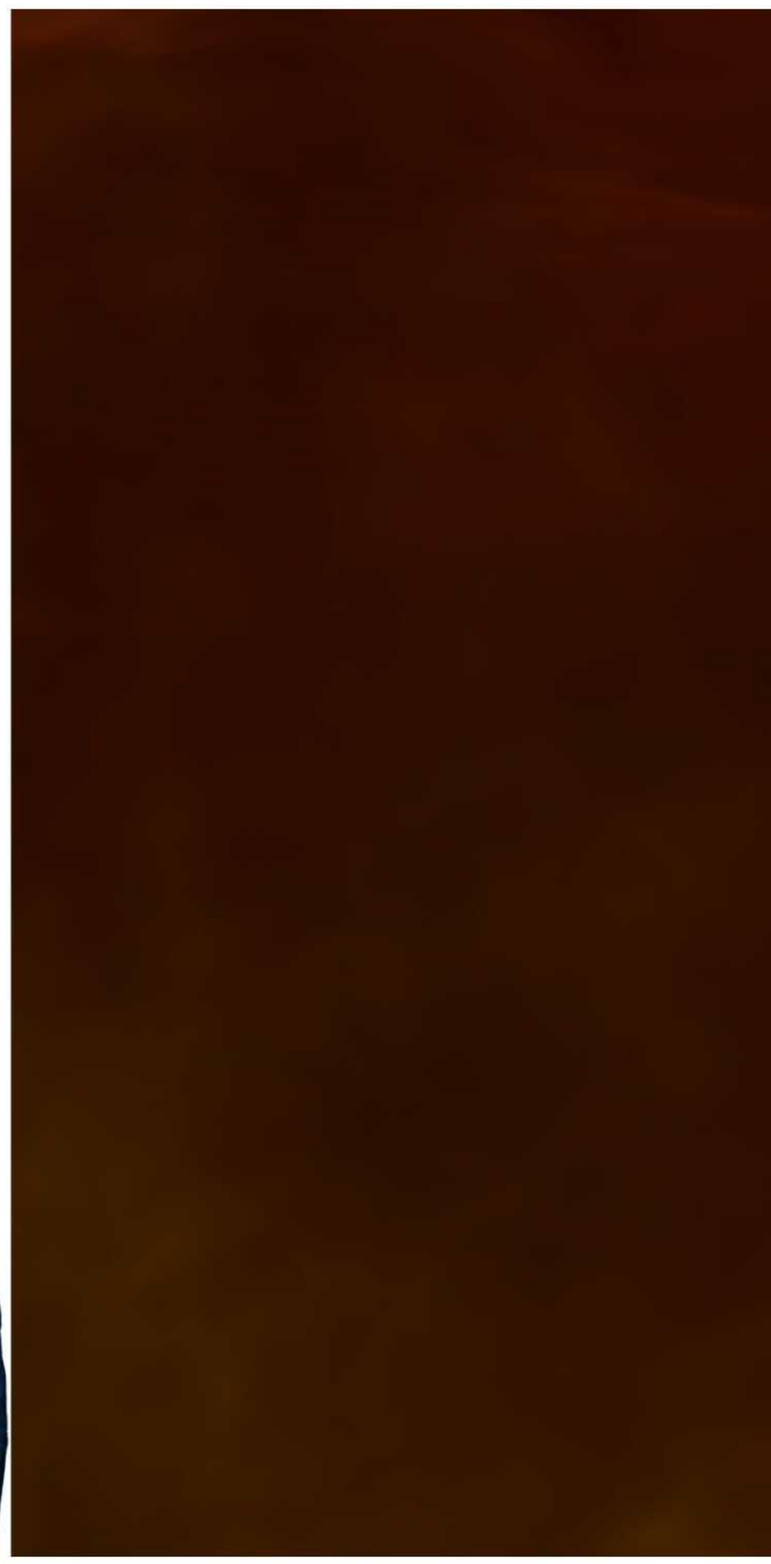
On board Invictus, the group have launched their own more specific newsletter to help strengthen the ships identity. The new copy of Download, specifically for members of the unit, has fast became a great point of knowledge and group effort from all!

ALWAYS GOING FORWARD...

As always it's been a rewarding experience seeing crews pull together in trying times, offering support, distractions and more to keep everyone engaged.

Over the coming weeks, as we look ahead to the potential





of further restrictions and cancelled events nationwide, we'll be aiming to bring more distractions to Europa including a few games, competitions and info-dumps for all to take part in and enjoy.

While we're aware and appreciate that not everyone is in top spirits right now, those within Europa and your Unit's will always be there to help and support; and we look forward to seeing more fun in the coming months! ■





CHANGE OF COMMAND

PIERS DRINKALL | USS SOVEREIGN

Well, what an interesting few months it has been!

Firstly, can I take the time to congratulate Daniel Adams and Karl Drinkall on their recent appointments as XO and Second Officer. So far, they have been invaluable in helping me to re-organise the ship and provide a better experience for all SFC members.

In recognition of the great work they have put in during this short time, both are hereby promoted to the rank of full Lieutenant, with all rights and privileges of that rank.

The past few months have been a period of change for the Sovereign. The ship has had a new CO, command staff and no less than 6 new senior staff members! It has been a complete rework from the ground up. We have expanded to 7 departments, with Security and tactical splitting to be independent and the new Communications division stepping up, led by Lt. Drinkall.

Email only members have been identified and given new ways to communicate and take part, and the first of a long season of online events and items has started with a bang with the hugely successful “Meet the CO”.

Coming up soon we have the “Meet the staff” events, with each department head having their chance to introduce and build relationships with the crew. New T-shirts and patches are also on the short-term horizon!

There is a phrase I like to use on the SOV called “Chiefs in charge”. This is a US Navy saying which means every leader, no matter who or how senior, is responsible for something. I have started to give a lot of basic direction to the department heads, with room for them to expand and try their own methods in managing their departments. I am happy to say this seems to be working great! Each department now has a FB chat, regular updates are published on the page by various officers and we are as busy as a real ship! This is all part of giving members the best SFC experience we can.

Looking long term, its unlikely that we will be able to organize or attend any meaningful events this year. With current government advice being that the COVID crisis may worsen during the winter months, it is imperative the SOV keeps all members safe and unfortunately the best way we can do that is to stay away from each other!

But rest assured, a full online schedule for the year is in the works to give us all something to look forward to.

As always, my door is forever open to anyone who needs me! ■

After an involved selection process, Piers Drinkall took command of the Sovereign earlier this year; Sovereign crew can reach him at sovereign@sfcq2.com



REPORTING FOR DUTY

ALONE TOGETHER

When the war ended and Cardassia was free, Garak stayed behind and said his goodbyes to his dearest Julian. On screen the friendship ended with sadness. In real life, Alexander Siddig and Andrew Robinson have continued beyond their time in Star Trek and more recently delivered some lockdown entertainment for fans worldwide.

Starting off on the popular Zoom video conferencing software, Siddig joined the fun many were having of hosting nights to reach out and speak directly to fans.

A bi-weekly session, the Sid City Social Club invited fans to talk Trek - and many other topics on Siddig's YouTube channel. Though his virtual chinwags and Q&A sessions were just the beginning of the fun. Soon enough the Sid City channel was moving on to release more episodes of Deep Space Nine. Well, kind of....

Twenty five years after Garak and Bashir say their goodbyes, they're reunited again. A virus has been ravaging Cardassia which dulls the mind and senses of whoever catches it. With no way to stop it, Garak reaches out to Bashir for help...

Of course this wasn't a real episode of DS9, but much like the writers room segment on the DS9 documentary, a bit of fantasy story telling.

Using a script from fan fiction writers Matt Campbell, Siddig used his YouTube Channel and Zoom to reunited with Andrew Robinson and several other former co-stars to offer a live table read of the story just for a bit of light hearted fun for Trekkies stuck at home through Lockdown.

Taking part over several episodes, Alone Together featured not only a return of Garak and Bashir, but included Cirroc Lofton returning as Jake Sisko, Armin Shimmerman as Quark and Nana Visitor returning to the role of Kira.

The Four Part series is available to watch on the Sid City YouTube Channel. It's maybe not the most immersive re-imagining with the usual conference call shenanigans and no make up or uniform (minus some teeth for the Ferengi!) but it's a lot of fun.

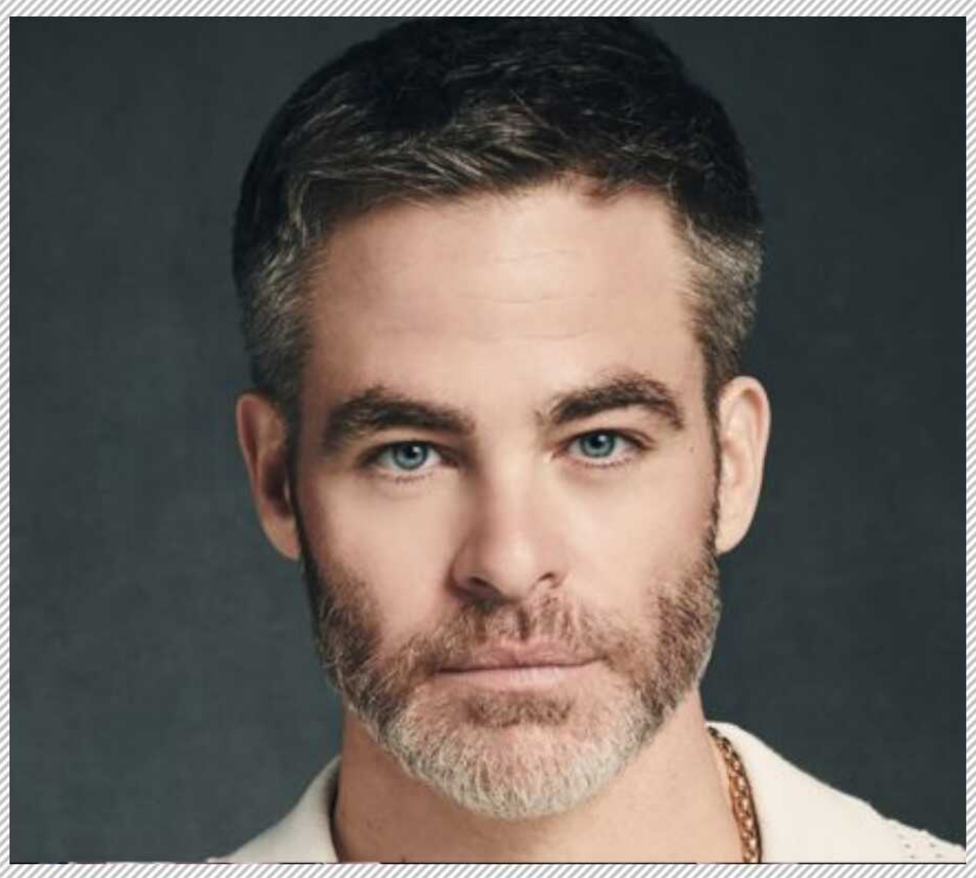
And even if it's not for you, there's still plenty oppertunity to have a chat with Siddig himself! ■



SHATNER VERSUS SPACE FORCE

As the United States Space Force program continues it's development from a department to full military branch, there are some tough decisions to be made and a lot of workk to be done. And of course, there's relatively minor things too.

Several US officials have made the petition to ditch the plan to use Air Force ranks and instead opt for the Naval structure. And Shatners on board, supporting it through an op-ed in Military Times hoping to help persuade the new branch to let it's leading men become Captains, just like him. ■



ALL THE OLD KNIVES

Based on the book of the same name, All the Old Knives is a story of a former couple who come together and remember a disaster that occured when they worked for the CIA. The spy thriller adaption has been picked up by Amazon and will co star Star Trek's Chrine Pine alongside Thandie Newton.

Pine is also set to star as iconic US news presenter Walter Cronkite in Newsflash, based on the news report Cronkite had to issue during the Kennedy assassination. Both productions are on hold and are set to film as soon as allowed. ■



ISSACS JOINS CAST

He may not be wearing the classic Starfleet Blues, or the Terran gold armour, but Jason Isaacs is heading back into the world of sci fi as he joins the cast line up for Australian action movie Rainfall.

Written and Directed by Luke Sparks, Rainfall is a sequel to the 2018 movie Occupation which focuses on a small town fighting back against aliens who are determined to wipe out humanity. As they often do!

Based in a world wherre the Aliens have won and the normal every day people are the new front line defence, the sequel is heading back to the ground warfare with Isaacs as a new character joining some of the original cast.

Already filmed it's all in the hands of post production with it's initial release date potentially pushed back to next year.

The original film is streaming now on Netflix.

If thats now enough Lorca for you, Isaacs - who continues to tease that his time with Trek might not be over, as he'd return for a logical story - the former Slytherin has already had a packed year having been The Judge on Castlevania, taken part in shorts including the Line of Duty Comic Relef episode and of course, took on the role of Dick Dasterdly in animated film Scoob.

Upcoming projects include World War 2 drama Operation Mincemeat, with Colin Firth and Kelly MacDonald; alongside Clara McGregor and Lesley Manville in Everything I Ever Wanted To Tell My Daughter About Men; And in a film about a kid seeking advice from an imaginary pigeon, Dr Birds Advice For Sad Poets among several other projects.

Though one of the most intriguing is starring with Humans and Merlin star Colin Morgan in The Dead Spit of Kelly, a series focusing on a taxidermist who kills his boss and wears his skin.

Of course, for all the work he's doing we still just want him back for Prime Lorca! ■

COMMS SUBMISSIONS

One of the most frequent questions we have regarding Comms is how to take part. With rising interest often comes rising. We're keen to get everyone involved from all over the fleet so this issue we're ensuring everyone knows how to get involved, what our guidelines are and what to expect when submitting or pitching an idea.

We're often asked what it is we look for with Comms. The answer is... almost anything! Of our regular intake, we're looking for...

CONTINUING MISSION

Our primary focus is, unsurprisingly, Trek. We're looking for your experience, your views and your insight into any aspect that may have been introduced or explored through the years; or something that has inspired you.

This includes exploring themes, character spotlights, retro reviews or even real world connected events such as space exploration of science developments. These could be short articles, personal essays or, in case you hadn't noticed, we do like lists!

We're also open to any creative and expressive ideas you may have!

GOING BEYOND

Although this is a Star Trek club environment, Comms does take note and feature broader interests throughout our members base from all around the geeky world

This includes a diverse range of subjets from sci fi, to comic book movies and even books and comics that members have enjoyed. If you have a subject in mind you think other members would be interested in, we want to hear it!

IN REVIEW

While our primary focus is always Star Trek and it's related products, we do accept reviews on other franchises that fits our sci fi interests. Whether Trek or otherwise, we're not always looking for a blow-by-blow analasys of each scene, but general thoughts about the product, what you enjoyed or disliked as well as highlights and quick wrap up.

We accept reviews on television, movies, games and print. Star Trek product reviews will always recive priority, however we do also accept reviews from the wider sci fi market that would appeal to our Trek fandom.

TAKE THE CONN

Comms features several regular features that we'd like to expand upon and tofen experiment with.

2019's line up includes the Features; Fleets Favourite Films, Bunch of Fives, For the Uniform, STO 101 and more.

We are always open to new ideas with fresh perspectives!

If you'd like to begin a new series of features please submit the theme, expected length how many issues you'd plan on writing for and what to expect next as a note within your submission.

AWAY TEAM

More and more events are happening across the UK and we want to hear about them! With the convention market growing substantially from Kent to Inverness, we want to hear all about events and conventions attended by members. Where did you go? What did you do? What did you see? Was this a group event or were you flying Conventions are the core event of clubs like ours and we want to highlight as many as possible and share your experiences and bring more SFC members together across the country!

If you have pictures available please also include a name/photographer to credit as well as a brief description of the picture where possible.

FLEET ALERT

Major announcements and news from units can be submitted to our Fleet Alert section. This can include progress or internal event reports, promotions and commendations, assignments, away missions or any unit-specific matters. Any news from a unit must either be submitted or approved entirely by a units commanding officer or acting CO,

THE IMPORTANT BIT

Every feature submitted to Comms must be between 500 and 2,400 words in length and must be wholly original. We recommend submitting a quick paragraph of an idea first, just to get the thumbs up before wearing out your fingers!

Each submission should have been checked for spelling and grammer, however there's no strict rule on how to conduct your writing style.

All works or pitches should be submitted to SFC's Media account via the MEmbership Hub Submission form or at ***media@sfcq2.com***.

For more help or information, full guidelines and advice is available in the Members Hub under the 'Accounts' section.

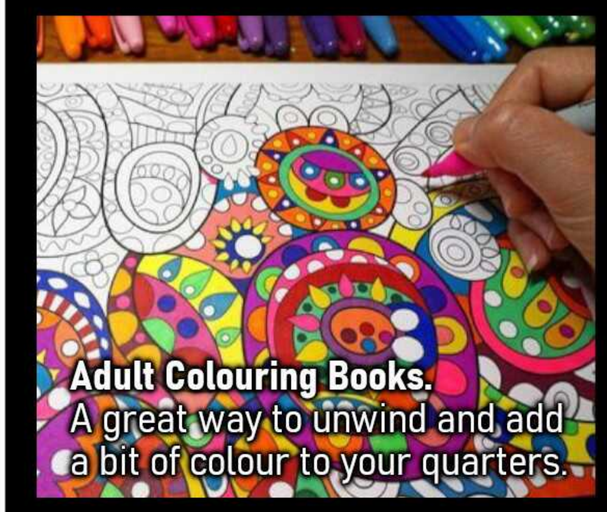


COMMS ARCHIVES

If you're ever in doubt about what we'd accept, or just want to look back at past isssues, all previous issues since 2016 are available for all members to donwload at any time.
Our Comms Archive is available to any logged in member at SFCQ2.com/Hub with the latest issue always available by selectiong "Comms" on the menu tab.

LESTERS **LIST**

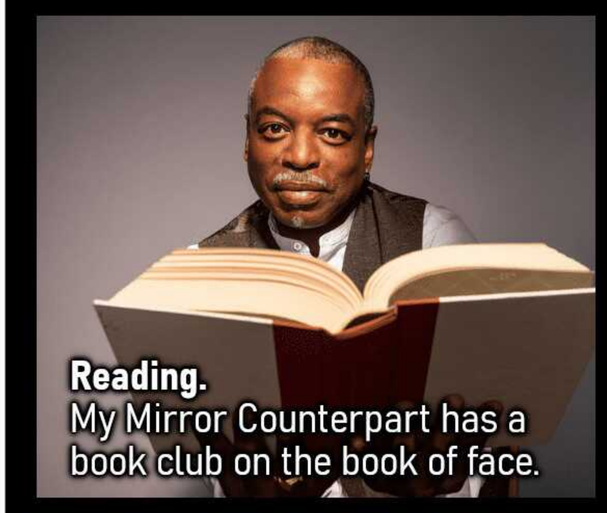
GETTING BORED OF LIFE IN LOCKDOWN? THE CHURCHILL'S CAPTAIN HAS A FEW IDEAS TO HELP TURN FRUSTRATION TO PRODUCTIVITY WITH TEN THINGS TO DO WHILE STUCK INDOORS!



Adult Colouring Books.
A great way to unwind and add a bit of colour to your quarters.



Baking.
How far could you go in The Great Starfleet Bake Off?



Reading.
My Mirror Counterpart has a book club on the book of face.



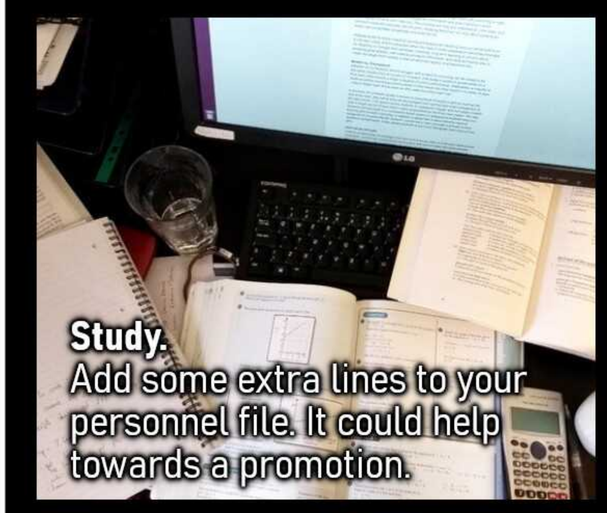
Gardening.
Keiko, Keiko, how does the arboretum grow?



Quiz Nights.
Could you be the next Quiz Master or Quiz Champion?



Music.
When was the last time you updated your computer files?



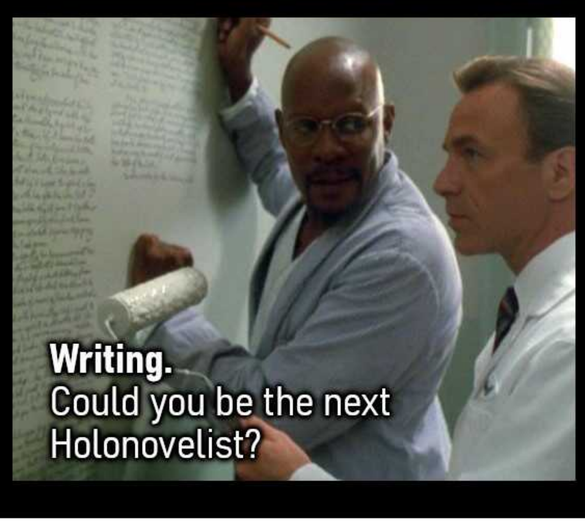
Study.
Add some extra lines to your personnel file. It could help towards a promotion.



Gaming.
A great way to sharpen your skills.



Films.
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SFCQ2
TOMORROW IS YESTERDAY
SEPT 2020

"One impossible thing at a time..."

Supported by members and happy helpers outwith the fleet, Comms would like to offer thanks to all who contributed their time and efforts to the TOMORROW IS YESTERDAY issue for this season.

CJ | *Holodeck & Comics*
Focusing primarily on the Holodeck gaming section and recently expanding to On Screen , CJ is a combination of two people contributing as a team.

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Ms B | *Library*
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SPECIAL FEATURE

A FISTFUL OF...

TIME TRAVEL

A FISTFUL OF...
TIME TRAVEL

This year we'll see the crew of Discovery redefine their mission as they become stranded in the far future. A unique pitch for the shows new format, but time travel has always been a core staple of sci fi and the Star Trek Universe.

From Ferengi travelling back in time only to become the Roswell Aliens, to Captain Kirk hosting a 20th century pilot on the Enterprise to Seven of Nine being pulled forward to help correct the timeline - as well as all the shananigans Archer got himself involved with! - time travel can be seen in every era of the Trek worlds.

In our latest Fistful Of... we're taking a look at some of the best times we've dealt with, well, time as our heroes have become displayed through the continuum, thrown to their past and visited their distant futures.



ALL GOOD THINGS
TNG Season 7,, Episode 25/26

Starting the list on a high is The Next Generations final episode, closing the series in style in an era-jumping episode that questioned the possibilities of humanities exploration through the stars and breaking limitations our thinking.

Jumping through three era's, Captain Picard finds himself being drawn to both his future and his past while trying to balance those lifetimes in the present. In the future he's an old man, living alone on his family vineyard as he suffers the effects of a degenerative disease that makes everyone doubt him when he tries to explain whats happening. In the past, he's just taken command of the Enterprise before the Farpoint mission and trying not to expose all he knows about his shipmates future.

In all era's there's a mystery, a phenomenon that's moving backwards in time and to perfectly round off the series, it all ends exactly where it began; with Q. In Encounter at Farpoint, the shows first episode, he puts humanity on trial for their arrogance, disbelieving they're as ready for exploring strange new worlds. In All Good Things we learn that trial never ended and he's thrown them a mystery to test them and how their minds can expand to the infinite possibilities of the universe.

Struggling through all era's at first, the phenomenon in the present (2370) is smaller than it is in the past (2364) where in the future, there's initially no sign of it. But thanks to Q taking him back to Earth before humanity existed, Picard knows that it will grow in reverse of linear time and disrupt evolution; meaning humans won't exist. Investigating through the three era's they discover that their future selves create the anti-time disruption in 2395. Using the skill of the crew in three time zones, they have to find a way to eliminate the anomaly and stop it wiping out humanity's chance of ever existing.

Initially the episode was devised as one ▶

in which Q had gone mad, with his senility causing the universe to undo itself. Pitched by Ron Moore, the episode was pushed in another direction with Michael Pillar suggesting the multiple-timeline events leading to Moore co-writing the finale with Brannon Braga whilst the duo also co-wrote the planned movie debut.

While they spent a year agonising over the film script, battling the need of every studio demand, the duo hammered out the first draft of All Good Things in a matter of days with only a few tweaks needed to finalise the piece.

Going back to the first episode allowed the crew to show their starting point alongside the finish line for the series, and threw in some nostalgic elements such as Chief O'Brien and Tasha Yar returning, alongside Counsellor Troi's "Cheerleader and go-go boots" uniform. In the future, we see a world beyond the Enterprise where Riker, now an Admiral, commands the Enterprise as his flagship; Crusher is Captain of a medical aid ship and Picards ex wife; Geordie's happily retired while Worf is working with the Klingon Empire. And Data's a professor in England surrounded by cats because why not.

There's quite a lot of layers going on on the episode., In the present the crew have bonded and merged and have become he embodiment of seven seasons of TV viewing. Those present in the pre-Farpoint mission however, don't know nor trust their new Captain who is currently chasing Q's appearance and acting – to their eyes – irrationally. While in the future no one trusts Picard because of his illness, but bend over backwards to indulge their old Captain; even if just to humour him.

Overall the episode is a bit of a hybrid of time travel, alternate realities and outright illusion. But it highlights the journey and bonding the crew have faced over the years and what could happen to them if they let their kinship become ruptured through pettiness.

It might have some dodgy science and one of the bigges tplot holes in TNG history (how can future Picard return to see the anomaly forming if it's growth reversed in time?) but it ovvers both a thoughtful and nostalgic ending to the Next Generation era and lets Q show his strengths as a guide more than an antagonist, hinting that all this time he's been pushing for humanity to realise it's potential.



PAST TENSE

DS9 Season 3, Episodes 11/12

As the crew of DS9 take the Defiant to Earth to report to Starfleet Command, Sisko, Bashir and Dax beam planet-side. But Starfleet reports they never arrived. Instead of arriving safe and sound at headquarters, a problem with the transporter sends them back to 2024; leaving them stranded in their troublesome history...

Past Tense is one of those episodes that hits a little too close to home. Now more than ever. While Dax is found by a higher class member of society and able to lie her way into making him believe she is too, Bashir and ▷







Sisko end up in a Sanctuary District; a place where the government hides the homeless, poor and generally unwanted elements of society. In the Trek timeline, 2024 was the year that those forced into these districts, hidden away in a their “poor camp” would rebel against the system in a series of mass riots led by Gabriel Bell.

As is the way of things, their presence helps Bell get killed, forcing Sisko to try and correct the timeline by taking on his identity and ensuring that history remains intact and that the key socialist uprising still happens and lays some more seeds for the idealistic future we all still hope for.

When it was produced in 1995 the producers maybe didn't comprehend how close to reality this show was. In 2020 - four years before the fictional show – the US has seen riots lasting for months due to the unjust killing of minorities which has led to worldwide protests against injustice and police brutality. Thats not the only backlash we've seen against society: within the UK alone we've seen a rising media backlash against those in need, gained a more corporate-centric vision where economy overrides public health and a societal shift that has caused a tension where even we can see a Gabriel Bell raising the local Job Centre.

More than the parallels with modern society, Ira Behr noted that it was accidentally relevant in 1995 as well. That was the year California had began trying to “hide” the homeless. Not help them, but shuffle them away out of sight to make the city of Los Angeles look nicer. Out of sight, out of mind.

The entire two parter showcases a world where empathy is lost and an image of perfection, or rather perceived perfection, is maintained by shuffling away the undesirables and those down on their luck into private districts they can't leave. Like the DWP shuffling everyone who lost their jobs into the same block of flats.

More than any other time travel episode, Past Tense is a reminder of the worst part of humanity. It highlights how those below an acceptable standard, a vision, can be treated and how easy it is to hide from the ideal of helping each other when in need.

The entire episode comes down to a hostage situation, with 2024 characters coming round to Sisko – posing as Bell's – vision of standing their ground and finding a way to reach out to the world. To tell their story. Much like the real world, we have people in dire straights telling their stories, We have people dying of hunger because they were cut off from benefits. We have people who can't walk cut off from help as there's intentionally no lift in the building they're being interviewed at. We have people openly speaking out over the “wrong” coloured people being allowed over the border, and prolific authors comparing transgendered people to sex offenders.

Living in the real modern world, it's not hard to see the dystopian future DS9 presented. It's a terrifying thought that this show was a warning on what could have been, yet twenty five years later it hasn't warned us at all; the world feels like it's progressively getting worse and the class divides widened through manipulating a massive lack of empathy.

There are many causes this episode can speak to. But at it's heart, it offers hope that no matter how bad it gets, we can fight for a better future. For the era of Gabriel Bell, that fight started in 2024. For us, it may already have started. ▶

HONORABLE MENTION
TRIALS AND TRIBBLEATIONS
DS9 Season 5 Episode 6

There's no way of mentioning time travel and Deep Space Nine without mentioning Trials and Tribbleations.

A 30th anniversary special, the crew of DS9 are hurtled back in time as former Klingon Spy Arne Darvin uses the Bajoran Orb of Time to go back to the moment Captain Kirk and Dr McCoy outed him and plans to take his revenge!

It's silly, it's fun and it's layered with nostalgia and impressive visuals; blending the original crew with DS9 cast members from Kirk and Spock in the foreground of Sisko and Dax hiding, to Kirk dressing down Chief O'Brien after a bar room brawl.

But! We gushed about it a couple of issues back, so we've taken it off the list as it'd just win the best of everything!



YEAR OF HELL

Voyager Season 4, Episodes 8/9

Once upon a time, a man learned how to change the past to create a better future. That future eliminated the one thing dearest to him. His wife.

This two parter is a bit of a cheat. The show doesn't deal directly with time travel, but instead on Krenim scientist Annorax changing the timeline to try and restore his world to it's former glory by erasing people, places and whole worlds from the timeline to try and find that one butterfly effect moment that could undo his past mistakes.

Annorax was an intriguing character to focus on. A man who had an idea and created an incredible invention, but couldn't live with the consequences of his early mistakes in using it. In his first trial he neglected to see every piece of the puzzle he was eliminating, which included a species finding a cure for a plague on his own world.

Though none of those mistakes were as devastating to him as accidentally causing the erasure of the colony his wife was from; turning his mission to restore the Krenim back to being a huge military power, to a personal fight against the winds of time to bring back his wife. As Chakotay and Paris are stuck on board his ship, protected from the changes they wee making, they allowed us to see both sides of him. Paris seeing the villain, Chakotay empathising with his pain and wanting to help Annorax as much as he wanted to restore his own timeline and get back home.

As the timelines shifted, Voyager was right in the middle of it all. Each change causing more damage to the ship. At first they met a small, underpowered scout. One timeline shift later they were against a warship. That rising threat would only escalate, seeing Voyager battered and bruised, torn apart as they got caught in the middle of the ever changing warring factions.

Following this ship for a year, the two-parter became one of the best "What If?" stories in Star Trek. One of Voyagers biggest, and most justified, criticism was that aside from a few thrown in phrases, the threat of being stranded and cut off from Starfleet seemed irrelevant. The ship was always fixed from any damage in the next episode. Replicators kept giving them food. Fuel was always found when needed. And no matter how many times a shuttle was destroyed, a new one would pop up. And just how many torpedoes did Voyager have anyway?

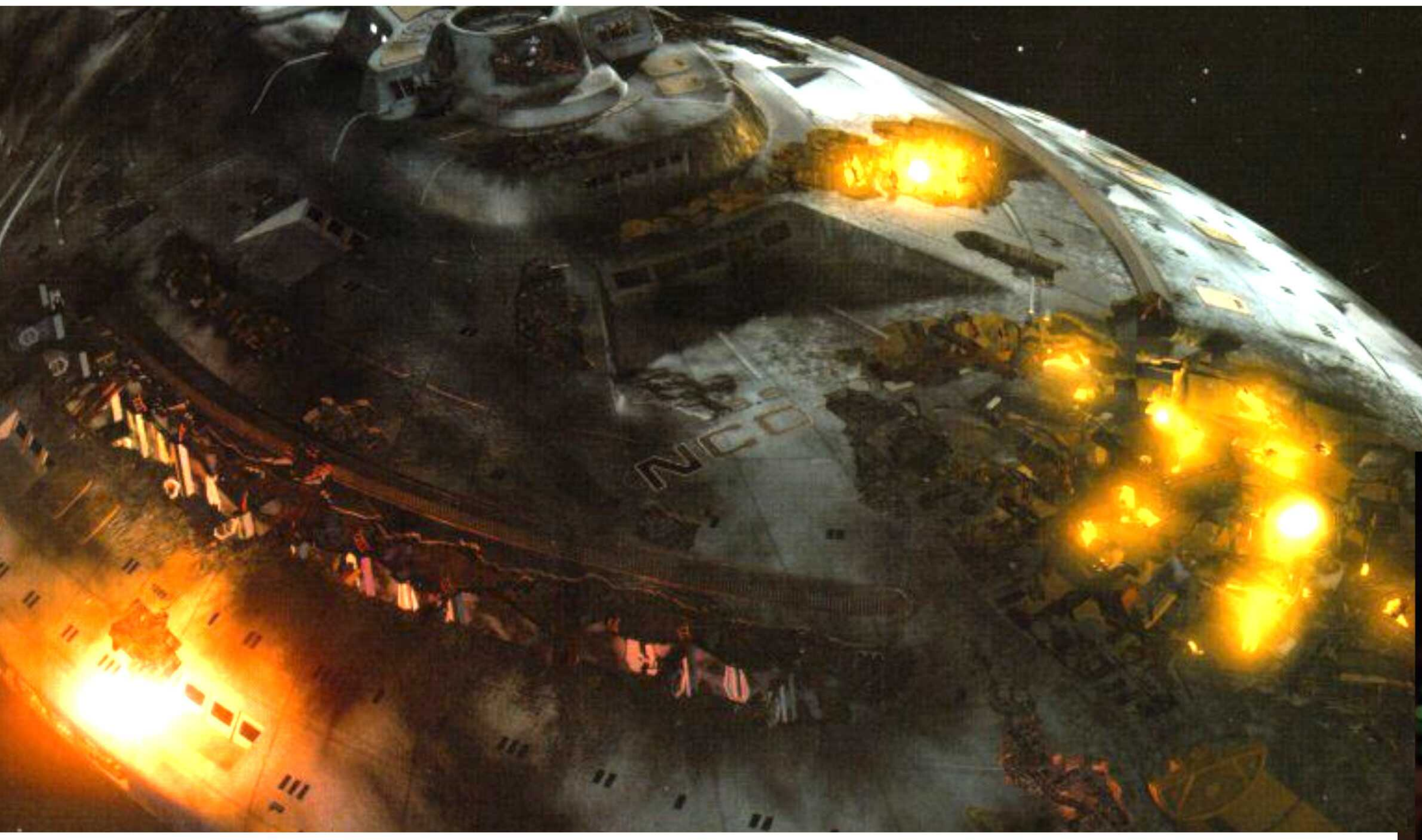
A lot of dramatic options within the shows premise were binned for familiarity. The word "ration" was the only tie to the base concept with replicator and holodeck time rationed between crewmembers despite food never running out and the holodeck probably needing some kind of rota'd booking system anyway. In a logical world Voyager would be suffering constant low morale, supply issues.... without a starbase or a chance for routine maintenance they'd probably have to put duct tape on the hull to keep it together.

But no matter what happened tot he ship in the series, it was always shiny and chrome in the next episode. And thats true of Year of Hell, admittedly, as in the end Voyager resets the timeline by doing a kamikaze run into Annorax's ship and everything's back to normal in the last few minutes.

But until then the episode focuses on what the show could ▷

To ensure Voyager looked completely wrecked while not actually destrying the sets, the production team placed plastic coating over consoles and set pieces with charred and ruined artwork over the top to ensure the look was achieved without any long term damage.





Aside from being Star Trek's biggest "what if" episode, it was also the last Star Trek show to feature actor Kurtwood Smith.

Best known for his roles in That 70s Show and Robocop, Smith would first enter the Trek world as the Federation President in The Undiscovered Country and later in DS9's "Things Past" as Odo's predecessor Thrax.

Year of Hell was his first Trek appearance without sharing a scene with Rene Auberjonois.



have been at it's most extreme, with Voyager taking attack after attack. Crew abandoning ship for their own safety. Slowly we see some incredibly CGI work where the ships taken apart piece by piece, permanent fires and tears in the hull making most of it uninhabitable. And the remaining senior staff were torn apart with it between Tuvok losing his sight with Neelix putting on a uniform to be his assistant, and Janeway going all John McClane as she feels the pressure of the ever worsening situation, suffering stress and running into fires to help fix the breaking down ship.

There were some brilliant alternate takes to what Voyager would have been under proper stress. Neelix being one of the best in that bunch as he drops his apron for a Starfleet uniform and becomes Tuvok's sight and right hand man; acting as both assistant, physical security officer and as a sort of unnoficial carer when he needed him.

Seeing Janeway really struggle, hich was touched on briefly at other times, was also a great touch to show far much she'd crack under the pressure and how far she'd fight back with her back up against the ropes. There was a lot to explore, and a lot that a modern season of television could have really played with.

For those who felt Voyager could be more than just another Next Generation or run of the mill series, Year of Hell is both a delight in seeing how things could have worked out, and an eternal frustration that they never had a chance to go down that route. Even if just for one season, which would have been a foregone conclusion in the modern storytelling world.

Even with that frustration of "reset button" writing in the last few minutes, that glimpse into their mission turning into a living hell made it a magnificent peek at what could have been, bolstered by the empathetic performance of guest actor Kuretwood Smith as Annorax and the slow descent into losing her grip on her professionalism from Kate Mulgrew as a tortured Janeway.

Thought he best moment was a simple one. Once realising that they can destroy Annorax's ship with a suicide run, Janeway stays behind to pilot Voyager to it's end; and as the crew leaves, Tuvok refuses to let his old friend sacrifice herself.

"As illogical as this might sound, I feel as close to Voyager as I do to any other member of my crew." Janeway tells him, "It's carried us, Tuvok - even nurtured us. And right now, it needs one of us."

In a perfect world, he would have stayed by her side. But that wouldn't have worked for the dramatic angle or Janeway sitting in the chair alone piloting her ship to it's death.

But for an episode that saw the crew suffer, that raised many questions on altering time and the personal effects it had on Annorax and Chakotay – it was one of those moments that took Voyager to another level and transcended it's need to be just another continuing mission.

Of course, the frustration of it only being a two-parter will always be raised and episodes like this is why the "reset button" argument in Voyager often pops up.

On the positive side, TNG and DS9 writer was on the fans side on that front. Briefly spending some time on Voyager after DS9's finale - writing just one episode solo, and co-writing another - and vented all those frustrations into a pitch for a reboot of Battlestar Galactica; which in turn has inspired other sci fi productions to help make sure those reset buttons are a lot harder to push! ▶

FEATURE | A FISTFUL OF...



LITTTLE GREEN MEN
DS9 Season 4 Episode 8
While taking Nog to Starfleet Academy on Earth, Quark's shuttle malfunctions and crashes in Roswell, New Mexico, in the year 1947.



ASSIGNMENTTT: EARTH
TOS Season 2 Episode 26
Backtracking through time to discover why the earth narrowly escaped disaster in 1968, Kirk makes the acquaintance of Mister Seven and comes down to earth with a vengeance.



ENDGAME
Voyager Season 7 Episodes 25/26
A time traveller forces Captain Janeway into a deadly showdown with her nemesis, the Borg Queen, and a romance ignites during Voyager's peril.





TAPESTRY

TNG Season 6, Episode 15

I won't lie, this is another bending of the rules. Tapestry is a time travel story with a caveat in the sense that Q, once again, interferes and offers an illusion that pulls at the threads of Picards life by allowing him the chance to go back in time and relive a defining experience so he can change his future.

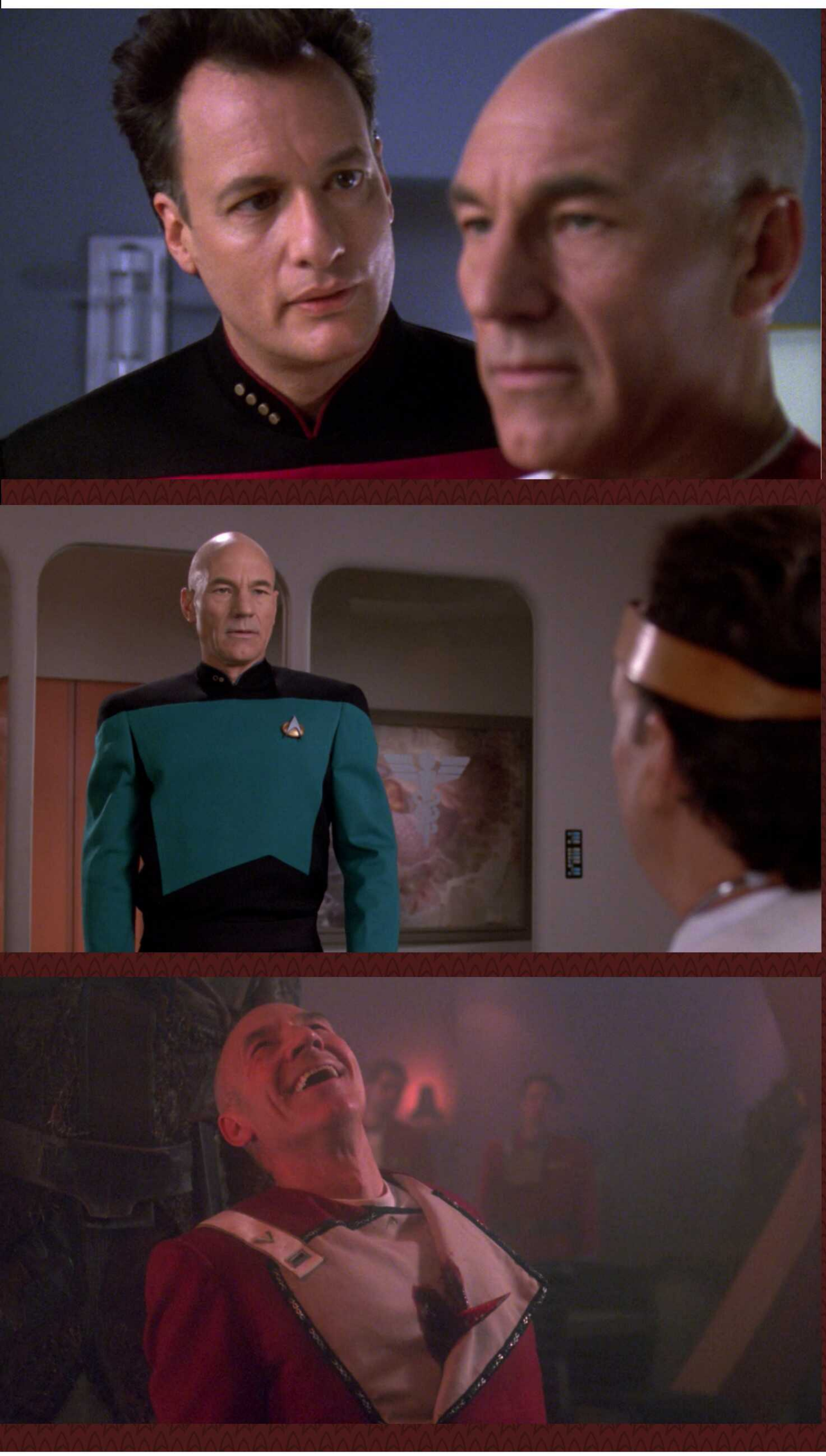
In the present world of 2369, the good Captain has an accident. After getting jumped outside a conference, he takes a blast in the chest causing his mechanical heart to malfunction and kill him. As he takes his last breath,, he wakes up in a construct of the Afterlife where he's met by Q. Posing as God, Q explains that if he didn't need a heart replacement in his youth, he may still be alive.

Showing him a recreation of how his organic heart was lost, being stabbed through the chest in a bar fight with a Nausican as a freshly minted Ensign, Q offers Picard the chance to go back to his youth and correct his youthfully arrogant mistakes.

Revisiting those early days as an officer waiting for his assignment, Picard was a far cry from the Captain we'd got to know; multiple romantic interests, hanging out with his buddies playing dom-jot and, apparently, getting in the face of Nausicans. Exploring the early life of Picard was an interesting touch from failed romantic interests to long long friends.

Though with Q watching over, when it came down to the time he battled a Nausican, this time Picard made sure that things changed. After his friend Corey lost a game of dom-jot to the Nausicans hanging around the bar, and realised they were cheating, he returned to show them up by rigging the table in his favour. Picard tries to discourage him as thats what started the fight, alas, Corey goes ahead with it anyway.

At the flashpoint of the plan going wrong, Picard ensures the fight is avoided, pushing Corey the ground and telling he and old flame Marta that they have to be the bigger people and walk away. With fisticuffs – and knives – avoided, Picard's friends storm off never to speak to him again. Meanwhile, the Captains life is restored and we move from a nostalgic trip back in time to the present day. Picard alive and well with his real heart on board the ▷



Enterprise. Huzzah's all round!

The problem for Picard was that the bar fight wasn't just one stupid mistake. But something that helped define him. One act that would likely lead to another, then another, then another. A simple butterfly effect that began with that fight. Instead, by ensuring that never happened, Picard became someone else; his life trajectory moving away from the heroic leader he'd become...

Now he was something else. A coward. Those friends walked away from him, his support network and his confidence dented; something which he was inevitably unable to rekindle.

Returned to his life, Picard steps onto the bridge and is greeted by an angry Worf and suddenly the reality of Picards situation becomes clear. That butterfly effect made him play his career safely and by the book. One of the defining moments of his career was taking the risk of jumping into action when the Captain of the Stargazer died, placing him into the centre seat and head first into Command; the brash and impulsive personality that he'd developed in his youth giving him the confidence to take that chair and, in turn, the first steps towards becoming a legendary icon within Starfleet.

Without those key points, he's not the Captain of the Enterprise. He's not even on the command team. Just a lower decks assistant astrophysicist ferrying reports for other people between departments with Worf glaring at him as he's so far removed from the bridge the Security Chief is just annoyed he even dared enter his domain.

Doing some digging into his new life, Picard soion discovers has had such an unspectacular and pointless career that Riker see's it as ridiculous he'd even ask to be put on the command track. There's really no way in after decades of choosing the safe option, of staing out of danger at all costs. Captains need to be brave, be bold. This Picard was far from it.

Of course things don't stay that way and Picard realises he needs to get Q to take him back and make sure the day happens as it was supposed to; that he learns to take that risk, however badly it turned out.

For years it seemed Picard regretted that moment and his reckless youth as he matured intop a strong leadership character. But he'd failed to realise that mistakes like those help to shape our life experiences and help us to grow stronger.

It's not a unique story. There are a lot of parallels that could be made to other time travel stories. For example, a certain 80's classic featuring Commander Kruge.

But it is an extreme example. Most of us are able to learn and develop without a key moment in our maturation being a stabbing. But those regrets he had harboured weren't just stupid moments, not in the biggest picture. And when he pulled at that thread, he began to realise just how important those moments were in making him not only the Captain, but the person he had become.

This is another weird episode where Q plays games with the Captain. Not to antagonise him, but to teach him. Give him a moral lesson and give him strength and self awareness. It can also be considered a hallucination of just a vision. But when we first learned the story about how he gained that heart, told to Wesley Crusher back in Season 2, Picard had said that he began laughing after he saw the knife poking through his chest.

Tapestry explains that he laughs as he's regained the life he's just lost; Q was always destined to teach him that lesson while teaching us that sometimes, those things we hate about ourselves or the things we wished we could change – even if it was a harsh experience – only helped to make us stronger, that each bad experience only leads to making us a better person in the end.

It's often debated whether this counts as time travel. Did Picard really go back? Or was it all just another illusion? Either way, it's a great story and one of the best for Q appearances. ▶



CITY ON THE EDGE OF FOREVER

TOS Season 1, Episode 28

When you think of Star Trek and time travel, there is one episode which undoubtedly tops the list as the definitive. City on the Edge of forever is a brilliant and powerful piece of science fiction, with a bit of romance and tragedy thrown into the mix to become one of the most iconic episodes of the original series.

Starting off kind of like an episode of Carry on Starfleet, Doctor McCoy is treating an injured Sulu with Cordrazine, but accidentally injects himself with a massive dose, putting himself into a drug feuled madness. Going a bit bonkers, he raids the transporter room and beams himself down to a nearby planet.

Giving chase, Kirk leads a landing party to find his friend only to discover that, upon arrival, McCoy had jumped through a mysterious and sentient time portal – The Guardian of Forever – and as a result, had changed the course of time.

Above the skies the Enterprise vanishes, having never existed, and so the Guardian allows Kirk and Spock to travel through it to find their shipmate and ensure whatever he has done to radically alter the future never happens.

Arriving in a930's New York, they take refuge with Edith Keeler, who houses and feeds the poor and homeless through her soup kitchen. As Spock reconfigures his tricorder using early 20th century technology to find McCoy, Kirk gets to know Edith, falling in love with her empathy and compassion. Only for Spock to discover that the change McCoy made in the past was saving her life.

Unfortunately, if she lives, her kindness has a negative effect on the future. Once McCoy saves her life, she'll lead a pacifist movement that gains enough support to delay the US's contributions to the second world war, and as a result,m the bad guys win.

What results is a peak moment in the Spock and Kirk relationship. The cold and logical Vulcan insisted Edith Keeler must die, while his Captain struggles with the emotional weight of the situation. Can he let it happen? Not only watch someone die, but someone he's fallen in love with?

It's a weighty topic, and one that brought a rawness to the series. Without their futuristic toys and fancy starship, it all came down to that one decision, that one moral choice. Is it right to save her, a valuable living person? Or is it right to sacrifice her for the future?



The episode doesn't live on for the time travel, but for the end result. The moment Kirk has to make the decision, seeing Edith in the path of a car and making that choice. ▷



Making the episode wasn't as easy as it may have seemed on screen. Unlike other shows, the original Star Trek took pride in bringing aboard sci fi writers to pitch ideas and write scripts, giving the show an experienced and imaginative backdrop behind the scenes.

Unfortunately that legitimacy was a double edged sword. The typical sci fi writer, though the calibre the show would hire, didn't write for television. So when it came to turning their story into a shooting script, considerations they didn't have in mind needed to be made.

Not only would the show need to be tweaked to fit the Star Trek world, such as minor character tweaks, but some ambitions would be too high a cost to film or wouldn't be able to be done under the demands of network TV.

Some writers can accept this. Andrzej Sapkowski, original author of the Witcher for example, is more than happy for anything to happen to his source material as long as he gets paid.

Others such as comic writer Garth Ennis and crime novelist Elmore Leonard are happy to accept their stories being tweaked to serve a new format. Even the writer of the Enemy Within, Richard Matheson was one of the few to step forwarding say, while he had frustrations writing the episode for Star Trek, TV was a different beast.

For The City on the Edge of Forever, Harlan Ellison didn't take those changes in his stride. After a long, and bitter feud with Gene Roddenberry, and failing to have his name removed from "the script they butchered" he would go on to release his version years later, which was roughly the same in spirit. But also contained a drug dealing officer, which Roddenberry objected to, trans dimensional beings who arrive due to McCoy altering the timeline and some other stuff which in no, way shape or form could



Star Trek have afforded to put on the screen.

More importantly in the change, the moment the show all came down to didn't happen the way it did in his original version.

The moment Kirk has to stop Bones from saving Edith is heartbreaking. It's a vital moment within and a perfect climax with Kirk fighting back all the tears, all the emotion to ensure history stays intact.

By this point, unknown to Kirk and Spock, McCoy is under the care of Keeler and close by when she's at risk of getting run over. Just as Kirk and Spock see what's inevitable, so does McCoy and he does try to save her – that was the moment Kirk was there to prevent. And he makes that call, he hears Spocks words echo in his head and he holds Bones back to ensure history happens the way it was supposed to, that Edith – the woman he'd fallen in love with – meets her end.

It's not only the role and evolution of a Captain to make these calls, but an extra emotional layer for a shows lead character. That moment was designed for Kirk. Yet in Ellisons, it was Spock who came in with the cold logic and held Kirk back. Which doesn't quite come with the emotional edge Roddenberry wanted from the script, and makes Spock seem completely heartless.

Mocking Shatner's overly dramatic "play to the back" style has become a loving pass time for most, though here more than any other episode, he deserves a lot of praise for his performance. He and Nimoy continue to have a wonrdeful connection as they try and downplay their presence in the past with Shatner bringing a more restrained and powerfully quiet performance as Kirk handles a deeply emotional mission under pressure. Something the retooled script allowed to come to the forefront.and badlyt needed to get to the core off the show.

Ellisons script was retooled over ten months under Roddenberry's watch, with Steven W. Carabatsos the late DC Fontana ensuring it met the standards of Trek. While Ellison himself held a huge grudge against Roddenberry, the input of Fontana, Roddenberry and Carabatsos was invaluable for taking Ellisons story and bringing it's emotional core to the forefront despite the credit going to Ellison.

Capturing everything Star Trek could be at it's finest, City on the Edge of Forever won both the Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation and the Writers Guild of America Award for Best Episodic Drama on Television

As a time travel episode, iot may not be complex or overly sphisticated. As a Star Trek episode, it was one of the finest produced.

ON SCREEN

TV & FILMS FOR GEEKY PEOPLE



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Returning for a second season, Billy Butcher is getting The Boys back together with new Supes on the horizon...



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Want to stay away from the cinema? Don't blame you! This edition we're recommending a soviet space thriller and a lost episode of Doctor Who

WHATS ON THE TELEBOX?



Article by **Ms Behave** with contributions by **James Tyler**

KB JT

Trapped in a COVID-riddled world where the evil virus is stunting production everywhere, the Boys got lucky in filming their second season hot off the heels of their first being launched to Amazon Prime. Without delay, without having to sit around and wait, and without much morality, The Boys are back on Prime!

Following a rag tag team of vigilante's determined to topple Superhero culture, The Boys made a refreshing change to how we see the mightier than mighty. Based on the comic series run writen by the always-entertaining Garth Ennis, the entire concept of the show dances around the dark side of the hero as a corporate funded super team led by Homelander - Captain America without a conscience – is ruled by ego, arrogance, PR stunts and a healthy dose of sociopathy.

Filled with dark humour, emotionally compelling viewing and a good old tale of trying to tear down the bad guy masquerading as the hero, the show was an impressive blend of some very human stories, some very gruesome moments and a good few Spice Girls references.

Central to the plot was Billy Butcher, a man who had turned from reasonably polite and pleasant to a dark, vengeful anti-hero determined to take down Homelander, the Super who assaulted and killed his wife. After learning the truth about his past, Homelander ended up killing his boss and lover to prove to Butcher he had nothing to fear, before revealing that Butcher's wife was not only still alive, but had fathered Homelanders offspring.

Leaving Season one in chaos, Butchers recruit Hughie tries to keep the rest of the Boys together in hiding, with the help of his superhero girlfriend Starlight, while Edgar, the CEO of the corporation who own the Seven supergroup, takes point in the business as he negotiates for Supers to become part of the military to fight supervillians they had secretly created.

To do this they need to rekindle the Seven after losing The Deep to sexual assault allegations, and Translucent from having C4 set off in.... well, an orifice. So they hire someone who can fix their damaged team and reputation; a new hero, outspoken feminist and social media influencer, Stormfront.

Meanwhile the Boys are on the run and Billy needs to come to terms with the fact his wife is both alive, and now the mother of a Supe.

After a dramatic first season and an utterlyt frustrating open ending, the return of the Boys doesn't just match the hype fo the first season; it managed to exceed it.

MORE THAN GORE

Even before it made it's debut on Amazon Prime, The Boys was projected to be either yet another superhero muscle and fight series, or going by the source material (without reading it!), nothing but gore. Much like another Ennis adaption, Preacher, it did have it's share of both, but at the same time so much more.

Much like Preacher, the series does lend itself to emotionally driven tales over all else. In the first scenes of the show Hughey loses the love of his life and only really begin to connect with Butcher when the gruff almost-Londoner speaks ▷





of the pain of losing his.

This time round the dynamics shift, both for Butcher and his nemesis Homelander, as the battle between good, evil and all things corporate resumes.

For Homelander he's now seeing his power shift within Vaught's corporate structure, with Edgar being a more rigid and unafraid boss. Giancarlo Esposito, best known in recent years for his performance as calm and menacing druglord Gus in Breaking Bad and Better Call Saul brings the same menacing persona, and in his screen time with Anthony Starr manages to come off as the stronger personality of the two despite being the one without any power.

Aya Cash coming in as Stormfront also brings a nice dynamic to put a dent in Homelanders ego. In the comics Stormfront was a typical neo-nazi man. With the TV version producer Eric Kripke decided that wasn't quite enough.

Extremists these days don't use the stereotypical tactics to recruit and make a following, they use social media, they use a picture perfect perception of themselves. And with this iteration of Stormfront, it's a media savvy empathetic woman at the centre of her far-right agenda.

What she brings to the table is somewhat fascinating. Her path to stardom and the Seven isn't far off Homelander's way of doing things. Where previous teammates have been intimidated by his presence and leadership, Stormfront's on equal footing and quickly begins to steal the spotlight and make him seem obsolete.

On the side of The Boys, Kimiko plays a much larger part and serves as a good example of how they use the obvious paths to go another way. Her biggest moment is gaining a new understanding of her powers when faced with the cult that kidnapped her as a child. Facing that personal moment not only gives her a new personal journey to ensure Kimiko isn't buried in the noise this season, but launches something more political in nature.

As much as The Seven are a twisted view at the greed and lust for power without morals within corporate America, and the corporate machine that is Marvel in a lot of ways, the vigilante side of justice begins to dig deeper into the cultural issues within the American woprld these days such as it's need to be seen as the worlds best of everything and how thats helped to give rise to the terrorist backlash. A fairly brave topic for a show that features ploughing a speedboat into a whale.

It's not the only political sidestep the show takes. Following the stand off between A-Train and Starlight in the ▶

Based on the comics by Garth Ennis, The Boys Season One was critically acclaimed for it's dark and somewhat realistic take on what super-humans could become in a corporate fueled world. Season 2 was commissioned and in production before the first had launched and a third has already been ordered from Amazon before it came close to release on Prime Video.

COMING SOON



Now is the time. This is the hour.

Launching in time for Halloween, a follow up t the cultt classic, The Craft is revisiting the story of three high school girls who meet a newcomer to their town to be their fourth member of their coven.

The original film focused on the teens doing teenagey stuff with their witchy powers as one became consumed by what she could achieve until it all went horribly wrong.

Not shying away from that film, the sequel has produced by acclaimed horror producer Jason Blum who aims to bring a little more magic through updates special effects and a lot more horror.

Releasing their trailer a month in advance, it looks to follow a similar plot, and reference the original coven, though details are being keptt under wraps for added surprise factor.

Starring Cailee Spaeny, Gideon Adlon, Lovie Simone and Zoey Luna as the young witches getting a lot more than they bargained for when they explore their own magical powers, the film also co stars someone who's already dealt with the strange and unusual in David Duchovny.

Originally meant for the big screen, plans for it's cinematic release were scrapped thanks to COVID, but to keep it on schedule for a pre-Halloween release on October 28th, it's going to video on demand instead; which might just be a better option - it's far more fun wattching a horror in a quiet living room at night!

The Craft: Legacy will be going to Prime Video and pretty much every streaming service with a video on demand option! The original is still available to stream on Netflix and other services.

season one finale, where he went off the deep end in unpicking her loyalties before having a heart attack, the pairs distrust of each other deepens further. But even then it follows from Starlights objections to being overly sexualised by Vaught in order to appeal to the public, bringing in more to say about A-Train and this ideal that the "token black man" hasn't really gone away and that both are merely just living stereotypes to build a brand.

Of course, the show isn't exactly one of brash point making. It's not really a show about making profound points and deep statements, but it is very clever in what it says and the seeds it sews in it's storytelling.

The Deep is possibly the most obvious parallel to realty and the toxicity of their celebrity culture. Much like many real-world celebrities, the Seven are all flawed to the extreme, and the Deep used his power and status to bully and harass women to the point of assaulting Starlight on her first day on the job.

After seeing so many celebrities torn down for their indiscretions and abuse of power, they touch on those who have tried to rekindle their spotlight with the Deeps first priority being, not to apologise or truly better himself, but just get his fame and status back.

Of course all these moments and points are layered with the insanity we'd come to expect. Did I mention the whale? But it's true strength is pushing to a gory extreme, often finding a severe dark humour within those moments and countering it all with both it's smart writing and with emotional depth. That strength of the show could have vanished if the producers opted to pick up on the extremes,, but thankfully they've managed to keep the balance of juggling the action with the character work.





NOT SO WEE....

For all the superhero celebrity antics of the villains, the show really isn't about them. Central to it all is Hughie, the once quiet geek who found himself wrapped up at the core of the battle between good and evil after his girlfriend was murdered by A-Train's reckless attitude.

His season arc being brought in as a catalyst to restart the Boys kind of saw him as a witness to Butchers fall into mindless revenge mode, slowly understanding that they had more in common than he thought and battling between being one of The Boys, and falling in love with Starlight.

Butcher is a force of nature; he's loud,, brash and often times uncaring. He led the team with a fearlessness and lack of empathy that may have got the job done, but caused a few cracks in the teams relationships. Picking up right where the last season left off, the team assume he'd dead and move on in their own direction. For Hughie, out from Butchers shadow, he develops something that was sorely missing in the first season; a spine.

Hughie's story isn't the most pleasant. After all, he's suffered major loss, depression and had his world turned upside down. Entering Season 2 he's really pushing to prove his worth to the team and his worth as a leader who can contribute something more positive than Butchers offerings.

Of course, as well all know, Butchers not dead and when the two finally meet, we can see Hughie's evolution and new found self worth. Which in turn has an effect on the whole team, who begin siding with Hughie and forcing Butcher to become more of an open book. Not a nicer person, not in the slightest. But facing a new Hughie means forcing himself to change and adapt to a new way of doing things. Not that any of it will go right, of course...

OVERALL

The first three episodes released gave a great reintroduction into the insane world of The Boys and their Super-adversaries.

Just like the first season, it has a bit of everything. Plenty of laughs, lots of drama, emotional moments that might just bring a tear to your eye, fascinating characters with real depth and action so messed up you might throw up.

It's not a show for the faint hearted, but it's still a magnificently messed up triumph! ■







STORMFRONT

For the second season Aya Cash stepped into the role of Stormfront with some big changes in comparison to the original comic.

In the original story Stormfront grew up within the Hitler Youth before serving for the Third Reich as part of their super soldier program. After Hitler ordered he be killed, Stormfront was moved in secrett to the United States where he created a new identity, but retained his Nazi way of life.

In show, Stormfront's origins are a little different and where she joins the Seven, recruited by Vaught's CEO, in the comics he led a team called Payback, a secondary super-force that was not shy at all in mocking the Avengers.



Stormfront would fight against the Boys several times, meeting his end at the hands of Billy Butcher with a big assist from Mothers Milk, and by that point had already lost an eye to The Female. In show there are some remarkably obvious differences that cause a whole different kind of drama.

The first obvious change is that Aya Cash isn't a man. For the show version, much like the changes made in other characters, such as Stillwell, the writers opted to switch genders for the role to create a different backstory and some sexual tension with her new mighty leader, Homelander, who's now her team mate, not part of an opposing crew.

The second is her attitude. The original Stormfront was a classic Nazi character who, like most villians, would intimidate with strength and fear. As well as super powers. For the show the producers wanted to take out the old school idea of white supremecy and modernise the concept.

Producer Eric Kripke noted before the show launched that, in a modern age, white supremecy groups have become a lot smarter witth their recruitment and messages and as such, he wanted their Stormfront tto be a happy, likeable (at first glance) and media savvy adversary.

While the core of the character remains the same, the differences have allowed the story to flow in it's own direction; somethting the Boys has been ensuring in their iteration with several key character and storyline additions tthattt had made the show into it's own beast.

The trend should continue into Season 3 where Jenson Ackles will join the cast as Soldier Boy, though one thing about the show seems to remain in line with the Comics; the entire battle between good and evil all comes down to Homelander. It'll be fascinating to see how far they push the leader of the Seven into madness with their tweaks to his character.



Unhappy in life and stressed with his ever-distanced wife and busy home life, Joe invests in some home help; a synthetic being like an Alexa brought to life. But underneath her emotionless stare and programmed smiles is a secret that might just void her warranty...

REVIEW BY JAMES TYLER



Recently arriving on Netflix, Humans isn't exactly a new release. A co-production by Channel 4 and American network AMC, Humans launched it's three season run back in 2015 and was, for a time, available through Amazon Prime. But moved to a new, more popular streaming service, it's been given a second wind that's letting curious viewers fill their lockdown hours with something new to watch.

Adapted from a Swedish TV show, Real Humans, the British version hits some very similar notes in it's set up. Based in a modern-day world everything's pretty much the same. Just instead of having Siri or Alexa to call on, you can instead purchase your own synth home help. Synths are everywhere in this mirrored world, working as janitors, assistants, even as live in carers for the NHS. Emotionless robots integrated into our world to act as pre-programmed servants.

Synths in family environments are programmed without a personality of a name. Anita, the lead synth within Humans, is unpacked and assumed to be a brand new machine. She's unique, a one of a kind design, and costs a small fortune. When Anita's unwrapped it causes a world of personal conflict from the obvious home life to the sci fi world.

Joe's intentions were fairly simple. All he wanted to do was have an easy life and spend more time with his wife, Laura, rather than do the washing up. As she grew distant from him, he hoped0 having less time worrying aboutt he house and more time with her would heal some wounds. Unfortunately, Laura's not keen on the home help. She doesn't trust Anita, at first out of envy of her husband bringing a highly attractive machine into he household, but soon enough Laura noticed that Anita's programming might be a bit wrong when she begins to defy small, but significant part of the “Asimov Laws” in her robotic brain.

Once the threads start to unravel, we learn Anita isn't brand new, but a refurbished synth who was created alongside other unique models. Her line of Synths weren't meant to be subservient beings. They were more than that. They were conscious. Within Anita is another peronsality, Mia, desperate to break free and join her other free synth friends. All of whom have one small part of a puzzle in their head that, when combined, will allow them to procreate and build a new race of synthetics who can feel, experience life and most importantly have free will.

You'd be forgiven if you thought this all sounded ▷

familiar. The good old trope of whether a machine can really be alive, if a robot could be considered a person aren't exactly new. Humans doesn't even shy away from that with a very early, and very obvious nod to the immortal works of Isaac Asimov.

What does feel refreshing is a more personal concept. If you look at stories like I, Robot which has a very large scope or even films such as Robocop which again is a very dystopian and heroic vibe there's always this feeling of something larger; a pre build massive world which is complex and futuristic. Humans contrasts all those big tales with being far more down to Earth. The concepts approached early on are very human-centric. Jealousy over the machines and their impact. Suspicion and paranoia aplenty over small things such as being your kids new favourite person.

Early on it's concepts are something we could all feel and experience, grounding these big ideas in a middle class home life setting. This is best paralleled by Pete Drummond, a police officer who's wife prefers the company of her synth to the point of marriage breakdown. In comparison to the usual big concept sci fi of this genre, most of the stories take place in a suburban, normal setting we can all understand. Even George, a retired scientist who struggles to remember his late wife, has his obsolete Synth still around just as he's the only link left to the life he can't remember.

Following these threads opens up a lot of varying stories, from the conscious synths looking to survive and build a future, to Anita realising she's Mia and even Laura beginning to understand and empathise with the robotic beings she initially hates being around. Fromt here the typical stories pan out as we explore the typical sci fi tales of living machines and subservient robots who could be much more; similar tones to everything thats came before over decades of sci fi.

But in framing this as a more personal, home-based tale, the show offers some mature and often remarkable storytelling to tell their version in a more understated and grounded reality.

There are lagging points, and being a retreaded topic dedicated sci fi fans will see where some threads are going, but it is an engaging story that managed to hit all the right notes. ■

Starring Katherine Parkinson, Tom Goodman-Hill, Colin Morgan, William Hurt, Neil Markell & Gemma Chain, Humans initially launched on Channel 4 in 2015; All three seasons are now available to watch on Netflix.



IT'S NOT SCI-FI BUT...



CRIMINAL

An anthology show based on a specialist interrogation unit, Criminal is a fascinating outlet; each series broken up into the persectives of different countries witth special guest stars aplenty.

After a fascinating first season, the shows back for another round with it's UK episodes featuring an almost unrecognisable Big Bang Theory star Kunal Nayyar and Game of Thrones King of the North Kit Harrington.

Recently dropping on Netflix, the show's filled with some nice tension and drama for a one-set piece.

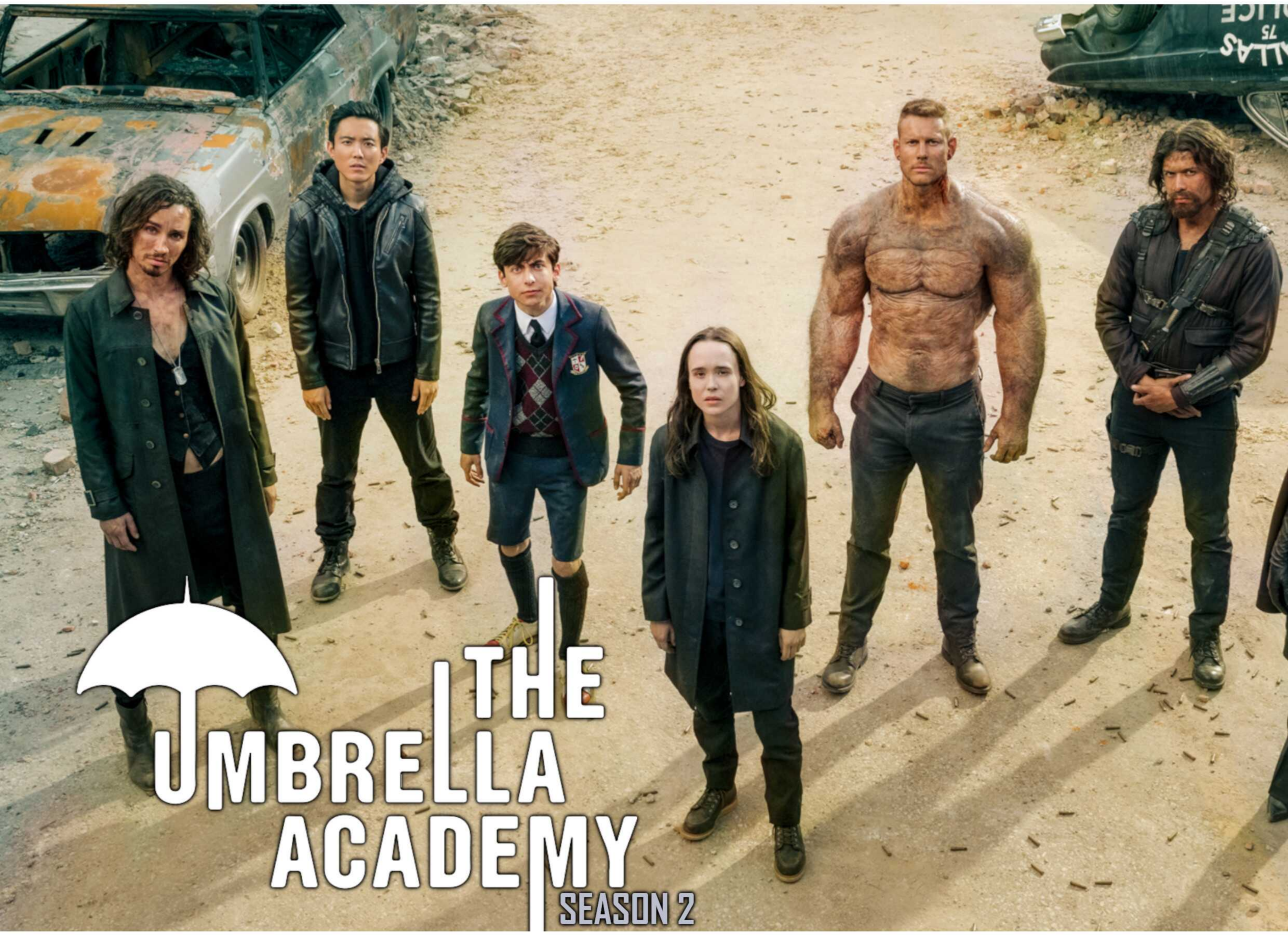


NORSEMEN

A bit of a tongue in cheek version of Vikings, Norsemen follows a tribe or warriors and their struggles in modern viking life. The first two seasons explored the death of their clan leader and struggle to find a new replacement as the next in line - Orm - was fairly useless, while the second followed on from clan warfare before they leave for a better land.

Making the decision to go back a little, the third tells the story of what happened before we met them in the first season. Focusing on Orm and his need to be accepted, it gives a little fun insight into how his brother tried to make him a noble warrior and how he managed to find a tough wife.

It's not quite on par with the second season, but filled with a lot of laughs and blunt Norweigan humour.



Based on the comics co-authored by My Chemical Romance frontman Gerard Way, The Umbrella Academy quickly became a hit for Netflix when it was adapted for television to tell the compelling story of a bunch of adopted children with superpowers who reunited after their fathers death, only to learn the world was coming to an end.

A superhero drama with twist, the Umbrella Academy is a compelling oddity. In 1989, over forty women find themselves spontaneously giving birth despite never being pregnant; coming to full term in minutes. Getting wind of the bizarre phenomenon, billionaire madman (and alien!) Sir Reginald Hargreaves tried to get ownership of as many as he can to create the Umbrella Academy, a training centre to raise and explore the children born from this event.

Managing to adopt seven of these infants, Hargreaves learns they each have unique powers which he refines and exploits to create a super-hero team of children. Over the years they drift apart, suffer the consequences of their strict upbringing and drift apart one by one. From the loyal Luthor, who stood by his father to the bitter end, to Vanya, who'd been raised as the outsider with her powers repressed as she was not only the most powerful, but the one who would single handedly caused the end of the world.

As the families survivors come together to mourn the man who raised them, their missing sibling – only known as Five – returns to tell them when the world will end, and implores them to help save their future.

Umbrella Academy's first season was a highly entertaining and engaging ride. With a lot of humour, nostalgic music and a story that had many twists and turns, it offered a personal backdrop to each characters upbringing, motivation and life beyond Hargreaves reach. More importantly, there wasn't a single moment that didn't matter. Maybe not to the plot. Klaus being thrown back in time and falling in love with a soldier in Vietnam didn't add anything to the story, for example. But it added a lot to him. On the same level, a fantasy scene where Luthor would dance with his adoptive sister and love interest Alison also made perfect sense in the mix as we saw them happy for the first time, and the extent of their happiness together.

It was one of those rare shows that seemed to hit every note. Whether it was a funny moment, a montage, or tragedy. It had everything. So when it came to a second season, expectations were higher than high.

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD. AGAIN...

Following a viral video featuring the cast recreating a dance montage from the first season, socially distanced in their homes, the second season was released at the tail end of July on Netflix, the highly anticipated sequel didn't chase the chaotic personal battles of the first, but instead offered a new perspective as the Academy Members found themselves scatted through the sixties.

At the end of the first season, after accepting they were just as responsible for Vanya's mind and emotional state being broken as their father, the un-named ▷



Number Five used his time travel powers to pull them back in time, away from the impending apocalypse he'd failed to stop. Instead of arriving in the past together, each of them appeared in the early 60's seperately, dropping into a back alley in Dallas one by one, months apart, left to fend for themselves.

Five arrived last. At a point where he saw his siblings in a final battle and facing a new apocalypse, realising that they hadn't escaped the end of the world; it had instead followed them back in time to ruin the world decades before it's scheduled destruction in 2019.

With the help of former associate turned assassin Hazel, Five jumps back ten days to find his siblings, all living new lives unaware of each others survival in 1963, and tried to bring hem back together to fend off the new end date for the worlds demise.

Just like in the first season, Five's insight into the future see's his siblings fighting together on a new doomsday, a nuclear attack from the Russians just days after the Kennedy Assassination. And once again it's up to him to rally them all together. Unlike the first however, it takes a while to get them in the same room.

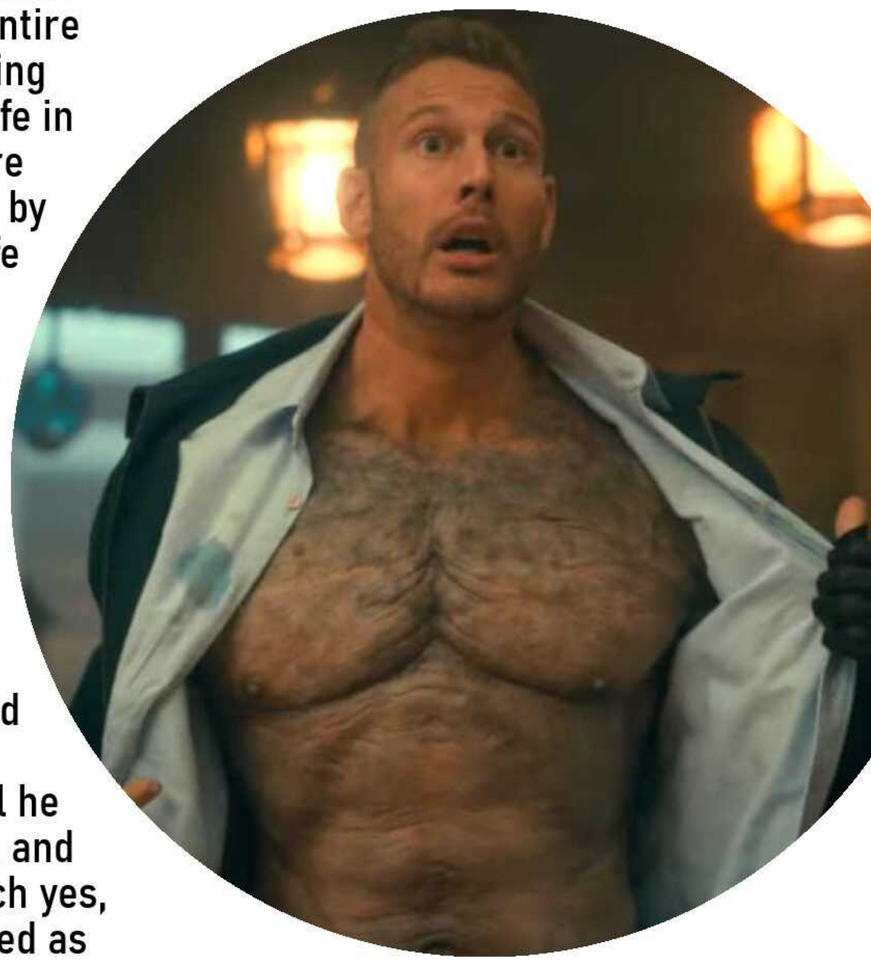
Season one was basically an introduction to the characters more than a tale of the world coming to an end. The action seemed almost secondary as it simmer into a climax, leaving each of the Hargreaves' at the forefront of the story. Season 2 isn't really much different in that regard. It's almost all character driven, but without the need to explain who these people are and what their past was. So out with the flashbacks to their childhood, and in with the catch up as we learn what they've all been doing to secure themselves new lives alone; from Alison suddenly realising 1963 doesn't exactly welcome a woman of colour, to Diego ending up in an asylum for his misplaced heroism in stopping an assassination that hasn't happened yet, to Klaus who accidentally starts a cult based on song lyrics.

As far as each of them know, they're the only survivors of Five's group time jump and a good chunk of the first half of the season is spent with us learning about their time in the 60's and slowly re-discovering each other one by one. Something that's both equal parts fun and frustrating is that they only come together as a group mid-way through the season.; and only a cohesive group in the finale as they face the inevitable early worlds end.

"YOU ARE A VERY OPEN BOOK FOR DUMB CHILDREN"

As a very character driven show, it's impossible not to take a pause to look at these people one by one. Despite us entering season two knowing who these people are inside and out, they remain an incredibly compelling bunch thanks to both the story and some perfect casting choices.

Luthor always gets a bad rub and is seen as the least interesting of the bunch; a fiercly loyal soldier who stayed with his father and kept the Academy project alive to the very end. But who was also, ultimately, a disappointment who learned after his fathers death that he was sent on a mission tot he moon for three years just to get him out of the way. That pain of sacrificing his entire life for essentially nothing carries over here. His life in 1963 is just that of a bare knuckle boxer scraping by in a quiet, uneventful life until Five arrives at his bosses club.



Season two advances on this weird, quiet character as someone who never really had a life outside his job and even now he's free, still doesn't know what to do but find another master and another mission. But all he really wants is that life, and Alison, his sister – which yes, is weird and is addressed as such! - is still his key to having that life.

And thats the boring character, according to the fan reactions. They have dumbed him down a bit and given him more room to bring a few laughs, but even being the least interesting he has a fascinating backdrop here which explodes passionately when he meets Sir Reg in 1963 still begging for acceptance. It's heartbreaking.

On the other end of the scale is fan favourite Klaus; a human ouija board who convenes with the dead – mostly his dearly departed brother Ben who Klaus has kept by his side since his death. Being a drug-addled and chaotic comedy character, Klaus is easily likeable on ▶

screen for bringing eccentricity and laughs aplenty. Especially as we look back through his time in the 60's in forming a cult around his magical powers, mostly supplied by Ben, and knowledge of the future.

Even as a comedy note, Klaus has a deeper side, only coming back to Dallas after travelling the world to find a boy called Dave, a soldier Klaus fell in love with and saw die in an accidental time travelling moment during the first season. He wants Dave to live, and tries to change history by ensuring he never joins the army in the first place.

Not everyone gets an emotional core within the season. Five, as the 48 year old assassin trapped in his pre-pubescent body, continues being the focused, grown up and somewhat relentless core of the group. And Diego, while he does have a brief fling and a lot of story time with Commission agent Lila is still the vigilante who deeply wants to believe his upbringing means something. Even Ben, who does get some spotlight on how he suffers only being able to live through Klaus.

The standout for me was Allison, however. The one who moved forward in her life. Entering the 60's and instantly experiencing the hostility and segregation only to end up joining the civil rights movement, finding a husband and building a happy and healthy life for herself. The unfortunate side being that Five's arrival – which of course also brings Luthor, who her husband called, rather accurately "the biggest white boy I ever met" - opened a series of events that forced her to reveal the truth of herself to her husband and disrupt that happy and purposeful life she'd built for herself.



Seeing her life in that era also holds up a nice mirror for the rise in racism within the United States, which seems a little more poignant, albeit it accidental, as the series was launched after weeks of protests nationwide.

As a group there's also another evolution that was mostly vacant in the first season. In the shows first outing there were moments of their sibling relationship resurfacing, and a good few characters shared some nice moments. However this time round there's more unity with moments such as Allison and Klaus reconnecting, and drinking and even the brothers-at-odds Diego and Luthor argue their way into a tender moment which is later solidified with both showing their insecurities in front of a pre-Academy Harvreages in a rare moment where the whole family seems to be on the same page.

Conflict can make good story, but in Season 2, the connections and bonds each of them have had through their troubled childhoods seem a lot clearer in their second outing. And of course, it's their love for each other that saves the day....

EXPLOSIVE DRAMA

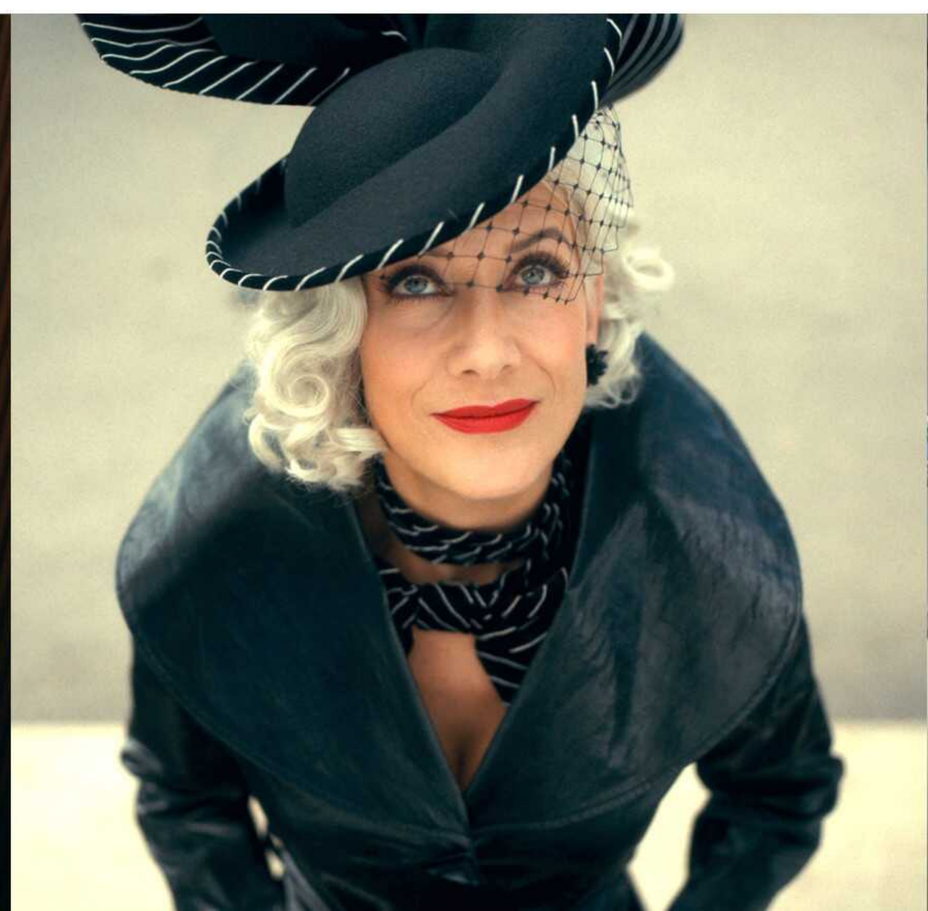
Despite the premise and the first five minutes, this isn't really a season about an apocalypse in much the same way as the apocalypse was merely a catalyst in the first to tell Vanya's story, the outcast sibling who's powers were repressed by Hargreaves out of fear.

After following Luthers lead in trying to contain Vanya, the same way their father had, the big question in Season 2 was how she'd evolve after the worlds end and again, her story was a large core to the new worlds end. Her story merges nicely with the first season; taking away all her hang ups and playing with her self discovery piece by piece to a point that shows the family unity wasn't just a thematic change, but a core story point that led to the climax.



The season also had a lot of good sideplots, some of which don't really go anywhere substantial. They introduce AJ the super-intelligent fish in a robot body and don't really use him for much more than a bit of weirdness. And the Swedes, while they seem like the new threat akin to Hazel and Cha ▷





Cha just end up in their own little sideplot being played by the Handler until the end.

Some nice new additions, including the family Vanya ends up living with and the introduction of the Handlers daughter Lila also make for good moments, both as her true self was slowly revealed, and in her weird romance with Diego. Though the return of the Handler herself, still as mad as a bag of spanners, as well as a look at a younger and more social Hargreaves was a nice touch; particularly when confronted by his future children.

Normally when a shows plot is as convoluted and kind of secondary as it is in the Umbrella Academy, it's a bad sign. Yet somehow this all works and offers a bit of everything; weirdness, comedy, drama, time travelling mayhem and an amazing cast who help lure you into the stylish and visually stunning world.

Making a follow up of the first season, with it's own series of twists and zany moments, was a hard task. But taking the family out of the Academy and giving them a chance to reunite as their own people, free of most of their hangups, helped to build a more engaging story that in some ways surpassed the first while not rocking the boat too much.

An engaging and often emotional tale, with a fairly fascinating cliffhanger to end on, the Umbrella Academy remains one of the best originals for Netflix and one of the most intriguing and addictive comic book adaptions to date; Here's hoping it can survive the Netflix two season curse so we can see a Season 3 return! ■

The Umbrella Academy Season 2 is availab;le excusively alongside it's premiere season on Netflix.



TNT ORIGINAL

SNOWPIERCER

A nuclear winter has consumed the earth, turning it into a cold, snow-filled hellscape from which there is only one way to survive: The Snowpiercer. A custom built train – an arc – endlessly racing around the remains of the planet in a bit to retain humanity within a hub designed to house those that can afford to live....

REVIEW BY MS B & MARK WHITBURN

Released worldwide on Netflix back on May, Snowpiercer's a show that's got a lot more history than many would realise.

The series is based on both the original and it's big screen adaption. A Snowpiercer movie, starring Captain America himself and helmed by Parasites Bong Joon-Ho, was released back in 2013. Not here though. Here it was released just last year. That film was a big budget adaption of a French comic, La Transperceneige by Superduponte and Ulysse writer Jacques Lob.

Snowpiercer the series is an adaption of both, picking elements from both and introducing a new timeline and series of events that both digs into the class war being told initially and, at least to start with, merges the uses the setting to kick off a police drama in very desperate circumstances.

Getting it into production was not an easy path. A TV series was first bought out five years ago with a pilot ordered in 2017. Since then not only was a second pilot ordered, but it lost a director, saw the initial show-runner get fired and shifting it's original network in the US. Usually all signs of doom and gloom. But for Snowpiercer the change in vision and direction seemed to help the show. Even if it wasn't an easy road getting there, not a perfect first season.

Having such strong predecessors made the series struggle to follow such strong acts. Joon-Ho's film being the biggest set up, which was a strong half of the inspiration. His film was a clear attack on capitalism focusing on a class was that just couldn't be won; the poor and the desperate would always be at a disadvantage to the money and power of the world.

The TV series doesn't shy away from the concept. Early on it explains how the train itself had developed. Those who could afford survival boarded, ready for a life of luxury on a custom-built fantasy island of sorts. It had cabins, homes, schools, a place to party. Everything the elite of the world wanted.

For those who couldn't afford it, there was only one option. Get on board by any means. Run, barge your way aboard and hope for the best. Which of course resulted in a hoarde of desperate people escaping an inevitable death in the new icey wasteland running and forcing their way into the train.

That class divide is a huge point within the series and we see mostly at first from that perspective of those cramped in storage units, living at the will of the guards and upper classes as they devise their own rules and ▷



BUILDING THE SNOWPIERCER

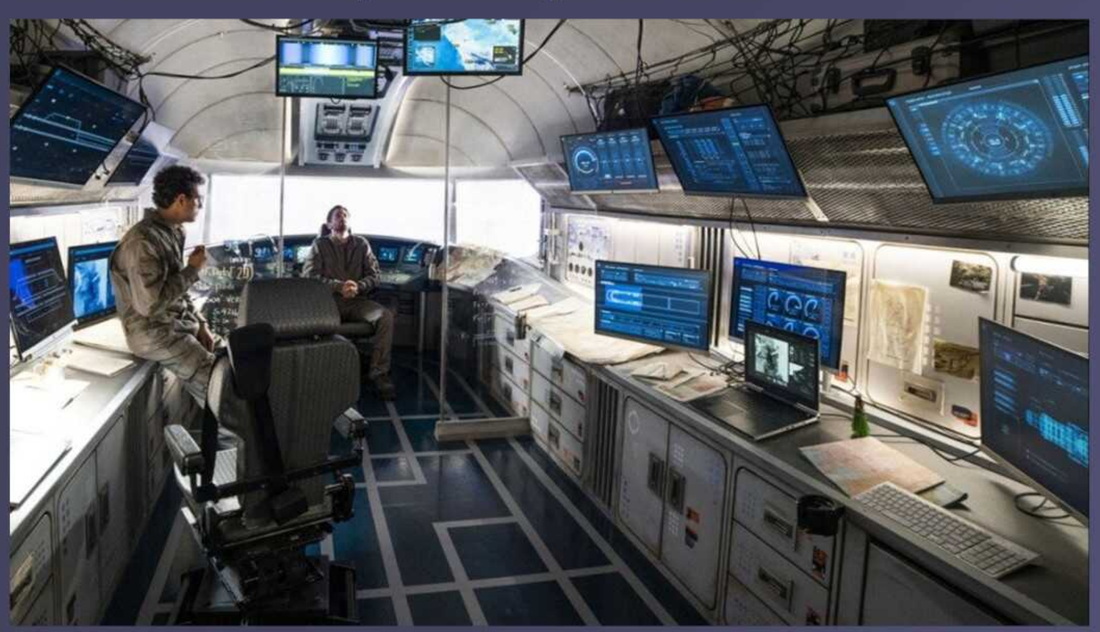
Despite the highly stylised nature of the show - from it's grungy windowless tail end to the polished and glamerous First Class sections, when it came to builing the sets for the near-future show, designer Barry Robison was determined to make te unreal idea as real as possible.

When it came to building the train, six cars were built on each sound stage which were retained on rail so they'd move and wiggle around just as a real carraige would. Despite the filming limitations it would cause, the cas were designed to match real-world specifications that would fit on existing rail tracks; meaning that each car was no wider than twelve feet in width with most being 40 feet in length.

To ensure ease of filming, the walls were designed to be removable, like any other enclosed set. The main challenge was ensuring the realism of the enviroment, but it wasn't one that Robison walked into lightly.

"In my first week, I really felt that it was necessary to map out the train — all 1,001 cars. And I've got to tell you, it was really fun." He told SyFy Wire back in May, explaining that he worked with the producers to figure out how many cars would be assigned to each section, each class and each purpose, whilst drawing out a scaled down map to ensure the layout was functional and logical. "We tried to keep it as real as possible. And yes, we did have to take license on a number of occasions, but not so much that I think that the audience wouldn't believe that we were being true to the train."

The work that went into the design alone was extremely intricate, with each space given maximum attention to ensure it looked the part; from those spaces being made to look massive as a high class function room, to a claustrophobic tight storage cart. The attention to detail made it an incredibly well designed enviroment.





Snowpiercer was designed by a "Mr Wilford", who foresaw a second ice age and designed the 1,001 carriage train to save "the best" of humanity. Aside from perpetual motion powering the train, there are over 130 carriages dedicated to growing food in greenhouses supported by artificial light; ensuring those on board have all they need to survive.

way of life. That is until the last homocide detective on Earth is pulled from whats developed into the lower class end of the train to investigate a murder on the rich side of things.

Theres a really interesting underbelly to the whole idea of the rich and powerful needing a lowly commoner, who was never supposed to be there, to sort out their lives. And while they don't quite touch on that in a blunt force way they do set up a class divide that's impossible to ignore.

The Snowpiercer itself is a big of a megastructure. Imagine a skyscraper, but built the other way round. It may not be as wide as the worlds largest – Shanghai Tower – but is almost three times as long as the Tower is in height. A little over 1000 carriages that needs a transit system within itself to navigate. Being a train is the shows gimmick, but in essence it's a luxury vessel. The worlds ended and, even surrounded by devastation and the world in ruins, the rich have planned their ▷



survival as a pleasure cruise across he globe.

Keeping the worlds elite happy is Melanie Cavil, the Snowpiercers head of hospitality who does whatever it takes to ensure the train keeps moving. If it stops, it puts everyone at risk; the kinetic energy generated from it's movement around the globe not only created a constantly self-powered machine to keep it moving, but enough heat and electricity to keep everyone alive inside; going outside is certain death.

With that responsibility, Cavill's morals aren't exactly the best to lean on and her ability to not only keep everything operational, but keep her passengers happy and content in their luxury isolation, makes her the most vital person on board.

Cavill and Layton are opposites on every level, right down to their basic character and wardrobe design. Cavill's crisp and perfect in tone and personality, representing the upper class service with her clean uniforms and bright chambers. While Layton's cheap look and environment in steerage is cheap and grimey; the stowaways lives shown as desperate and lacking anything nice.

That look transcends the whole train; the front ends are functional, stylish and filled with luxury and colour. Everything there has what they need from nightclubs to schools for the kids. Those living in the rear have spent their entire journey taking scraps; presented with the bare bones of food from armed guards to keep them all in line. Or starve them out, really...

A lot of it can seem obvious or cliché in tone. But they don't pull any punches in introducing us to the desperate situation or that, when there's a job that needs done thats dangerous of high risk, it's the disposable people living in huddled masses that are called on; risk the poor to keep the rich happy.

And thats where Layton finds himself invited into the foreground of the trains operations. He's the last detective left behind. He's a calm and cool rebel, trying to keep the peace and keep people from causing a riot that'll get them all killed. When Cavill needs help, someone with his now unique experience, he's assigned to become the trains detective and so begins his new life balancing his job, his duty and his obligations to the people he's been fighting to protect.

Being on the other side, he begins to collect information for the resistance at the rear end of the train but a lot of it does fall to the usual murder mystery early on. In some ways it's reminiscent of Altered Carbon's first season and hits a lot of similar notes being a mystery in a dystopian setting with the outsider coming into the land of the rich and powerful to figure it all out. And much like Altered Carbon, that base story is just the beginning, expanding beyond to explore the unique world. Even if we have seen this kind of story before, the backdrop helps add a more interesting layer to it all and doesn't take a lot of focus to follow all the high notes.

Early on it does hook you enough to lure you in without being overly complex in setting the stage. It's an easy to ▶





understand scenario for most of the viewers and everythings laid out without the exposition being overbearing or too much of a burden. Though a lot of the work comes down to the performance of Naveen Diggs as Layton as the character evolves throughout the show.

Similarly Jennifer Connolly as Cavill is one of her best performances as she hits her stride early on as a sort of Stepford wife style hostess.

From the other cast members there's really no weak links. Though the dialogue and writing doesn't lend itself to a high standard a lot of the time. Part of the problem is that it doesn't quite hit the same notes as the films tale of a never ending class war. But it doesn't really try to either, ensuring to establish itself as it's own thing despite never hitting the critically acclaimed multi award winning status so far.

The TV adaption of Snowpiercer is missing a few things the film had. Such as the dark humour and darker vibe. But it does take elements introduced to the world from that movie adaption and makes them a lot more sinister.

THE WEATHER CHANGED...

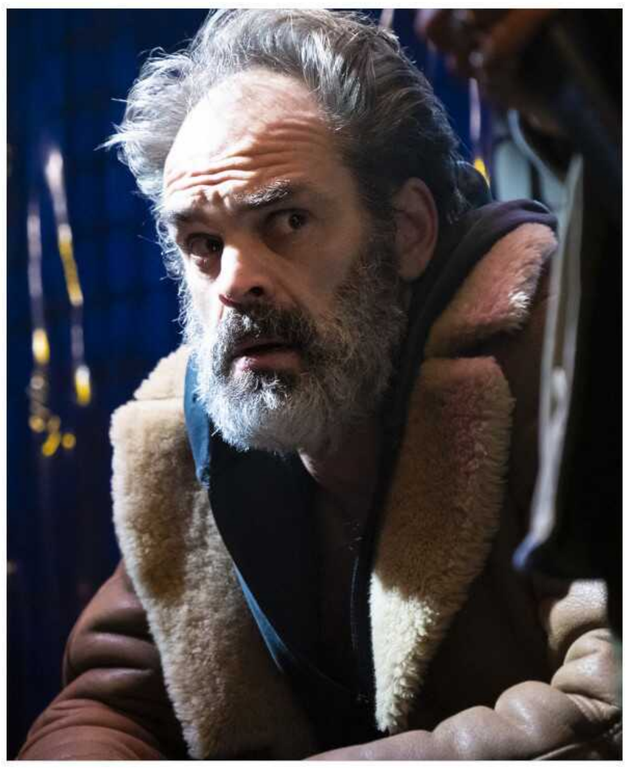
There's been a lot of “review bombing” for the show being unrealistic. Which in the concept of any science fiction show it a bit bananas. The thought of a 1,001 carriage train propelling around the Earth thanks to perpetual motion is an odd hill to die on compared to spore drives, Galaxies far, far away, time travelling phone boxes that are bigger n the inside or even a ▷

superhero born by a spider bite. So going in, you have to take a lot at face value much like any other sci fi, and it does make an effort for it all to make sense.

Of course this does come with the usual cliche's. Of course there's an episode where the train might stop and kill everything. But between the unsubtle class war concept and the somewhat claustrophibic nature of the show (despite the size of the thing!) does really add plenty of tension.

It's not going to be held up to the highest of high standards of science fiction or drama, nor is it the best show to come out of either genre. Some of the characters are a bit basic and the dialog can be utter tripe at times. But there's a real effort to get the most out of it and it does become a slow burner captivating show that uses it's setting to tell the tale in interesting ways.

One problem that's rather common these days is that it does suffer the half season curse. That murder investigation is a bit by the numbers at first, but it all helps to paint a picture of what this world is like and the struggles of the vaying classes: Not just those in first class versus the tail section, but a range of different structures. Particularly tension with the third class level of passengers. Which really does help insure the szhow isn't just another black and white "poor versus rich" story.



As they move into the second half, with a society really beginning to rebuild itself within the new conditions to form their own law and order, their own new way of life with the fight for equality being pushed through lies, secrets and good old fashioned violence, things really heat up and get interesting as it goes. By the end of the season, it's moved from a basic procedural drama within a sci fi concept to some gripping television that helps fill the ever-growing void in lockdown entertainment!

It may not be the best out there. It may not carry all the bleakness or darkness of the film. But much like other adaptions, such as Twelve Monkeys which has some simiular tones in shaky dialogue and interest creep, by the time it all comes to a close you begin to want more and to see more of the story.



Overall the show has a shaky start, a core concept that can generate years worth of stories and after it's first season, has already grown into a fairly good scci fi show in it's own right beyond both sources that inspired it. And after a dramatic ending, it'll be fascinating to see where the train takes them next. ■

Snowpiercer Season 1 is available to watch now on Netflix. Season 2 is curerently in post production for a 2021 launch.

Principal Photography on Season 2 of Snowpiercer was completed before lockdown began. With the show in post production, it's expected to return between May and July next year.



COMING SOON

UNDER CONSTRUCTION



KNIGHT RIDER

Fighting for justice as the lead agent for the Knight Foundation, Michael Knight and his super-powered and sassy car became a phenomenon in the 80's action drama genre and made David Hasselhoff a household name years before he put on a pair of red shorts. Now it seems one writer wants to recapture the magic for the big screen.

FEATURE BY MARK WHITBURN

Originally airing between 1982 through to 1986, the short lived show strangely became a pop culture phenomenon with it's heroic lead and fairly cool car fighting injustice one car chase at a time.

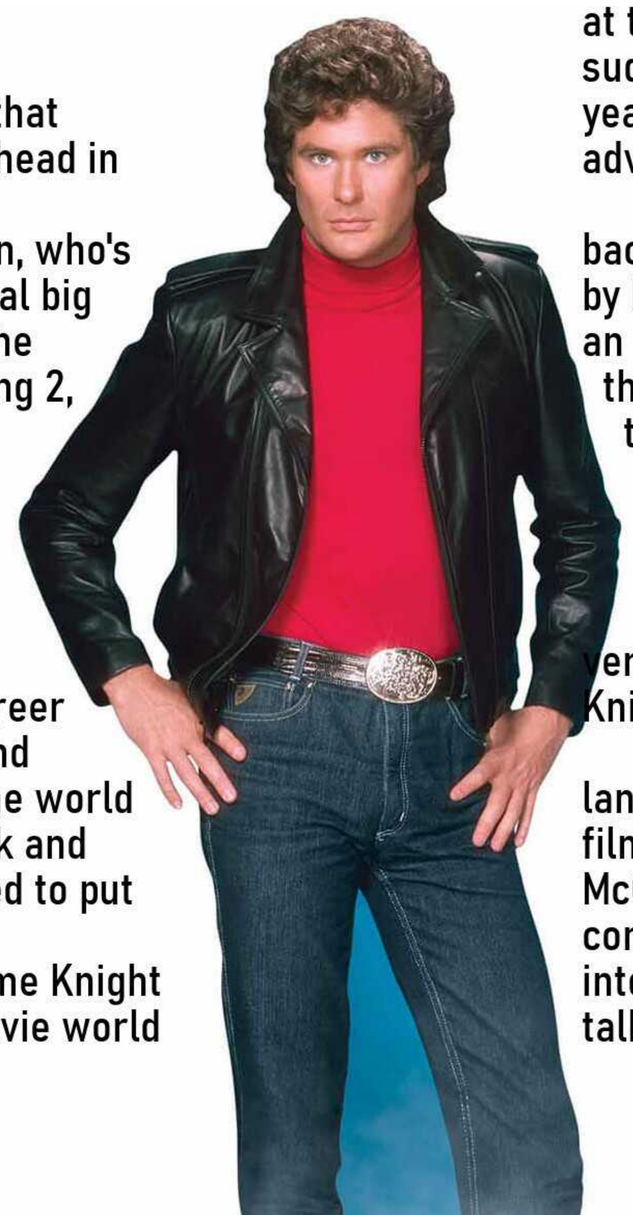
With KITT - Knight Industries Two Thousand - the selling point of the series as a car with artificial intelligence and special tricks up it's tyres, it remained a solid favourite that would eventually spawn a sequel series by NBC in 2008.

Though the sequel was cancelled after just one season, there's a fresh push to revive the concept as the Spyglass Media Group has come together with production company Atomic Monster to adapt the show into a big screen adventure. An ambituous goal, but one that seems to be full steam ahead in the planning stages.

Producer James Wan, who's been involved with several big movie projects such as the Saw series, The Conjouring 2, Mortal Kombat and more recently Aquaman 2, has teamed up with his regular creative partner Michael Clear to get the project off the ground.

TJ Fixman, who's career so far has revolved around writing for the video game world including Ratchet & Clank and Overstrike, has been hired to put the script together.

This isn't the first time Knight Rider's made it to the movie world as it had previously been adapted to film. Well, kind of....



Knight Rider 2000 was a made-for-TV movie released in 1991 that jumped ahead to an idealistic world where, as per everyones expectations and hopes at the time, the year 2000 suddenly jumped about a hundred years ahead in technological advancement.

KR2000 saw Michael jump back into his crime fighting ways by hacking KITT's computer into an old truck before getting hold of the replacement model, the 4000, to help save the day.

It was not well recieved. It was, in fact, fairly awful. Not as awful as the follow up, Knight Rider 2010, which was only very loosely connected to the Knight Rider concept.

Based in a post apocalyptic landscape, the main core of the film is that smuggler Jake McQueen uploads the conciousness of a oung woman into his mustang to create a super talking car that would help him ▷

save the day.

Unlike the original series and subsequent TV Movie, 2010 was pretty much just Mad Max with an Alexa Auto. Critical reactions were worse than the first and it became the film that time, thankfully, forgot.

As if the 90's didn't give enough bad Knight Rider adaptions, someone had the bright idea to create Team Knight Rider. In this spin off, FLAG had overtaken the Knight Foundation and pulled together a group of operatives to offer them swanky tools and loads of gadets to help fight crime.

Team Knight Rider was so poorly executed, 2010 looked like a masterpiece. The low budget, almost Power Rangers-like show, was cancelled after one twenty two episode season fauiled to generate any momentum.

Which, was probably for the best, to be fair.



It wasn't until 2008's TV Movie by NBC that the Knight's caught a break. A direct sequel to the original series, ignoring all else, it focused on Michael Knights son taking on his fathers role with an all new KITT model, the Three Thousand. The sequel TV movie was so well recieved, NBC raced towards offering them a series.

Originally running as an ensemble cast, the show returned to the "Michael and KITT" format much like the original series, but while audience reaction was mostly positive, the ratings were not enough to give it a second run.

James Wan's new attempt to bring fresh life to the project could work out, this time, but like most projects the Knight Rider cinematic journey has been a long, long road.

Wan is just the latest producer to be passed the torch on the Knighht Rider project which predates the production and launch of the 2008 TV movie and series.

Way back in 2002, Revolution Studios announced their intention to build a film series much like their leading action frachise, XXX. The project went along seemingly smoothly, with Hasselhoff brought on as a consultant and original series creator Glen A Larson hired to write the first draft.

A year later more writers were hired to flesh it out and it weas revealed that David Hasselhoff would be reprising his role, but with his now much older Michael Knight being a mentor to his son, much like the sequel series ended up doing.

Ben Affleck and Orlando Bloom were linked to the film, but turned it down. At the five-year mark, Mirimax were involved and it seemed to disdapear into the typical production black hole, succeeded with NBC's Television movie.

After Knight Rider 2008's cancellation, further ideas were thrown around, but were all abandonned at some time or another, including having the popular Chris Pratt lead in a comedy action version, much like Dwayne Johnson's Baywatch revival. Though, like all other attempts, it never got off the ground.

There's a fair chance the latest attempt will end up in a similar production black hole, though Wan and Spyglass are keeping their concept largely under wraps, only revealing that they're adapting to operate against a modern backdrop.

It may be years off, or it may never happen, but Knight Rider seems to be the dream that'll never die. ■

KENOBI
A STAR WARS STORY

Over the past few years the Star Wars world has expanded massively, with a new trilogy bringing a(nother) conclusion to the Skywalker story, one-off films filling in the gaps of the lore and of course, the Mandalorian launching on Disney+ to widely positive reviews.

As further stories developed and little pockets of the universe explored, including the history of Han Solo in a spin off film, there was one character that people wanted to see come back to the forefront; and fans were delighted when Ewan McGregor was announced as reviving his younger version of the role for the first time since the prequel trilogy.

Despite filming issues (which is becoming a bit of a chore to say as the world of TV figures out how to safely get back to work) McGregor has revealed that they plan to start filming in Spring of next year.

The initial plan was thought to involve the second season of the Mandalorian being shown before the Obi Wan series, alternating much like Star Trek has done with it's output. However a lot of plans are up in the air at the moment despite the cast and crew seeming positive they'll be back to work next year.

No other cast have yet been announced, with story details being kept under wraps for the moment. Though McGregor has confirmed that the scrips have been in earlytt draft stages and were being tightened up through the year before the cameras roll.

"There are scripts that I've read that are really good," He told Newsweek in September, "they're continuing to write on them to make them even better, and we start very early next year."

Set between the events of Star Wars Episode III, his last appearance as Kenobi, and the original film, the shows set to bridge the gap between the eras. The season will last only six one hour episodes and is hoped that if all goes to plan will launch on Disney+ in 2022.





Seth MacFarlane's light hearted Trek-inspired show has went through two seasons on Fox with mixed, but mostly positive reviews. For it's third round, however, things will be a ltitle bit different as the show evolves and grows.

FEATURE BY JAMES TYLER

Starring as Kovacs in the second season, Anthony Mackie was unlikely to return for a third after ths show established the concept of a new actor each time. Mackie won't be off our scrteens for long however as he's set to co-star in Falcon & The Winter Soldier for Disney+

We've not seen anything from the Orville for quite some time, with it's first series launching in September 2017 and a second coming just a little over a year later. Taking the year off for 2019, the team planned to be back by the end of this year. However, some changes in both home and format – as well as more obvious production hold ups – means we'll be a little further away.

The biggest change for The Orville is a move of venue. Within the US the show had been broadcast on Fox, with it being available on Fox UK on our shores. For the third it's moving to another Disney owned network, the ever growing online streaming service Hulu.

Making the announcement MacFarlane praised 20th Century Fox for their partnership over the years, mentioning the longevity he's had to create under their banner. Thugh further explained, "My friends at the network understood what I was trying to do with this series, and they've done a spectacular job of marketing, launching and programming it for these past two seasons."

MacFarlane didn't end there, hinting at further format changes thanks to being moved to a less restrictive online service. "As the show has evolved and become more ambitious production-wise, I determined that I would not be able to deliver episodes until 2020, which would be challenging for the network. So we began to discuss how best to support the third season in a way that worked for the show."

It's not all about timing and having to stick to a schedule that caused the move; but being able to raise the scope of ambition for the upcoming season. For example,s treaming services don't require a strict run time; meaning that episodes could be longer if the story required. Other bonuses include content and language freedoms, if they wish to use them.

It's also been hinted that the show will take more serious stances within the story, veering closer to modern sci fi instead of it's now retro pacing, with potential for longer arcs.

Assuming they can continue filming soon, the shows expected to launch it's third season next year. Though a new UK provider is still to be confirmed. ■

Y: THE LAST MAN

HULU ORIGINAL

Based on the original comic book series, which ended back in 2008, the FX produced show has had several false starts and delays, but it expected to finally enter production next year.



Another post-apocalyptic world story, the concept is based around the Y chromosone dying. The only man left on the planet is Yorick, who is searching to find answers to what happened and how to rebuild humanity.

Created by Brian K. Vaughan and Pia Guerra, the comic itself was an award winning piece that ran for several years under the now defunct Vertigo comics. It was a huge success, but in terms fo adapting to the TV world it's not been as smooth a journey.

After a pilt was ordered, it's first issue was losing it's showrunner. A replacement was swiftly found, but not long later it's leading star, Barry Keoghan, left the production for unknown reasons which have been speculated to be connected to scheduling conflicts with Marvel movies The Eternals.

Now set to star Ben Schnetzer as Yorick as the only male in an otherwise all female cast which includes Diane Lane, Imogen Poots, Juliana Canfield, Marin Ireland, Amber Tamblyn, and Lashana Lynch, the shows been hit with whats now the stardard 2020 production difficulites.

Other issues popped up, including complaints from PETA over the shows use of a live monkeyu to play Yoricks companion, but so far assuming productions can safely begin soon it looks like ths show will get back towards it's eventual release date early next year for a potential late 2021 or early 2022 release.

Helmed by Eliza Clark, who had previously worked on Animal Kingdom and Rubicon, will see her show launched on Hulu through a partnership with FX which FX Productions boss is hailing as a major success.

Within the pages of the original 60-volume series there are many explinations put forth as to why the male chromosone became extinct including the mythological idea that it was punishment for the "original sin" to government conspiracy theory and bio-warfare gone wrong.

If anything, the show itself should raise some intriguing questions and hopefully offer a definitive answer to where it began. ■



Starting it's life as a summer blockbuster, Stargate's real success was on the small screen. With Kurt Russell switched out for Richard Dean Anderson, Stargate SG1 continued the story of the film while opening up an entire universe of Aliens posing as ancient Gods.

FEATURE BY MARK WHITBURN
EDITED BY JAMES TYLER

Explorin the Galaxy through an ancient network of portals connecting to multiple worlds, the first offshoot series ran for ten seasons, changing from a sci fi drama to become massively light hearted and often comedic, spawning two further live action shows.

First spin off, Atlantis, saw a team explore the Pegasus galaxy where they found the fabled city on another world, while later spin off universe followed a team on board an ancient vessel they had no control over. Atlantis was cancelled after five seasons, while Universe's tense serial plot only lasted for two.

There have been other offshoots including two straight to DVD movies with the SG1 cast and an animated series, Infinity, which lasted for a season. More recently Stargate Origins launched on the official website, though it being just a series of mini-sodes based around the discovery and early experimentation of the gate, excitement quickly dwindled without a full show as most expected.

In a world of reboots and re-imagining, Stargates one of the franchises it's fans want to see come back to life and to be honest, it's a bit weird that we can get another Battlestar soft-reboot, another shot at night Rider and even a new McGyver in play, but the world of Stargate seems to have the doors closed.

Creators of the original show, Brad Wright and Joseph Mallozzi have been trying to wedge that door open ever so slightly.

The duo have been putting together a new pitch for the next adventure in the Stargate world. Instead of being a reboot, the plan is to pick up on the universe they'd created that ended with the cancellation of Universe back in 2010.

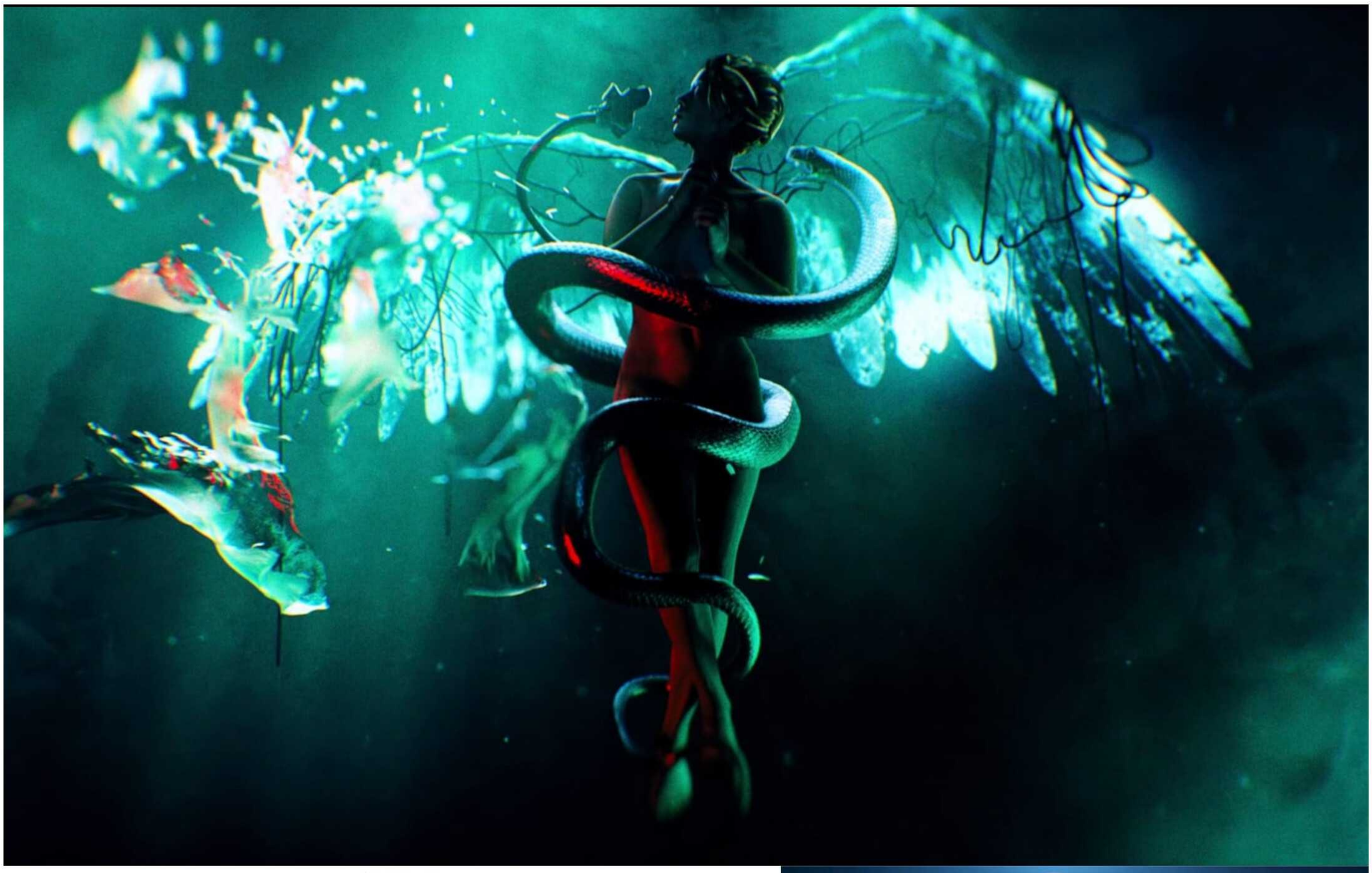
Between Universe and Atlantis, the series' left alot of unanswered questions behind. Particularly with Universe which left the crew of the Destiny in the early stages of solving a galactic mystery.

Co-creator Mallozzi has stated that his pitch aims not only to restart the Stargate franchise in a more updated setting, but answer the questions left behind; such as what happened to Destiny, and we'd hope what happened next in the Pegasus Galaxy and if the Jaffa were able to stabalise their new freedom. But it might be a long way off if it does go ahead.

The duo have both hinted that, if it does happen, they're hoping it'll be through a streaming service. And to be honest, all our fingers are crossed that it will! ■

ALTERED CARBON CANCELLED

THE TWO SEASON NETFLIX CURSE CONTINUES



ALTERED CARBON

One of the most visually stunning and compelling drama's on Netflix has fell to their curse. After a two season run, the bodyswapping sci fi based on Phillip K Dick's series has become the latest show to fall to streaming service's axe.

FEATURE BY JAMES TYLER

Launching back in 2018, Altered Carbon was the story of Takeshi Kovacs; a resistance fighter who was revived to solve a murder.

It sounds like a simple story, but based in a world where the physical bodies are merely vessels that can be bought and sold thanks to some alien tech turning the human consciousness into a swappable hard drive, the mystery quickly went into a depth of imaginative storytelling in a world where the rich have gained immportality, and the poor struggle.

Digging deep into Kovacs past, there were several threads throughout the show that worked incredibly well. The first season starred Joel Kinneman as the host body Kovacs was given, while the second saw him find both a new body, thanks to new lead actor Anthony Mackie, as well as a clone of his original portrayed by Will Yun Lee.

Unfortunately as engaging as the first season was, it cost a lot of money to maintain it's futuristic style and stunniong visuals.

Though the second season was contained in a smaller, cheaper, enviroment, it again cost a lot. Sadly, too much for Netflix to shell out in comparison to the viewing figures which remained unsustainable. Much like others shows that have been given the chop such as Sense8 which was their most expensive show to date.



Starring as Kovacs in the second season, Anthony Mackie was unlikely to return for a third after ths show established the concept of a new actor each time. Mackie won't be off our scrteens for long however as he's set to co-star in Falcon & The Winter Soldier for Disney+

Once upon a time Netflix would have been reluctant to cancel a series befoe it gained an audience, but having to constantly roll out new content as well as buy in exclusives, the bar for success has been lowered in order to ensure they're getting their moneys worth.

This brings an unfortunate end for a show that had the potential to go on for years. ■



After a very uneven season debut, Another Life was given, well... another life with the Netflix Original granted a second season to correct it's low points and continue the fascinating journey..

BY MS B

"First day filming today after our pause for COVID" Star Katee Sackhoff posted on instagram at the end off August, "Let's go kick some alien butt!"

The Netflix Original Series had a troubling start. Filled with all too familiar cliche's and tropes we'd seen for decades, it seemeed a merger of several idea into one badly produced clusterfrak of weirdness. At least until half way through the season when the show began to settle down before findig it's feet towards the end.

Reviews were generally mixed. It was a show that had potential, despite a rough start. But that potential merged with the star power of Battlestar Galactica's own Starbuck as star and producer seemed to give Netflix the jump it needed to give the showa a second chance.

The shows premise focused on an alien ship landing on Earth soil and the best of the best failing at communicating with a a seemingly dormant craft landing in the wildernesss.

Niko, as one of the worlds finest, is send out into the depths of space to find out where it came from while her husband, who just happened to be one of the crack scientists trying to communicate with the alien prode,, stayed home to solve the mystery while raisinf their child while Niko dealt with the dissent, rebellion and stresses her crew faced on what seemed like a one way mission into the unknown.

Filming was underway for Another Life's second season before the pandemic halted production and everyone had to shut down and go home.

Fortunately, the production worked hard on finding a solution to continue in spite of the cramped sets with the cast and crew isolating for two weeks near the studio in hotels before the camera's started rolling.

After a dramatic end saw the surviving crew of the Salvare discover the wider worlds out thee and the key to understaning the aliens ocupying Earth, whilst Earth begins to understand the threat ahead of them, the season ahead could be the defining make or break moment for the sci fi drama as the crew head deeper into the unknown... ■

Starring BSG's Katee Sackhoff, Selm Blair, Samuel Anderson and Shameless' Justin Chatwin, Another Life is a science fiction drama created by Aaron Martin. It's debut season is available to wach now exclusive to Netflix subscribers.



SEASON 5
THE EXPANSE

Much like Star Trek's flagship show, Discovery, The Expanse is another show that got lucky with it's filming schedule with the show's Calgary production crew wrapping up their part in February.

And much like Discovery, and other productions, it was up to the team to work from home to finish the job; a tough task with a show that uses a lot of CGI and virtual sets to create it's expanding world of space travel and future-based politics.

Last year, during Amazon's first season as the home of the Expanse, filming wrapped at the same month witht he series launched in December. This year it weas expected to folow the same pattern, but without any news from Comic Con or other virtual events, it feels like the radio silence from the team might suggest it'll come a little later than planned.

The whole Roci crew are set to return aong with other regulars Frankie Adams as Bobbie Draper and Shohreh Aghdashloo as Avasalaria after losing her role as Secretary General.

Keon Alexander, Jasai Chase Owens and Nadine Nicole have all been upgraded to regulars for the next season, which would make sense as the fifth series is based on the fifth book in which their characters have a larger part.

In book five the need to reach out and colonise the newly found worlds which has a negative effect on the power structures back in our own solar system and another political battle is waged with new private armies rising to take control.

We still hold hope for a December release, but The Expanse looks to be pushed back to early 2021. ■





"I'LL SEE YOU IN THE BEGINNING, FRIEND."

REVIEW | TENET

In a time bending sci fi thriller, a lone CIA agent finds himself working for Tenet; a group dedicated to preserving humanities survival who believe there is a weapon built in the future that's moving backwards in time and will destroy humanities past...

REVIEW BY CJ WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY MS B

Directed & Written by:
Christopher Nolan

Produced By:
Warner Bros

Release Date
August 26 2020 (UK)

Starring
John David Washington *The Protagonist*
Elizabeth Debicki *Kat*
Robert Pattison *Neil*

Also Starring
Dimple Kapadia
Martin Donavan
Fiona Dourif
Yuri Kolokolnikov
Himesh Patel
Clemense Posey
Michael Caine
Kenneth Branagh

From the mind of Christopher Nolan, Tenet took the long way round to production. Nolan had said that conceptualising the plot took twenty years, and the script itself was written over the course of seven before finally being filmed.

Nolan's idea here is traditionally big. And it opens big, with an impressive action sequence where the unnamed protagonist leads an operation in a big auditorium with big action and explosions. Though the Michael Bayness of it all falls to one moment where a bullet is “un-fired” from a gun, moving from i's victim back into the gun.

That moment of weirdness is one small hint at whats to come, and enough to let you kknow this isn't just another action movie with cool bang-bang moments.

The protagonist is injured, and wakens as a member of Tenet who explain that a cold war is brewing and that we're expecting, not just a nuclear holocaust, but worse. I'm not sure how it could get worse, however there it is.

There's a lot of ideas thrown in here. Some of which have been done before. Central to everything in the film is a mineral that reverses the entropy of objects and through that, the future is eliminating the past. This means time doesn't always work in the right order. Car chases can, and do, happen in reverse, for example. And suddenly the Next Generations All Good Things gets smashed together with Red Dwarf's Backwards in the weirdest and most expensive of ways.

Playing with spies as your characters, there's obviouslyt a few James Bond style stuff as well, which is a bit cliche but it feels oddly cliche on purpose. Kind of like Inception; it's a genre we all know the usual ins and outs of, but layered in sci fi twists and the tropes that come with that genre as well.

If you're brave enough to get to a cinema in these times, I'd suggest not going to the bar first. Not only because, you know, the obvious. But this is a story that's told through the past, present and future. To really come to grips with all the time bending mayhem, and the story's core concept, you don't want to go into it with a few pints going to your head!

Asa story, it's a fascinating concept. There's a sense that Nolan is really digging into various thoughts and ideas, and if his commentary on how long it's taken to work it all out over the years is genuine, then it's a real testament to the dedication and imagination of the ever-inventive film maker. It has a huge scope, both in the sets, backdrops and locations being huge in visual appeal and in the high concept nature of the core concepts within the film; merging several different previously explored ideas into one mega-explosion of sci fi awesomeness.

Of course, there is a downside. Much like a lot of Nolan's leading characters, the entire motivation of plot and scope. Which leaves our protagonist, once again, a bit of a hollow shell who's motivations and background remains mostly unexplored and underdeveloped.

In spite of that John David Washington's performance was extremely impressive in the role and in leading the film; and much like a lot of Nolan's work, it was a great experiment in exploring a new theme which not only entertains, but makes you put on your thinking cap.

It's neither a perfect film, nor Nolan's best work. However Tenet managed to present some intriguing ideas, some stunning visuals and an intelligent film to the surface. ■



Molly is the primary carer for her father, Leo; a man who stares into the distance, seeming constantly lost, mostly non-verbal and who relies on her to make sure he gets through every day. Focusing on just one day, The Roads Not Taken shows a glimpse in their life and the thoughts that lay underneath Leo's dementia.

REVIEW BY MS BEHAVE

When I read the synopsis of the film, I wasn't entirely sure what to expect. It sounded like a very bleak film. And I'll be honest, it was. But it also became a big of a journey, going through parallel worlds that could have been all imagined within Leo's head.

Everything within the characters strained lives plays out right off the bat. Molly panics when Leo doesn't answer his phone, or buzzer and eventually barges into his apartment relieved he's still there and alive. Though the impression is made that he may be alive, but he's just not living. Deep in the heart of one of the most vibrant cities in the world, Leo is a shell in the middle unable to experience any of it.

Thoughts and feelings aren't something he can portray well any more. Molly has to shuttle him around New York city for some appointments which is a bit of a pain in itself.

The building blocks are already there for an emotional journey. It could have been more in the vein of the Angriest Man in Brooklyn following the two's journey through New York until their final destination. Instead it takes another direction by following Leo's thoughts. A lifetime of regrets pushing him to wonder and fantasise about what he could have done differently and the lives he could have led before ending up there.

In making this film, writer and director Sally Potter made it from a very personal place. Outwith the film making life, she had cared for her brother when he was suffering through dementia which has helped to inspire a very deeply emotional story.

Those realities Leo creates in his head aren't the cheery escapes you'd imagine. All three stories he fabricates in his head, these parallel lives he considers and imagines playing out, all end in miserable ways. Maybe not enough to mirror his current life state, but enough to show him that no matter how things turn our, life is suffering. Life is miserable. There's no escape from that. Whicdh does make the film rather bleak, but also fascinating.

With some brilliant performances and very thoughtful writing, The Roads Not Taken is a deeper film than it could have been. The story itself skips the obvious and goes straight to fantasy. But it's a fantasyt many of us can connect with on both sides, and that some of us fear having to go throughl.

It's not a film with a lot of lasighs and most parts it is bleak. Though it comes alive with some steller performances as well as a carefully planned and nuanced story that leaves you with a hint of hope. ■

The Roads Not Taken skipped cinema and went straight to streaming, You can watch now via Hulu



THE NEW MUTANTS

Pushed back two years only to have the precarious release date of peak pandemic, New Mutants was always going to be a little bit doomed. After being trapped in the void of being perfected before it was finally given a launch, the first question we should ask is... was it worth the wait?

PREVIEW BY MS BEHAVE

The short answer is simply, not really.
Five teenagers have all began to exhibit mutant powers, with each being discovered in tragic consequences. Brought together at a hospital surrounded by impenetrable forcefields, they all fall under the supervision of Dr Reyes who tells them she's there to help refine their powers and cure them of being little pockets of terror to the general public.

One of the group, Dani, accidentally makes everyone relive their worst moments, bringing each tragedy back to life and as it happens, they realise they're not being prepped to join the X Men like they've been telling themselves, but realising the true nature of their carers...

It's all got a nice claustrophobic horror vibe where no one can really escape their pain or their torture. Story wise it's kind of like the films you'd watch on the old horror channel or an 80's classic where the stakes are high despite being trapped in the enemy fortress.

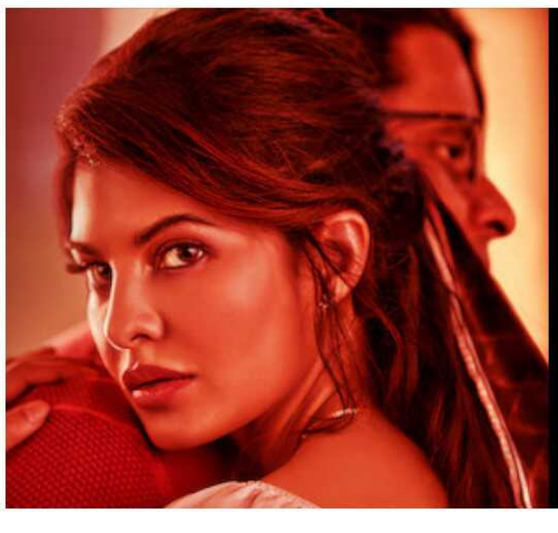
Despite being somewhat of a classic format thats impossible to mess up, it just misses the mark. The pacing is more horrifying than the frights they just don't deliver.

There are some good threads throughout, particularly the way they've dealt with each characters own trauma, but the film as a whole just fails to pick up an steam with a lot of wasted time. It feels like a long, long teaser before racing to the finish line towards the end. With some horrible dialogue and special effects which were a little underwhelming.

Even if it does take too long to find any sense of plot or story, the cast are all on point and really do their best to bring together what could be seen as a lot of messing about until anything interesting happens.

It's not a complete dumpster fire. It's a decent enough film with just enough to scrape by. But as a whole, especially after waiting for two hours, it's incredibly underwhelming. ■

New Mutants is in cinemas now. Remember to check with your local theatre to ensure times are available.



MRS SERIAL KILLER
When a doctor gets jailed for a string of shocking murders, his loyal wife sets out to commit a copycat crime to prove his innocence.
Subtitled for English-speaking audiences.

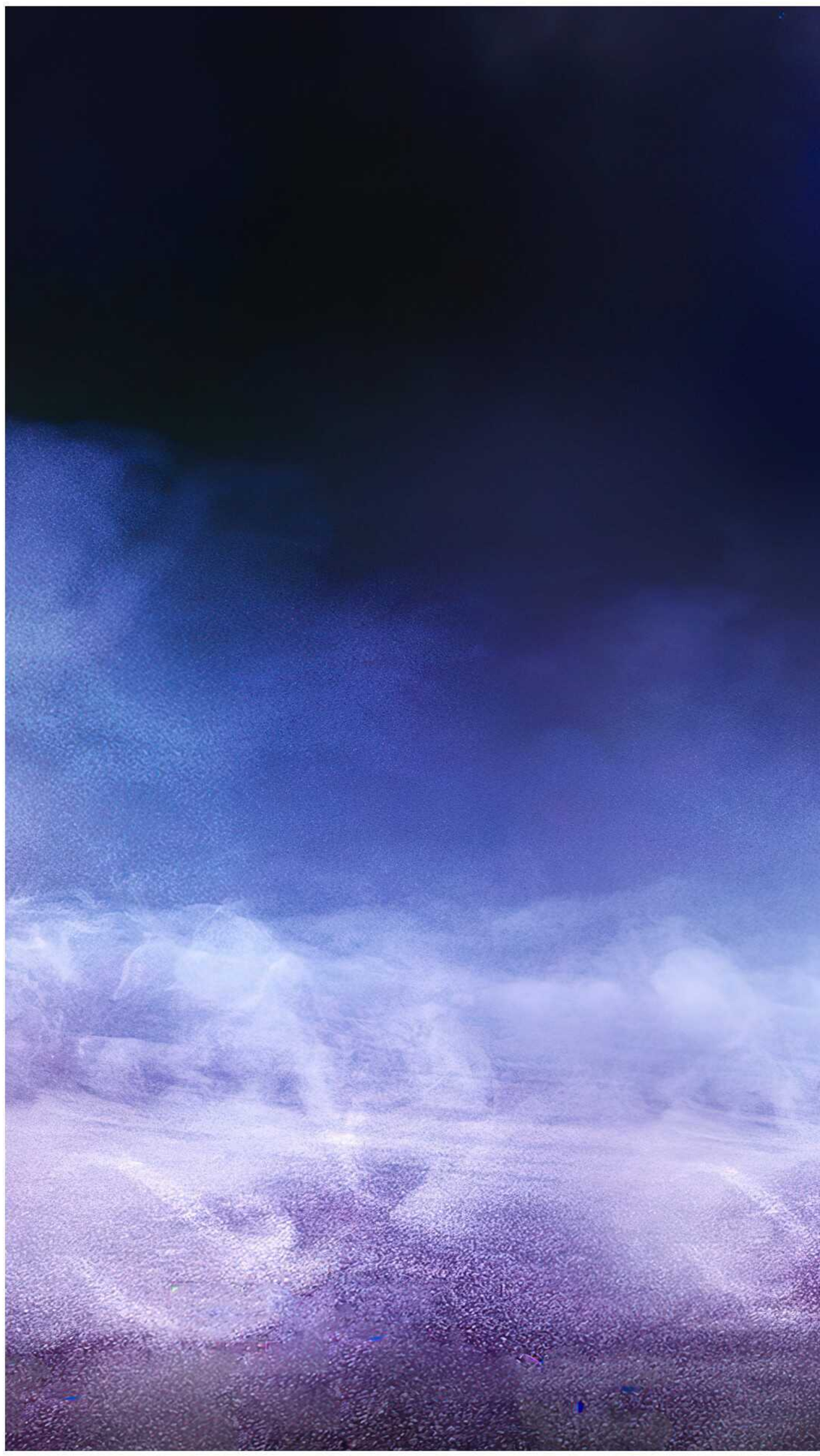
Released May 1st, exclusive to Netflix



ALL DAY AND A NIGHT
After killing a young couple in a housebreaking gone wrong, Jahkor ends up in prison with his abusive father and through begins to contemplate his life and what led to his criminal behaviours in an enlightening and deeply contemplative film.

Released May 1st, exclusive to Netflix

BILL & TED FACE THE MUSIC



One day in 1989 the lives of Bill S Preston Esq and "Ted"! Theodore Logan changed forever when strange things were afoot at the Circle K. Meeting time traveller Rufus, and their future selves, the two best friends were told that they would one day become saviours of the world with their music.

More than thirty years later, the future is at risk. Now middle aged and losing hope, they still haven't written the song that'll define them and a brighter future. Venturing back into the circuits of time, Bill & Ted begin to find a way to find that one song that'll change everything.

REVIEW BY CJ

Bill & Ted's original film, Excellent Adventure, was a weird one. A typical light hearted and somewhat brain dead high school comedy, but one that you actually have to know things in order to understand and find funny. For it's crude humour and over the top silliness, if the viewer is as clueless as the lead characters, it doesn't work.

Though what worked more was a light hearted time travel film; two kids who were abuot to drop out of high school and, due to their future worth and importance, if it were allowed to happen it's cause a huge rupture in the space-time continuum and ensure a peaceful future would never happen.

With the help of Rufus and a loan of a time machine disguised as a telephone box, as is the tradition, the first film saw them race through time, collecting historical figures and supposedly learning about the worlds past so they could ace their history report. A sequel two years later, Bogus Journey, saw a faction from the future try and shape a new world by sending Evil Bill & Ted's back to take place of the originals; which resulted in less time travel and more metaphysical storytelling as the duo would find themselves in the afterlife, playing twister with Death and meeting God.

Since their younger days, the duo may have returned as grown ups, but they're still the immature kids at heart. And thats one of the films best qualities. Now married with children, they've been waiting for destiny to come to them instead of knocking it's door down. Knowing their destiny is together, their childhood bond hasn't left them and as a result they've never truly grown up. Immaturity and co-dependence combined has caused another problem in their lives that threatens the potential utopia ahead of us all; marital breakdown.

In the grand scale of the universes problems, they still haven;t become famous musicians. They haven't even left their garage or released a track. Not even on YouTube.

Just as the first film all came down to Bill and Ted passing their history report to secure the timeline, the return see's them face up to their mid life crisis and how it's effecting, not just their lack of an adult life, but the entire universe as the future knows it.

Due to George Carlin passing away in 2008, they have a new guide in Rufus' daughter who takes Bill and Ted to the future where they learn their lack of progress means the timeline will collapse in 77 minutes. And it's up to them to pull their fingers out ans fix the world, and themselves.

And that obviously involves them stepping back into that phone box once again, zipping through time and finding the best musicians in history including Jimi Hendrix and Louis Armstrong, as well as re-encountering Death, a killer robot and having the whole family covering their backs.

Let's be honest. A Bill and Ted sequel with the two lead actors well into their mid-50's, and one of them now known for being somewhat of a massive action star, and where the audience will have grown up while the script hasn't.... it's not going to be a cinematic masterpiece. We're not going to get a Lord of the Rings Epic. But thankfully we do get a film with a lot of heart, personality and both writers and actors who you can feel love revisiting these characters once again.

The concept to these films is obviously ridiculous. But for all their time travelling shenanigans, the heart of them is more fantasy than touching reality. For Bill and Ted, this is their fantasy, the letter from the Owl that takes them out of their under achieving lives to transcend them to another level. And that does give this film an incredibly amount of heart. Especially when they bring in the kids who idolise their parents and not only stand as the generation that'll carry their message of unity, but become an integral

The infamous George Carlin appeared in the first two films as future guide Rufus. Unfortunately Carlin died of heart failure in 2008. One of the most influential comedians of the 20th century, Carlin still makes a sneaky - and very welcome-appearance in Face the Music thanks to archive footage.





part of why they finally achieve their dreams.

It's hard to take Reeves here at times. He's not as flamboyant as he was when he first took on the role in 1989, and every now and then, even minus a beard he's still John Wick or Neo to us all now. Whereas Winters might have a few wrinkles, but he's still Bill and both of them still have that spirit about them. Both of them taking these ridiculous characters extremely seriously adds a lot more depth than if they just played it for laughs. They're still the idiots in the room, but have this incredibly curiosity and ability to recognise their situation and act on their feet where more modern versions of the “dumb duo” have been less than complimentary.

Seeing them now obviously wasn't going to capture that teenage spirit, but revisiting them as their energy begins to fade, their vision of what they could be is slowly dwindling, that their dreams just haven't come true, is very poignant. And something that those of us old enough to have seen the first film in our youth can empathise with.



Starring Alex Winter & Keanu Reeves, Bill & Ted Face te Music was released in cinema's in the UK . Though due to the massive COVID cases within the US, was released on streaming services overseas.

There's a lot more to the film that's so silly it's just stupid fun. From alternate versions of the pair and brilliant performances by their teenage daughters Theadora and Wilhemena.

There's a lot more to the film that's so silly it's just stupid fun. From alternate versions of the pair and brilliant performances by their teenage daughters Theadora and Wilhemena. And of course, their solution to the infinite problem of fast tracking themselves towards rock stardom is just as silly as the base concept of these films in itself.

But overall, when it comes down to it, Face the Music was just the right film at just the right time, offering nostalgia, silliness and laughs aplenty when we all needed them most. ■

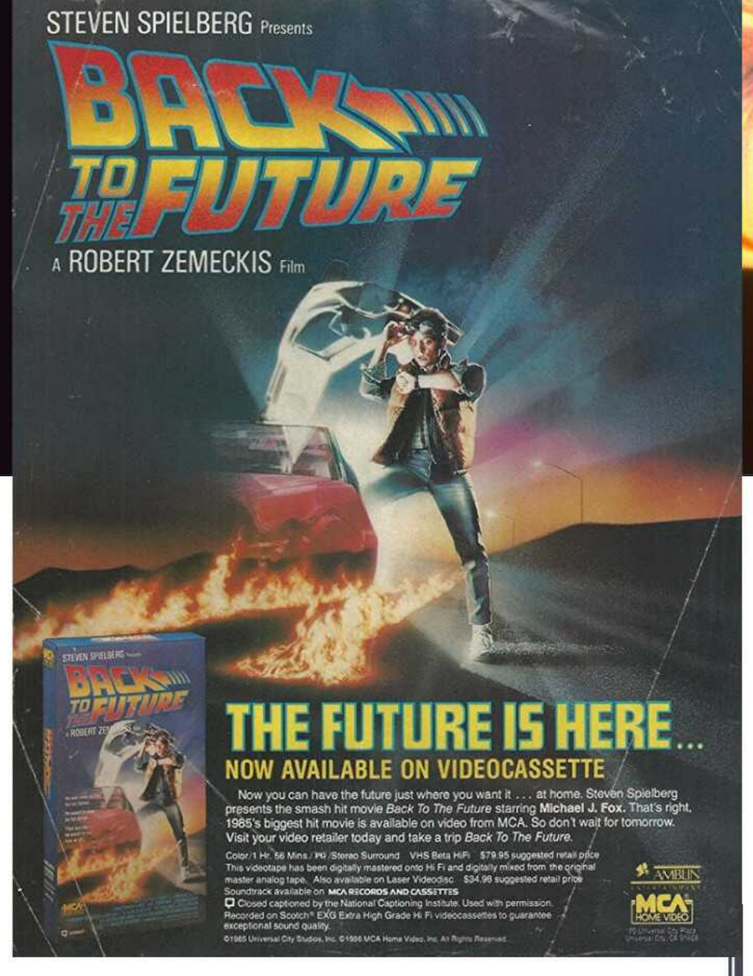
BACK TO THE FUTURE

RETRO REVIEW

For years, he's been the last word in professional football. Now he's Earth's only chance for a future. Sam J Jones entered the cinematic wqorld in 1980 ready to save every one of us!

Article by James Tyler





Original Release:
July 1985

Directed by:
Robert Zemeckis

Written by:
Robert Zemeckiss & Bob Gale

Starring
Michael J Fox, Christopher Lloyd, Lea Thomson, Crispin Glover, Thomas F Wilson

There are few films that can seep into the culture of society, even fewer that everyone and their dog has seen. Even fewer that seem to be universally well remembered. Back to the Future's reputation goes all the way to film school, where several high profile schools have held it up as an example of a near perfect script. For those not in film school, its still remembered fondly as one of the best sci fi and 80's movies of all time.

Back to the Future is the fortunate tale of Marty McFly. A generic young cool kid who's always late for school, who loves playing in his band and who comes from a poor household with an awkward father who's living an unfulfilled life.

Home life not being quite what he'd wanted, Marty makes a strange friendship with Doc Brown, Hill Valley's local mad scientist who has went and built himself a time machine out of a Delorean. Called out to film the testing of the time travelling vehicle, Marty starts off filming the experiments in a car park late at night, before finding out the Doc has nicked plutonium from Libyan terrorists, who are understandably a bit upset and charge at them with guns ablazing.

After seeing Doc Brown gunned down, Marty jumps into the car, tries to race away and accidentally ends up stranded in 1955 where he meets his parents as teenagers, disrupts the timeline and endangers his very existence. And the only person who can help is Doc Brown himself, who hasn't quite figured out how to build a time machine....

As time travel films go, a lot of the plotting is fairly standard. Marty goes back in time and interferes with the events of 1955 and it all went wrong. In this case, he found out his dad was in a tree trying to watch his mum get undressed through binoculars. The story he grew up with was that his dad, George, got hit by a car outside his ▷





mum – Lorraine's – house and the nightingale effect kicked in. When Marty see's George falling from the tree, despite realising his dad was a bit of a dirty as a teenager, Marty instinctively pushes him out the way of the accident and gets knocked over himself; meaning George never had Lorraine's affections. Instead, Marty became the person Lorraine grew a crush on which.... is the entire reason Disney passed up on producing the film!

Looking back, thats one of the most baffling aspects of Back to the Futures production. No one would touch it. Some studios didn't think it was cool, calling it old fashioned and lacking in sex appeal. Meanwhile Disney's rejection all came down to Lorraine's crush on Marty. All the back and forth did have a benefit though,, allowing Zemeckis and Gale to refine the script and change certain elements; for example, the time machine was originally a fridge, but cars are cooler, right? Following Zemeckis' hit Romancing the Stone, studios suddenly gained interested in the script they'd been rejecting on a loop, and the one producer that had faith in it just happened to be Steven Spielberg. And no ones arguing with him!

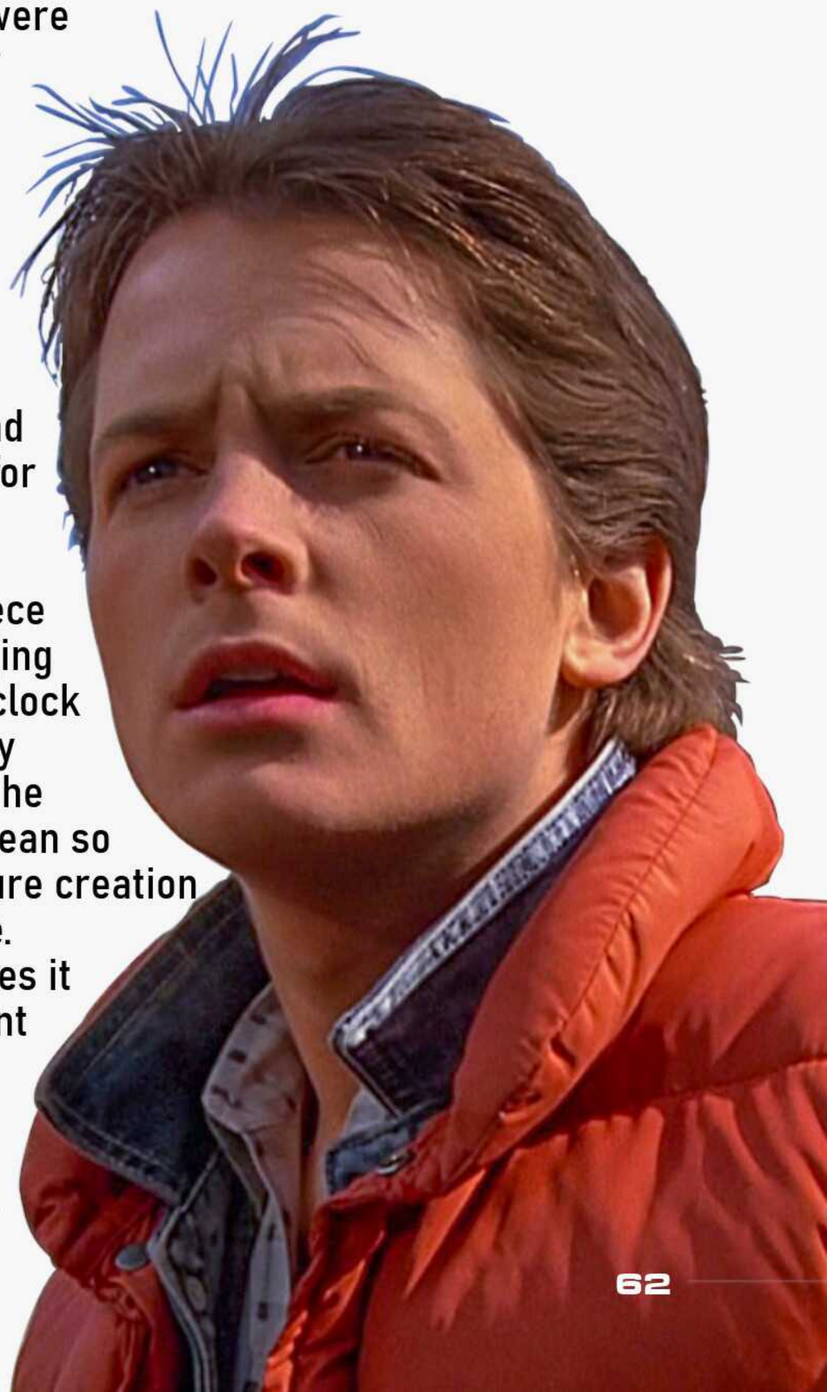
One of the reasons it's considered a near perfect script is it's opening scenes. There's no room for confusion or a dragged out introduction to the setting or characters. Even with Doc Brown not appearing for a good twenty minutes, he's already established as a crackpot inventor in the opening scenes. Marty's quickly noted as the cool kid assistant. And everyone's fairly sightly established, from the strict headteacher Strickland, to Marty's family, they even fit in a natural moment of them saying how they fell in love and introduce high school bully Biff, who's still kicking around with George under his thumb, which gives subtext to why George isn't well regarded by his children, and how his lack of confidence has effected them all.

It might seem over the top to highlight it, but that exposition is quick, natural and fast. Even when Doc Brown arrives on screen, the often overly complex time travel bit is done swiftly without any need to jump through scientific hoops thanks to a test drive with his dog, Einstein. Everything you need to know is breezed right through and sets the stage for whats to come; both in what you need to know, and in setting up that tone.

Despite being an 80's classic, it's mostly set in 1955 with a combination of the usual “fish out of water” trope as Marty tries to adjust to the rose tinted view of the past the film presents. It's a bit of an innocent view that takes a few swipes at the era and how far the world had changed and progressed without being too heavy handed. Such as a moment Marty recognises a cleaner as the mayor in his time, which is met with disbelief. Another notes on wider cultural shifts as Doc Brown refused to believe Ronald Reagan could become president as he was a celebrity in the 50's, not a politician. Which has an extra layer of laughs decades on.

The sets for Hill Valley added another intriguing layer toi the innocence of the 50's presented. The sets were kept neat and tidy for the 50's, but trashed to look grungy and worn down for the 80's segments. Which is just a small detail considering the set dressing, costume and special effects used for the film, which all climaxes into an impression action piece with Doc Brown hanging from the town hall's clock tower as it's struck by lightning to channel the energy into the Delorean so he can power his future creation and send Marty home.

What really makes it though is this innocent story of Marty trying to make sure his parents fall in love. Not only because if ▶



they don't, he won't exist, but in just this sweet nature of trying to make sure they have the life he's seen them have. It may not have been glamorous, but he did grow up with loving parents. But in doing so, in twisting events to try and recreate that spark of a moment that they ell in love, he ends up changing much more than how they got together, but their entire lives.

With the original plan out the window, Marty and Doc Brown conjure up another idea; he'll pretend to take advantage of Lorraine so that George can chase him off and save the day, but Biff interferes and when George goes to fake-save Lorraine, he ends up being mocked and belittled by the bully who's – in the original timeline – continues to have a hold over George through his entire life. But in that moment, with the scenario changed, George does something he'd never done before Marty caused the divergence: He fights back.

That punch is a huge moment in the film and one of the reasons it remains so wholesome. The film was carried by it's leads Christopher Lloyd and Michael J Fox, who are absolutely brilliant and have amazing chemistry together. It is their film after all, and their casting was perfect. But for all the time travel shenanigans, the 50's nostalgia and the awkward incestuous nature of Lorraine having a crush on her future-son, it's that moment that pulls it all together.

Marty spends the entire film trying to make George likeable and desireable – realising that his dad was neither in his youth. He was a drip. An introverted writer with no friends, no confidence and no belief in himself. But by sheer luck, Marty doesn't just inspire him to take the lead and be forward in showing Lorraine how into her she is, but through a series of unfortunate events gives him the confidence he needs to stand up for himself.

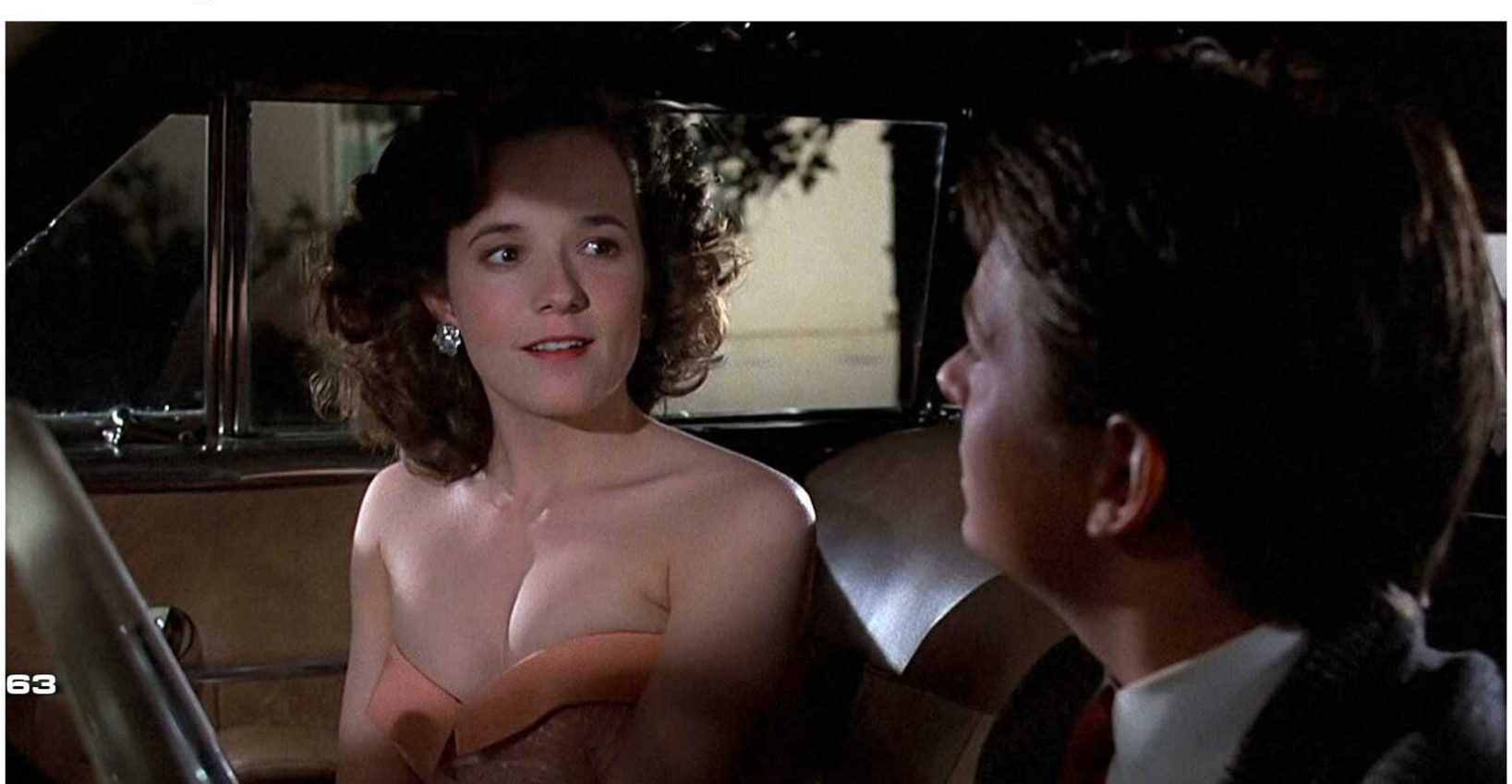


Of course, there's more to the film than that. Marty showing up Biff and making him crash into a manure truck is one scene thats always remembered, and repeated in subsequent sequels that no one thought would ever happen. The clock tower scene, where Doc Brown's able to send Marty home and see his time machine, which in 1955 is just an idea, zoom back to the future; and those final moments where Marty arrives home to mourn his mentor only to realise.... he'd been able to change that too: the Doc wore a bullet proof vest. It's filled with those spectacular moments; which all come from some very clear and very simple story telling.

Altered Carbon Season 2 has a few notable sci fi cameo's this season as the 'Meth' who brecruits Kovacs to protect him is portrayed by Stargate's Michael Shanks; Battlestar Galactica's Alessandro Juliani and one of the most prominent "Hey, that guy!" faces, Neal McDonough makes

But that moment George takes action? That's the film. Thats everything. It's both watching the geek take hold of himself, and seeing your old man live up to the idealistic childhood vision. “My dad can beat up your dad!” It's childish, but in this setting, heart-warming.

When Marty gets home, thats where some perhaps just criticism can come into play. 80's idealism of having money and things plays out. George is rich(ish), Marty's got a spanking





new car. They're yuppies and life is good. Which, it is fair to critique; happiness and money don't go hand in hand and you don't need to have grown up rich and successful in order to be happy. But this was the 80's where money did equate happiness and status, and there's barely an 80's film without everyone somehow having a massive house and a merry family who are all just picture perfect.

But that success and wealth was onlly part of what Marty gained when he got home. He got a father who was confident enough to follow his dreams and become a writer. He came home to siblings who'd been raised by a confident man, not a coward. And he came home to Biff being a relatively nicer person.

A lot of us are defined from our hopes and fears. A lot of us hold back, and we hear that insecurity in the back of our heads telling us we're not good enough. For all it's time travelling shenanigans, this film was the story of how Marty was able to redefine his dads life; how he helped make sure that insecurity didn't dominate him.

It may seem overly commercialised all these years on, but if an entire film can come down to how much better life is if you believe in yourself? If you stand up for yourself? Thats a win. For it's perfect script, it's wonderful casting and it's memorable moments, that little spark of hope makes this movie one to treasure even 35 years on.

The first in an accidental trilogy Back to the Future and it's subsequent sequels are available to own on home video, as well as to view on multiple streaming services including Amazon Prime Video.

BACK TO THE TRIVIA

Sid Sheinberg at Universal Pictures hated the title and pushed for a play on the barn scene where Marty's mistaken for an alien. After suggesting and pushing the title "Spaceman From Pluto", Steven Spielberg sent out a memo thankling him for the joke, noting how funny the crew found it. Sheinberg never suggested a change of title again.

Doc Brown notes early in the film thattt it took a lot of years and his entire family fortuine to build the time machine. At the time, he's living in a converted garage; in 1955, the day he has the idea, he's living in the family mansion that was suspected to be burned down 30 years later, and the land sold, in a case of insurance fraud to fund his dream.

In the original script the time machine was funded by Marty helping Doc Brown to sell piratte videos. Universal wasn't fond ot the idea for obvious reasons, so it was dropped.

The height difference between Michael J Fox (5'4) and Christopher Lloyd (6'1) led director Robertt Zemekckis to frame shots of them together ith Fox in the foreground to balance the difference. In shots next to each other, Lloyd would hunch over to keep them both in frame.

Thomas F. Wilson is solely known for the role as Biff. He later became a comedian, signing about all the questions he'd be asked about the films on a loop and after more than 30 years of being asked the same questions, he tends to walk around with postcards to hand out covering the most asked by fans.

In contrast to Biff, Wilson is known for being a very pleasant person who used his experience being bullied in high school for the part.

Most remember the film with "To Be Continued" at the end, however this was only added in home release. At the time there were no plans for a sequal and as the writers had a rough few years, the success and request for more actually caught them off guard.

Ronald Reagan gets a name drop in the film when 1955 Doc Brown asks Marty who the president is and he laughs as Reagan, in 1955, was a Hollywood actor. Reagan had noted on several occasions that Back to the Future was one of his favourite films.

FLEETS FAVOURITE FILMS



TIME TRAVEL

SELECTED BY JAMES TYLER, DOFC

Star Trek's flagship show is reborn with a trip to the future, Bill & Ted are back and Back to the Future is celebrating 35 years. So what better time to talk about, uh.... time....

Time travels one of those subjects that can be inventive, fun or filled with chaos and shenanigans. It's a sci fi trope that offers multiple different rules, from the McFly's being zapped out of history to the more modern idea of alternate timelines being developed with any changes you may make.

It's always one of the most fun and inventive concepts; offering us a visit from the future, a dive into the past or a consistent loop where time and space suddenly stop and you begin experiencing the same moments all over again.

Looking back over the years of time travel movies, I've maybe not picked the difinitive list and I'm sure someone out there someones upset I didn't through in a Planet of the Apes or maybe even a Looper, but of all the time bending films in all the worlds, there are a few that I can watch time and time again...



TERMINATOR 2: JUDGEMENT DAY

"Of all the would-be fathers who came and went over the years, this thing, this machine, was the only one who measured up."

Turning the baddie into the goodie, Arnie returns as a reprogrammed machine from the future to protect a young John Conner from a new, more advanced Terminator. One of the few films that manages to surpass the original.



DONNIE DARKO

"I hope that when the world comes to an end, I can breathe a sigh of relief, because there will be so much to look forward to."

Followed by a man in a rabbit suit, waiting for the end of the world, Donnie Darko is a troubled teen who's world around him is spiraling out of control. Time travel's a bit of a hidden in plain sight element to a weird and oddly thoughtful film.



STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT

"I've got a four-alarm hangover. It's either from all that whiskey, or your laser beam. Or both...."

As the Borg invade the past to destroy Earths future, Captain Picard has to face his biggest fears and insecurities while the crew try to ensure the first warp flight still happens. Undoubtedly the best of the TNG cast on the big screen with loads of action, a few laughs and big speeches!



GROUNDHOG DAY

"What if there is no tomorrow? There wasn't one today."

On his most hated annual assignment, a bored and egotistical weatherman shows nothing but boredom and contempt for being put out on the job. Unfortunately, it doesn't end. Reliving the day over and over again, giving him the chance to do what he wants before finally finding a way to try and have the perfect day



HOT TUB TIME MACHINE

"One little change has a ripple effect and it effects everything else. Like a butterfly floats its wings and Tokyo explodes or there's a tsunami, in like, you know, somewhere."

It's not going to blow any minds or change the genre, but as a comedy it's pretty fun. Three guys travel back in time, fight their urges to change anything in the future and try to make sure their very existence doesn't make their future any more messed up than it already is!



TWELVE MONKEYS

"Nobody is going to die! You're not going to save the world, okay?"

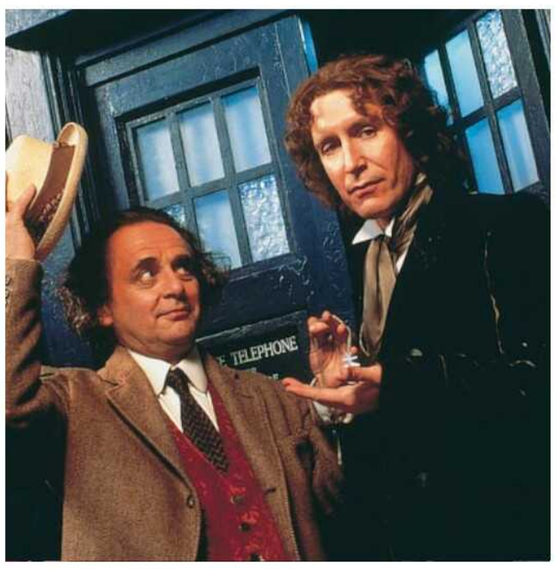
In a future where the Earth has been ravaged by a deadly plague, convict James Cole is sent back to try and stop it all from happening. Which would be nice if they got the right year... Terry Gilliam's time bending film bounces around with time travel, paranoia and plays with perception before realising what can't be undone.



TIME BANDITS

"God isn't interested in technology. He cares nothing for the microchip or the silicon revolution. Look how he spends his time, forty-three species of parrots! Nipples for men!"

Getting caught up with some thieving time travellers, a young boy ends up racing through the ages with them as they hide from all things good and evil. Basically, if you don't love this film, you have no soul.



DOCTOR WHO

"The world's about to end, and here I am, stuck in traffic."

Made as a backdoor pilot, the TV movie was the only adventure for Paul McGann. As the Doctor transfers the Masters remains to Gallifrey, it all goes horribly wrong as he crash lands in the US in 1996, gets shot and has to rediscover who he is after regeneration while tracking down his biggest nemesis.



BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III

"Your future is whatever you make it."

As the Doc is stranded in 1885, Marty goes back in time to save him. With no power, tech or help they have to find a way to get back to... well, you know. Sure, most people like the second one better, but going back to basics offered a lot more character time and maturity to end the trilogy.



THE TIME MACHINE

"What have you done? Thousands of years of building and rebuilding, creating and recreating so you can let it crumble to dust."

One of the definitive time travel stories follows HG Wells trip to the future in his time machine; thoughhe doesn't find the utopian society he'd hoped for, but instead the remains of civilisation after centuries of devestating war. The Time Machine may look dated now, but is still timeless.

STARBASE EUROPA

Our fleet hub is more than just Trek: Through the pandemic especially, the fleet connections are more important than ever. As well as Trek talk and sci fi shenanigans, Europa is also a place to welcomer other conversations - so share your lockdown films, activities and help keep each other sane before we all end up wearing army boots and gigham dresses!

HOME RELEASE

ON SCREEN REVIEW

SPUTNIK

ART PICTURES STUDIO

DVD

Written by Oleg Malovichko & Andrei Zolotarev
Directed by Egor Abramenko
Starring Oksana Akinshina, Pyotr Fyodorov, Fedor Bondarchuk
Initial Release: August 2020 (Russia)

At the peak of the cold war, a Soviet ship's mission does wrong when returning from the Soyuz space station. On it's return the ship crash lands, with only its commander surviving. Digging deeper into what happened, and what rattled him, it soon becomes clear that he wasn't the only survivor of the crash...

Konstantin is one of their best men in the program. His survival is obviously good news, but his co-pilots death leaves a huge mystery. It wasn't the crash that killed him. It was whatever ripped his head of that killed him. Now that Koinstantin's in a reclusive state of shock, under guard in a locked down facility, his boss Colonel Semiradov wants answers and brings in Tatyana, a psychotherapist who he believes will help Konstantin back to health.

For a first time film director, this is surprisingly good work from Egor Abramenko. Early on it's as you'd expect. A tense, psychological investigation with some excellent pacing and a lot of tease as Tatyana tries to draw out what Konstantin knows, what he witnessed; the truth of what happened.



And in one moment it all changes when a weird little creature exiting Konstantin's body showing us the alien inside him, using his body as a wonderful little hiding place. Most will remember Sputnik the satellite, launched by Russians during the space race. Most don't know the word means “Companion”. It might not be warm and cuddly, but thats exactly whats came back.

What resultsis a psychological thriller, that quickly becomes a horror in the second act before turning into distrust and tension towards the end. I'll admit, that does all fall apart a little as it races to the finish

There are some cliche's and tropes we've seen before. Alien inhabitation is clearly, well, Alien. Not exclusively so. Stargate did the same thing, as has several others.

There's really a lot to love in the film, from the nostalgic look at the Russian miitary from a homeland perspective, to the well-paced script and aura of suspense early on, even though it does get bogged down a litle by a swift politicalised climax with everyone having their own agenda's.

It also doesn't go too over the top or aim for massive shocks, which is a real bonus as such storytelling wouldn't work within the huanced world they've crafted.

A mostly solid and engaging film, Sputnik's a weird hidden gem and a great start for Abramenkos film career. ■

Subtitled in English, Sputnik is available to own on DVD from October 19th



ALFRED HITCHOCK: CLASSICS COLLECTION

BLURAY

Very few names stand the test of time as well as Alfred Hitchcock. Still known today as a master of suspense, many of his films have stood the test of time to become unforgettable, and unmissable classics of cinema.

Upscaled to 4K Ultra HD, a new release of some of his best work is coming to home release which includes two versions of Psycho; one which most of us will have seen having been edited for video and TV broadcast, and an extended uncut version which restores the mostly undeen full version of the film as seen in cinema's back in 1960.

With four classic films scaled to the max and hours of bonus features, the Classics Collection is a must own for anyone who's a fan of Hitchcock or even cinema in general! ■

The Classics Collection was released on September 7th and is available to own in full now. Prices range between £68-88.



FURY FROM THE DEEP

BBC

DVD | BLURAY | DIGITAL

Directed by Hugh David
Writen by Victor Pemberton
Starring Patrick Troughton, Frazer Hines, Deborah Watling
Initial Release: March 1968

Much like many of the BBC;s original archives, Fury from the Deep is one of the many pieces of film that vanished.

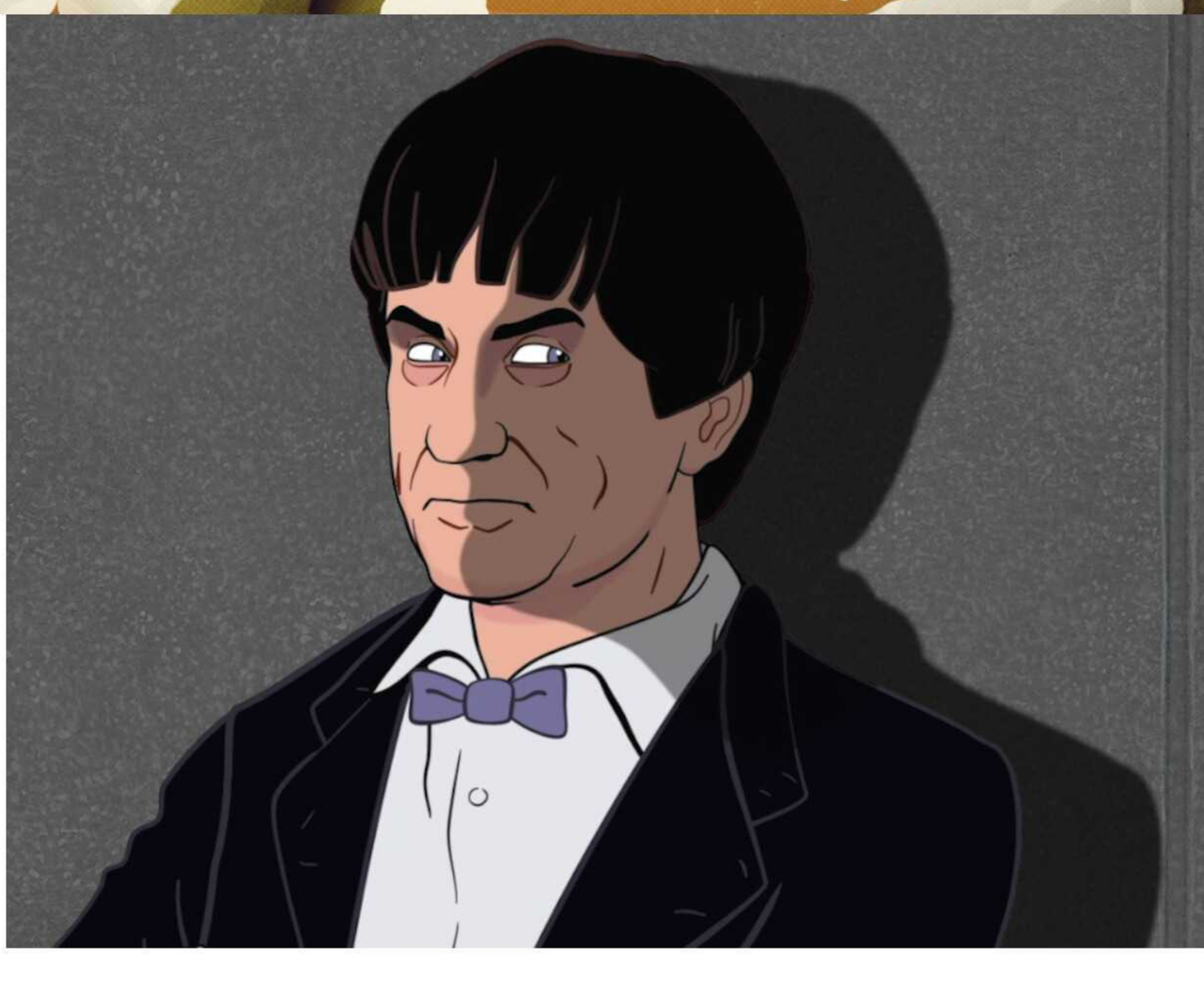
Using audio recordings that have survived through the years, the episode is being recut as an animation with it's original cast replaced with new cartoon bodies.

Arriving on the coast of Sout England, the Doctor and his companions find themselves on a base drawing natural gasses using a long series of pipes to off shore facilities in the North Sea.

People working on the complex have been mysteriously vanishing, but the boss doesn't want to shut up shop just yet. The Doctor disagrees, as he's convinced he can hear something in the pipes. Something alive. And soon enough it attacks; a vile and vicious sea creature using the base as a point of entry, the first step to takking over the human race and destroying us all.

It's always a joy to rekindle the clasic Doctor Who episodes, and to have more of Troughton's long lost run be restored - albeit in animated form with new visualisations - is a welcome addition to the catalogue. ■

Doctor Who: Fury From The Deep was released on September 14th; including a special steelbook edition.



> Doctor, why is it that we always land up in trouble?

BOLDLY GO

THE CONTINUING MISSION



71 EXPANDING UNIVERSE

As the Nickelodeon show title gets officially confirmed, the Star Trek Universe looks to expand far beyond the stars...



73 LOWER DECKS

Mike McMahon's new offering is Star Trek's first adult comedy within the franchise. Ahead of it's UK release date we take a quick peek through the first batch of episodes.

77 KELVIN TIMELINE OR BEYOND?

Three pitches, many ideas.... will the film franchise to back to tthe Kelvin Timeline or reboot? We look over the options on the table.

79 PICARD AT SDCC

Between seasons the cast of Star Trek Picard joined the virtual panels of tthis years SDCC and we're here witht he highlights!

81 DISCOVERY SEASON 3

On the eve of Discovery's third season, we look forward to the future and speculate about who and what they'll find in the 32nd century - Spoilers: That includes the first trans & non binary characters in Trek's regular cast!.



87 IT'S ABOUT THEIR FINEST MOMENTS

As we race towards Discovery's third outing, we're taking a look back at the second seasons best and most memorable moments!





Expanding further as ViacomCBS continue's to push for more Trek round the year, one of the most unique shows to enter the line up has finally dropped more information little by little as Nickelodeon's Star Trek Prodigy edges closer to launch.

ARTCLE BY JAMES TYLER

Suffering "franchise fatigue" in the late 90's and earlyt 2000's, with many concepts and pitches for Star Trek revolving around the same concept, the new production team at Secret Hideout have been aiming to bring some variety and originality into their concepts.

Discovery is an adventure, Picard is a contempative show and Lower Decks is the comedy. The one show not being made in-house at Secret Hideout is one Executive Producer Alex Kurtzman was keen on handing to Nickelodean - specialists in kids TV - to roll with and bring another new format.

Star Trek Prodigy was described early on as a way to introduce young fans to the Star Trek Universe, offering a more innocent view at the universe to appeal to younger viewers.

As we'd reported on before, the concept is rogue teens living outside the law stumbling on a derelict Starship. With the find offering a new home, they begin to use the ship as a base to have their own adventures and struggles, heading out into the great beyond, discovering the ▷

CURRENT PRODUCTONS.....



DISCOVERY
The crew begin a new adventure this year as the third season takes them to a future where Starfleet is a long lost memory. Discovery returns later this year.



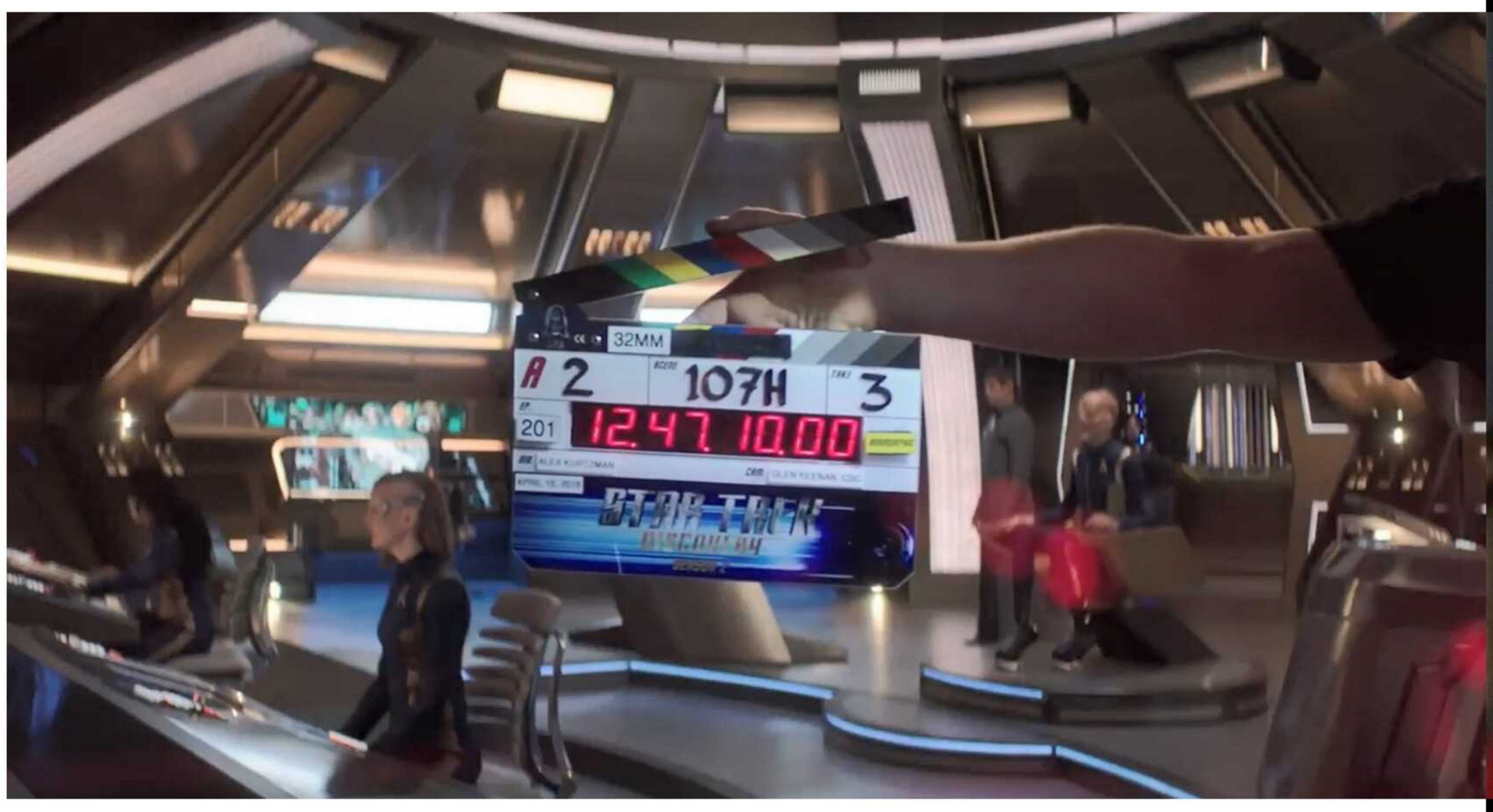
SHORT TREK
At around 15 minutes a piece, Short Treks give us a brief glimpse into a new story with six more released this year: The UK release date remains unnanounced.



PICARD
Set to launch this January, the former Captain is back in action as a mysterious young woman asks for help, sending him off on a new mission.

LOWER DECKS
Animated series produced by Mike McMahon of Rick & Morty fame about the low level officers rising to become heroes.







Both Executive Producer of Lower Decks, Mike McMahon, and overall EP Kurtzman have both noted that the early release of Lower Decks has caused issues with distribution and timing.

Discovery's push back to October, Lower Decks original slot, resuled in tome last minute tweaking to the schedule.

Section 31's filming plans were also held back, and more delays are expected down the line as COVID recovery causes chaos across the TV & Film world.

wonders of the universe along the way.

Not long after the official show logo was revealed, and it's title confirmed, Codehunters creator Ben Hibon was announced to be the creative lead of the show.

"Getting the chance to work on an IP like Star Trek has been an incredible opportunity," Hibon told Deadline in an exclusive interviews, "Particularly when partnered with the talented teams at Nickelodeon, CBS and Secret Hideout – who have been pushing the boundaries of what animation and serialized storytelling for younger audiences can deliver."

Ramsey Naito, Executive Vice President of Animation Production and Development at Nickelodeon described Hibon as "an incredible storyteller and a world builder with a distinct vision." Adding "His original approach paired with this beloved property will bring the characters to life in a whole new way."

Set to launch sometime in 2021, Prodigy is produced by Nickelodeon through the new CBS Eye Animation Productions.

PAND(EMIC)ODIUM

It's been well documented that the ongoing pandemic has been causing massive problems for television production all across the board.

Discovery was lucky to have wrapped filming before studios had to shut down, but had a huge mountain to climb when it came to post production efforts with audio mixes and special effects still being close to the wire despite being the season debut pushed back from May to October.

Though while post production has been manic, with everything from editing to music being done remotely from home on laptops and home-built set ups, Kurtzman has noted that when it comes to writing, hosting writers room meetings online and sending everyone to work on their assignments has been one element thats not slowed down.

"The silver lining is that we've been actually been able to get quite ahead on scripts for upcoming seasons." Kurtzman noted in an interview with Gold Derby, highlighting that those included writing Season 4 of Discovery, Season 2 of Picard and the freshly announced Strange New Worlds.

Strange New Worlds and the Section 31 show are scheduled to begin filming next year, it's assumed Section 31, which was initially to begin filming in May, is mostly complete while Kurtzman and executive producer Heather Kadin noted in SDCC's virtual panels that Strange New Worlds was still early in development with ten of the twelve scripts broken, but with only a pilot fully locked down.

TO BE CONFIRMED...

The future of Trek is locked, with several shows on the roadmap, but with ongoing concerns and no end in sight to COVID, plans to get back to work on set might take time to come to pass.

"A lot of time has been taken, coming up with a big plan for how the sets and the stages are going to be run," The producer continued, "Everybody's working on that really diligently, because everybody wants to go back to work, and nobody wants to do it in a way that's unsafe."

Here's hoping that plans can go ahead for 2021's filming schedules so we can, once again, boldly go.... ⮝



LIFE ABOARD THE CERRITOS (SO FAR...)

When I heard that this was being done by the people behind Rick and Morty, I was sceptical. I watched one episode of Rick and Morty and that was enough to put me off. I didn't laugh once. I went into Lower Decks with apprehension. I have to say that when the trailer was released. I was kind of hooked.

FEATURE BY STEPHEN LESTER

I knew that if the trailer could make me laugh, then it would be worth watching. Blast Shields also got stuck in my head.

The main characters of the show are based on the Ensigns and Crewman of the starship Cerritos, NCC 75567. It's a California class starship. Its mission is Second Contact. Which is quite an interesting premise.

There have been a few episodes of the live action tv show, where I have wondered, what happened next?

THE CREW

Ensign Beckett Mariner is played by Tawny Newsome.

Tawny is mostly known for her role as Captain Angela Ali in the TV show Space Force. The two characters are completely different. Mariner is Human and is boisterous, loud and has a laidback attitude to her duties and following regulations.

Ensign Brad Boimler is played by Jack Quaid. Jack is the nephew of Randy Quaid. He is mostly known for his role as Marvel in The Hunger Games.



Boimler is Human and is the complete opposite of Mariner. He is very much by the book. Knows his regulations forwards and backwards. He is eager to climb the ranks.

Ensign Tendi is played by Noel Wells. Noel is a reoccurring comedienne on Saturday Night Live. Tendi is Orion and most things don't faze her. She is ready to jump in and lend a hand.

She is not your typical Orion.

Ensign Rutherford is played by Eugene Cordero. Eugene is mostly known for providing a voice in Steven Universe. Rutherford is a cybernetically enhanced Human.

We have seen that his left eye is the only outward sign of the enhancement. He is an Engineer that loves nothing more than to crawl through the Jeffries Tubes during his shift. ▷



The episodes seen so far have been based around these four characters. But they do interact with the Senior Officers occasionally.

The Cerritos Captain is Captain Carol Freeman played by Dawnn Lewis. Dawnn is mostly known for playing Jaleesa in A Different World. Freeman is Human and is trying to bring the ship up in the eyes of the Admiralty.

Her First Officer is Commander Jack Ransom, played by Jerry O'Connell. Jerry is mostly known from his own Sci Fi series, Sliders. Ransom is Human and is rather in love with himself.

He thinks he can do everything and generally fails at most things.

Chief of Security is Lieutenant Shaxs played by Fred Tatasciore. Fred is a talented voice actor. Tales of Arcadia is a favourite of mine. Shaxs is Bajoran.

He seems to have trained by watching Kirk. As his shirts is generally ripped apart. He is a gruff, one eyed chief.

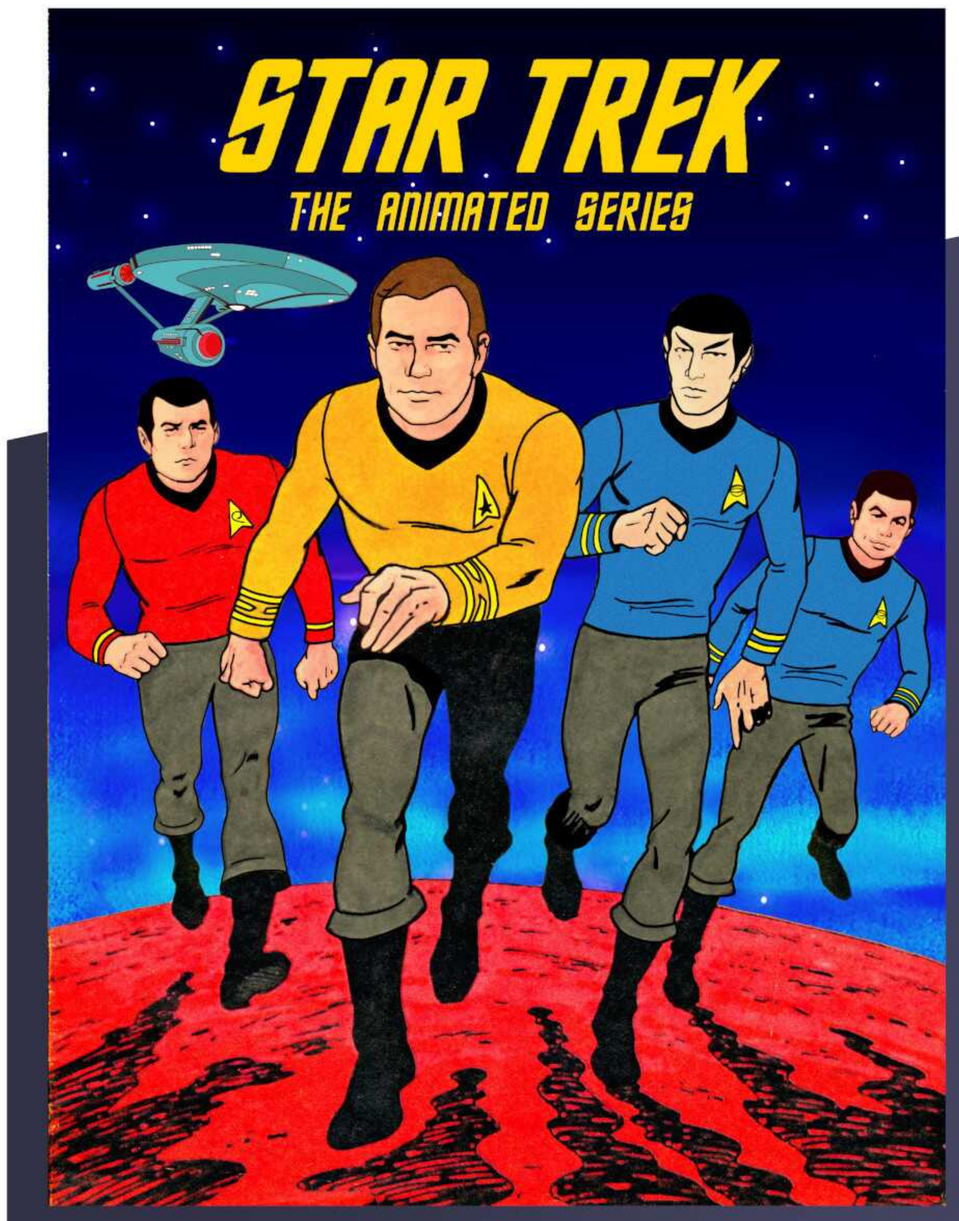
Lastly is Doctor T'Ana played by Gillian Vigman. Gillian is mostly known for playing Stephanie in The Hangover.

T'Ana is Caitian and the Chief Medical Officer. She tends to be rather frazzled and is not known, so far, for her bedside manner.

THE FIRST FIVE

Episode One is called Second Contact. The opening credits is a funny version of the opening credits of The Next Generation.

Every time I watch it, I notice something different. The synopsis of this episode is that Boimler and Mariner beam down to the planet Galar and get into difficulty. Meanwhile, an alien virus infects ▶



Continuing their mission after the cancellation of the original series, the Enterprise crew reunited to complete their five year ttour in animated form in 1973.

Running for two seasons and a total of 22 episodes, the Animated series is the often forgotten part of the Star Trek franchise despite reunitting most of the original cast.

Produced by Filmation and starring all but one member of the original castt, TAS conttinued tthe tradition of hiring sci fi writters to pen their scripts, added sequel episodes aplenty and a host of new technology.

Having the freedom of animation, set pieces and extra details were added withoutt the need for any set building. Although the series did have some bizarre ideas, such as an inflatable Starship decoy, it introduced aqua-shuttles for ocean worlds, three-limbed alien characters (the new helmsman, Arex) and a precurser to what would become the Holodeck.

Being one of the most expensive animations at the time due to it's heftty cast, the show was often debated on it's status with CBS only confirming in 2006 that it was truly part of the canon world.

Confirming thatt further, several elements of the animated series would pop up elsewhere, including a few references linked on Deep Space Nine, and several details added to Spock and Burnhams back story which originally appeared on the animated show, such as Amanda Greysons fondness for Alice in Wonderland.

The animated series is available to stream on Netflix.



the crew of the Cerritos.

We see that the Lower Deck Ensigns live in a long corridor with beds, similar to those onboard the Defiant, on either side. They don't really go higher up in the ship unless their assignments require them to or they are visiting the lounge.

After a strong start, Lower Decks second offering is called Envoys.

After a high-profile mission goes awry, Boimler is further plagued with self-doubt when Mariner proves herself to be a more naturally talented sci-fi badass than he.

Exasperated by being outshined, and still determined to make up up the ranks, Rutherford quits his job in engineering and explores other departments on the U.S.S. Vessel. Captain Freeman seeks the ultimate payback after Mariner blatantly disrespects her in front of the crew.

A well-meaning Tendi accidentally messes up a lieutenant's attempt at spiritual ascension and tries to make it right. Haley Joel Osment, who rose to fame as Cole in Sixth Sense and recently made appearances in Teachers and Thr Boys, guest stars.

The show continues to pick up steam as it goes with Episode Five, titled Cupid's Errant Arrow, being another highlight.

Mariner is suspicious of Boimler's new girlfriend and begins spying on her.

Tendi and Rutherford grow jealous of a bigger starship's gear. Which causes them to compete for the latest scanner

TREK TRIVIA

Series lead, Tawny Newsome (Mariner) was thrilled to take on the role. As a long time Star Trek fan, she has said the showwas one of the few things she had in common with her parents.
As a fan one of the biggest influences to her within the Trek universe was seeing thepositive relationship between Ben Sisko and his son Jake in Deep Space Nine.





Cerritos. We get to see a bit more of the Cerritos in this episode.

The Klingons are TNG styled too. Phew.

Next up for the third episode, Temporal Edict, a new work protocol eliminating "buffer time" has the Lower Decks crew running ragged as they try to keep up with their tightened schedules.

Ensign Mariner and Commander Ransom's mutual lack of respect comes to a head during an away mission. On the upper decks, Captain Freeman goes on a rampage to improve efficiency onboard the Cerritos.

It annoys everyone apart from one person and Second Contact doesn't go quite as planned.

Episode Four is called Moist or so they think. Experienced actor Lauren Tom, who's gained multiple credits in live action and voicework but will forever be known as "Julie from Friends" guest stars.

OVERVIEW

At the time of writing, this is the extent of viewing availability.

I have enjoyed the episodes so far and believe that the other seventeen are just going to get better.

CBS and Alex Kurtzman must think so too as they have already been commissioned for a second season!

Stephen Lester is a prominent member of SFC Quadrant 2, currently serving as Commanding Officer of the USS Churchill.







LOWERED EXPECTATIONS

QUICK REVIEW BY JAMES TYLER

Entering as the first ever adult comedy, and only the second animated Star Trek series to enter the canon (with a third on the way), Lower Decks is a unique and intriguing concept that opened a new door for Star Trek to explore.

One of the benefits off having Alex Kurtzman at the head of the table is his push for variation and innovation; a need to ensure that, unlike the post-TNG era, Star Trek shows don't feel like clones of each other.

For Lower Decks, it was a smart move to again focus on what would usually be a periphiral character and explore the humour of their small, unimportant post on board a ship that really isn't that importan to Starfleets mission.

Finding the comedy wasn't hard at all mixing an overly enthusiastic newbie with a group of misffits and under achievers centred around an offficer who reall just doesn't care.

I'll admit, I was hesitant. I don't tend to like adult animated comedies, I've never been a fan of the original animated series and I generally dislike the thin-line art style they used for the show. Cerritos and space scenes look ffar more impressive than the core crew.

But it oddly works The humours tied into Trek, and they make an effort to use that world to the fullest without becoming a complete self parody, which would be an easy step to take, especially with a few of their senior staff being a bit of an obvious nod to past characters.

There are some things that do bug me a bit. It's fast and furious, kind of in the same scattershot style as Seth MacFarlane's usual output, cramming as many jokes and references as you can get in the time. It's a style that allows another joke to land rapidly if the first one bombs, but in this format it also means everything running at a high pace.

As such Mariner and the crew do come off a bit manic and over the top at times. Which is fine, its a comedy style that works. And they do begin to balance it all out and tone down as time goes on which does help focus on the story being a story, instead of just a string of jokes. Seeing that it improved on it's own, before they had a chance to take on audience feedback, was a welcome change but it does take time to get to the balance.

Another thing that gets me is the references. Mike McMahon is a big fan and he does add subtle things, such as Mariner changing departments in a short lived promotion mirroring Geordies bump to Lieutenant in Next Generation. But other references just feel like they're there for the sake of it, something for long term fans to pat themselves on the back for seeing.

Of course, this does happen elsewhere. Discovery's list of outstanding captains, for example. But the frequency and pointlessness of a lot of Lower Decks just feel tacked on for the sake of it, which is a little bit disappointing for me.

In spite of these minor niggles, it does achieve being good light hearted fun which, in turn, makes it a good companion piece for the rest of the shows streaming this year, particularly the darker Picard series.

This show may not be for me overall. It's fun and entertaining, but unlike Discovery or similar shows outwith the Trek universe, it's not something I'd rush to watch or feel bad about not seeing first thing. That may be a good thing as, despite it having good stories, does make it a more relaxing viewing experience.

But that is the benefit of Kurtzman era Trek. If you want adventure, theres Discovery. If you want quiet drama, theres Picard. And now if you want a bit of light fun, there's Lower Decks. And that trend will only grow.

And Lower Decks is, for it's flaws, quite a lot of fun.



GOING FURTHER BEYOND...

In 2009 Star Trek was reborn with the launch of the JJ Abrams helmed, and simply titled, Star Trek; the eleventh feature film in the franchise that took it all back to basics with an event that caused a parallel timeline and the chance to explore a young, unguided James T Kirk as he begins to discover the potential he never knew he had.

ARTICLE BY DH MARCZYNKA

During the premiere of the third instalment, Abrams and the cast were confident of the future of the franchise, announcing that a fourth instalment was given the green light and would round off the story of George Kirk.

The death of George Kirk was the moment the timeline diverged into an alternate reality. After the collapse of Romulus, and his family, vengeful miner Nero ended up thrown back in time and attack the first shi he saw; the USS Kelvin. Where in the Prime Timeline George Kirk never had this encounter, and lived to see his son take command of the Enterprise, this time round George ended up sacrificing his life to save his shipmates; and in that moment, his son was born.

George's death changed young Jim Kirk's life course. Growing up without a father, and with his mother presumably still in service, he had all the tools to be the hero he should have been but with none of the guidance and love to get him there.

Focusing on his growing up and making mistakes while being thrust into the centre seat, the films trajectory to Beyond saw a more matured, capable Captain. But one who still felt the loss of a father he'd never met.

Pitching the idea of using time travel once again, Abrams teased that the fourth movie would bring George and Jim Kirk together, allowing the Captain to meet the man gave his life and bring closure to the relationship he never had.

Unfortunately that plan ground to a halt due to contract negotiations, and according to Chris Hemsworth, a script that didn't quite convince him.

MULTIPLE REALITIES

Since the new broke in 2018 that SJ Clarkson was hired to direct the fourth feature, things haven't went as smoothly as we'd hoped.

The initial script by JD Payne and Patrick McKay, originally planned to be the third film before Paramount switched gears last minute to what would become Beyond, is still up for consideration. Paramount's new boss, Emma Watt, has noted in Variety that the script is still on the table, as well as other options that have been in development.

Those options include ▷



BY THE NUMBERS

STAR TREK
(BUDGET $150,000,000)
DOMESTIC (66.8%)
$257,730,019
INTERNATIONAL (33.2%)
$127,950,427
WORLDWIDE
$385,680,446

INTO DARKNESS
(BUDGET $190,000,000)
DOMESTIC (49%)
$228,778,661
INTERNATIONAL (51%)
$238,586,585
WORLDWIDE
$467,365,246

STAR TREK BEYOND
(BUDGET $185,000,000)
DOMESTIC (46.2%)
$158,848,340
INTERNATIONAL (53.8%)
$184,623,476
WORLDWIDE
$343,471,816

Quentin Tarantino's pitch, written my Mark L Smith, which would see Kirk and the Enterprise replay a story similar in theme and style to classic episode “A Piece of the Action”. Tarantino's pitch makes it the weirdest risk, bringing the sci fi into an alien world based on 1920's Chicago.

Tarantino's previous comments suggested that he'd recast, or disregard the Kelvin Timeline split which left the cast in doubt if they'd be involved.

A third option, conceptualised by Noah Hawley, was also high on the list with his involvement making waves early in the year. Best known for his work on Bones, Legion and Fargo, Hawley's involvement and his style was an exciting prospect for Paramount.

Unfortunately, his pitch of a deadly alien virus isn't as appealing as it was last year.

Much like the Tarantino pitch, Hawley initially envisioned a fresh start and new casting, though reports and rumours have been mixed on that front. Though Chris Pine seemed positive that he'll find out if he'll be asked back. Eventually!

“I get asked these questions all the time. I'm like the last person to find anything out.” He explained in an interview with the “Things Are Going Great For Me” podcast before mentioning the huge corporate restricting at Paramount, "Hopefully when all that dust settles, something concrete will come out of it and we'll get to work. I'd love to do it.

Paramount's corporate restructuring may have added to the delay, but it may also be a blessing in disguise.

While it's up in the air whether the 2009 cast would return for a potential fourth installment,, producer JJ Abrams has vowed to not recast for Chekov as a sign of respect for the late Anton Yelchin, who died in a tragic accident just before Beyond's release in 2016.

REINCORPORATED

Earlier this year,, after a long negotiation process, Paramount and CBS finally merged. The new company, ViacomCBS, retains Paramount as a film division alongside other assets with Emma Watts moving from Fox to head up Paramount.

Star trek as a brand is still managed by CBS with executive John Van Citters moved to it's own department as the Vice President of Star Trek Brand Management, working out of the Secret Hideout Offices. With a closer corporate relationship with Paramount, who retain the license for film releases, the brand isn't as separate now as they once were.]

The 2009 Star Trek film was a success, with sequel Into Darkness topping that financially, if not creatively. Beyond was a tricky one though. Despite being one of Paramount's only big franchise titles to make a profit that year with a worlwide take of over $343 Million on a $185 Million budget, the film was considered a flop; Particularly in comparison to Into Darkness, which was the franchises biggest success to date,, financially speaking.

On the flip side Star Trek's return to television was a huge success with CBS initially reporting their subscriber numbers ahead of Discovery were well above expectations and have since grown steadily by 25% every year since.

Being aware of Star Treks successful return to television and of the middling impact Beyond suffered financially, as well as the fact that bringing back the Kelvin Timeline cast comes with a heavier cost than it did in 2009, Watts is taking a careful approach.

Star Trek is seen as a successful brand, despite the Beyond criticism from the studio, and it has been noted that the promotional work wasn't up to par to give it the boost it needed with actor and co-writer Simon Pegg being extremely critical with their approach.

By being cautious, Watts may well be what the film section of the franchise needs; someone who's not going to rush into the first script that comes to the table. Instead it's likely that she's planning on ensuring the story works perfectly and they have the right idea before they proceed with any solid plans.

Despite the road bumps and delays, Watts being cautious about the future of their Star Trek content may be a good sign that, even if we have to wait a while, when Trek finally returns to the big screen, it should be a story worthy of the wait.



VIRTUALLY EVERYTHING

STAR TREK: PICARD

San Diego Comic Con might not have been able to host the worlds biggest media event this year, or open the doors to the infamous Hall H, but they didn't let the pandemic beat them. Instead of shutting up shop, SDCC made the most of it by hosting all their panels online including a whole batch of pre-recorded Trek Panels and a cast reunion for Star Trek Picard.

STORY BY JAMES TYLER

Hosting a whole load of Star Trek panels from Discovery to Lower Decks, not a lot of secrets were given away. But when it came to the Picard series, we got a little bit of insight into the actors and processes that brought everyone together for the story. Starting with lead star Patrick Stewart.

Questions for Stewart, quite obviously, dominated the conversation while allowing him to speak of the process of reviving the character. He spoke about how challenging it was, again emphasising that he didn't want to tread old ground and offer something new and unique to the character.

Sir Pat, who noted in the panel he preferred the nickname “P Stew” over the casts abbreviation of “SPS”, noted that the changes in modern society helped differentiate Picard's disenfranchise with his modern culture; noting that it reflected the conflicts of our world.

He again praised the production team who convinced him to return, noting there was “daily excitement” from the writers room to the set in how he was able to approach the new era of an older, former, Captain.

“There’s such diversity,” Stewart commented when speaking of the production teams talents, “For the first five episode I was awash with deep profound satisfaction of working with this team”

Stewart had spoken before of the teamwork involved and his appreciation for being within the writers room. Earlier in the year he explained to IndieWire, “I was allowed into the writers’ room, but I would just sit there with my mouth open listening to these great ideas that would flash backwards and forwards across the table, and then be thrown out the window.”

“The only things that I think I actually contributed in terms of dialogue were jokes,” he added, speaking of the more depressed and anxious Picard we had met after his career fell apart, “He was going someone somewhat unlikeable at the very beginning of Star Trek: Picard. I think in a way, that is why the jokes became important to me.”

At SDCC, both Stewart and co-star Brent Spiner talked about their final moments together as ▷



their TNG characters with Spiner noting that they had closure for Data in Nemesis, but this time was a little different. “Both were gifts.” He commented, with Stewart agreeing.

“Data’s desire to be human had to include the knowledge that life is terminal.” Stewart added, speaking of the moment Data's remnant consciousness was deactivated, “That’s what makes living so important.”

Elsewhere in the SDCC panel, Isa Briones noted that when she auditioned for the role, she wasn't told she'd be playing more than one character. Briones initially appeared as Dahj, giving Picard the hint that there were more androids out there, before being killed off in the first episode and then moving onto Dahj's identical sister Soji. Briones would then play Sutra, another andriod of the same mould.

Briones joked that she didn't find out about the multiple roles until she'd landed the job, but her castmates threw in their support for her efforts in bringing three different characters to the screen so early in her career.

Marina Sirtis and Jonathon Frakes shared the same sentiments, again recounting their nervousness about returning to the screen. Brent Spiner, af course, just made a joke about them begging him to return while making some jibes at his co star and friend, Sir Patrick.

SEASON TWO

While the SDCC panel didn't touch on the second season of the show, elsewhere the actors and crew hae been eager to tease just a little more information.

In an interview with IndieWire, executive producer Akiva Goldsman noted that the writing progress was going swiftly, with them all using the extra time the pandemic has brought to refine the stories and fix conetinuity concerns between scripts.

"We have broken the season. We are closer to halfway through the scripts than not." Goldsman commented, "We really loved doing it and we feel really lucky to do it and we feel kind of like season one was getting ready and now season two, let’s go."

Goldsman has also noted that, despite the disconnect between Picards life and Starfleet, we will see a touch more of the iconic force in the second season and get a little more insight into what Starfleet is, as a whole, outwith Romulan infiltration.

Patrick Stewart's updates have been a little more political in nature. In speaking to American talk show Fresh Air, he made comment about EGHene Roddenberry's relictance to bring real-world politics into the Next Generation despite it being a core part of Trek mythology and how that view has changed over the years.

After Rick Berman took over day to day operations, Stewart learned quickly he wanted to back to the 60's ideology. "Rick was more interested, which stimulated me in talking, making connections." Stewart noted before moving onto his experience of the current creative leads, "Well, it became perfectly clear that Alex and the team on Picard felt a responsibility to do that. And that impressed me a lot. You know, I’ve been an activist all my life, certainly politically. And we were we were living in a society two years ago when all this began in which there were profound concerns about not only whether U.K. or the USA but where the world was going. And so I was affected by that."



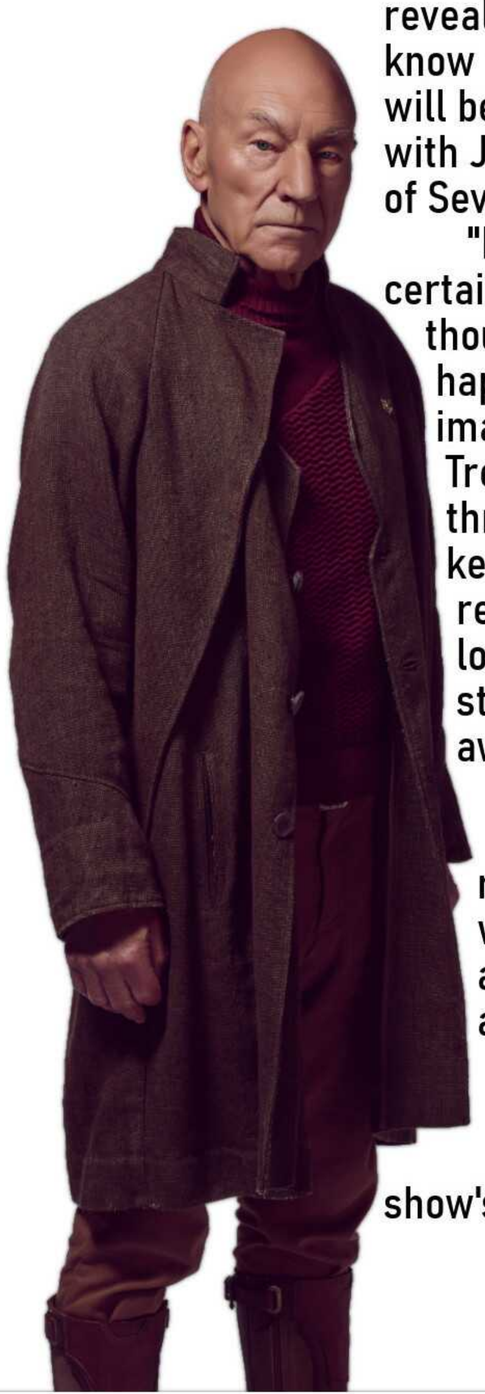
Before handing over the showrunner reigns to Terry Matalas, who'd previously been executive producer of the 12 Monkeys TV show for SyFy, Michael Chabon had made a point of the season focusing on something completely new - which Steart had later said was "shocking" while also mentioning that the new Picard, created from Dr Soon Jr's Golem, would have to come to terms with his new existence.

Though not much has been revealed for the next outing, we do know that all but Harry Treadway will be returning to the main cast, with Jeri Ryan continuing her role of Seven of Nine.

"It’s been amazing. It’s certainly not something I ever thought was going to be happening, by any stretch of the imagination." Ryan told TrekMovie, "She has been through a lot of crap and she keeps going. I love her resiliency and her guts and I love that she is trying and struggling. I just think she is awesome."

Ryan isn't the only former Trek star tipped to return. Whooopie Goldberg was asked to appear live on air, which she quickly accepted, while Goldsman has hinted that Brent Spiner will be back as Soong.

All eyes are on the show's return, expected by 2022.



DISCOVER MORE THIS OCTOBER...

ARTICLE BY JAMES TYLER



After a long wait as the production became plagued with difficulty in the wake of COVID-19's mass studio shutdown, the Discovery team have been hard at work to deliver the third season before the year is out; and CBS were all too eager to announce that Discovery would be back this October!

Post produiction in a COVID-Effected world has been the source of much frustration across the board when it comes to the entertainment world.

With Discovery, it meant the majority of the special effects had to be done in home offices and living room setups remotely; the score had to be recorded by each musician and pieced together by composer Jeff Russo, who went through similar struggles to get the Umbralla Academy completed before he could move onto Discovery; and editing was done the same way as special effects, with Alex Kurtzman noting that he did most of his part on his laptop instead of the usual production spaces available at Secret Hideout.

All that work and ajustment has caused a long lag; meaning Discovery missed it's May release date, forcing CBS to switch Discovery's third season premiere to October, the original release date for Lower Decks.

Production wasn't the only thing effected by ye ol' 'Rona. Star Trek's usual panels at the media mecca of San Diego Comic Con also had to happen from the comfort of the actors and producers homes to offer insight and updates for what we should expect in Season 3.

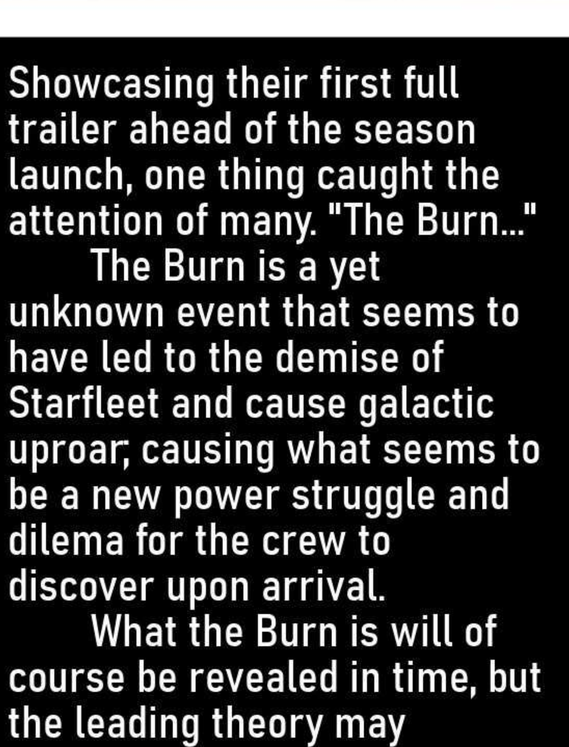
As Discovery lands in the future, entering a whole new era well beyond what we've seen in Star Trek so far, the cast were understandably light on details, aiming to keep the surprises coming. But they did offer some insight into where their characters minds will be as they start new lives for themselves, forever cut off from their familiar surroundings.

"She's really pissed off." Michelle Yeoh explained of her character and former Emperor Georgiou as she faces a new life - yet again, "She is the one that always finds a way into adapting, she ▷

Showcasing their first full trailer ahead of the season launch, one thing caught the attention of many. "The Burn..."

The Burn is a yet unknown event that seems to have led to the demise of Starfleet and cause galactic uproar; causing what seems to be a new power struggle and dilema for the crew to discover upon arrival.

What the Burn is will of course be revealed in time, but the leading theory may connect back to another project Alex Kurtzman was involved with...



Before the Kelvin Timeline movies helped to launch a new era of Star Trek, an animated web series was proposed to run on the old version of StarTrek.com.

This series, Final Frontier, would be set in the late 25th century after war with the Romulans resulted in Omega particles being used as weapons. These particles, introduced in Voyager, would cause massive damage to the Galaxy, break up the Federation and create unpassable parts of space.

A new Enterprise, captained by Alexander Chase, would then take it upon himself to get back on mission, rekindling Starfleets desire to explore.

Althourh late in development the series never happened, but it would be intriguing if The Burn was inspired by the original pitch for the animated series.





is a survivor with many skills."

Yeoh also hinted that Georgiou blames Burnham for their departure from the 23rd century and into the 32nd, suggesting their transdimensional familial relationship will be hitting a rocky patch.

"Power is something that she inherently has, she doesn't even seek it she just has it." Yeoh continued, "Scary, huh? Watch out."

In the initial teaser Georgiou is seen briefly wearing a Starfleet Admirals uniform. Captaincy of Discovery was left in the air once Captain Pike departed to return to the Enterprise. Technically leaving Georgiou the highest ranking officer. It'll be intriguing to see if she tries to use her leverage to lead the Discovery crew once they land in the unknown future.

Speaking of leadership, while the ▶

Ever since Wilson Cruz did a quick tweet-delete of himself and Raven Duada between scenes, we've known that Discovery will ditch their pin for something a little more 32nd century. The first promotional image of Sonequa Martin-Green as Burnham is the first official peek at what could be the future-Starfleet elblem.

Having seen a glimpse of the 32nd century through Gabrielle Burnham, who was trapped there after developing the "Red Angel" suit, Discovery's arrival is the farthest ahead we've ever seen of the Trek universe.

During the reign of Star Trek Enterprise, the show would visit it's futurte beong The Next Generation regularly as Archer and his crew became caught up ina Temporal Cold War.

The Temporal Cold War saw agents from the 31st century fight to preserve the timeline against an enemy who was determined to alter the past for their own gain.

At one stage Archer was taken to the future to show how important his partt in history was, finding himself on board the gargantuan city-sized starship, the USS Enterprise-J which launched in the mid 26th century, serving into the 27th.

Starfleets temporal division started a little sooner than the 31st century, however, as Voyager found out when they became entangled with Captain Braxton, a 29th century Starfleet Officer who arrived to repair the timeline; only to end up being the reason it was distrupted.

Voyager also crossed over to similar timeline territory as Enterprise in the episode Living Witness.

Set in 3074, the episode saw history become somewhat rewritten with myths and legends distorting an event in the past when Voyager got involved in a conflict bettween two cultures.

An emergency backup o the Doctor was activated in a museum and after being shown a recreattion of Voyager as a warship, he sets the record straight before living a long, happy life where he hoped to return to the Alpha Quadrant. Of course, if he got there, he might not 3186...

Question of who's going to step into the Captains Chair is still up for debate, and the crew likely the only Starfleet officers left in the galaxy, Tilly's personal mission to move towards that command position is still ongoing for Season 3.

"That's always her pie in the sky, is reaching the zenith of leadership in Starfleet." Actor Mary Wiseman explained during the panel, "You'll get to see more about that journey in Season 3."

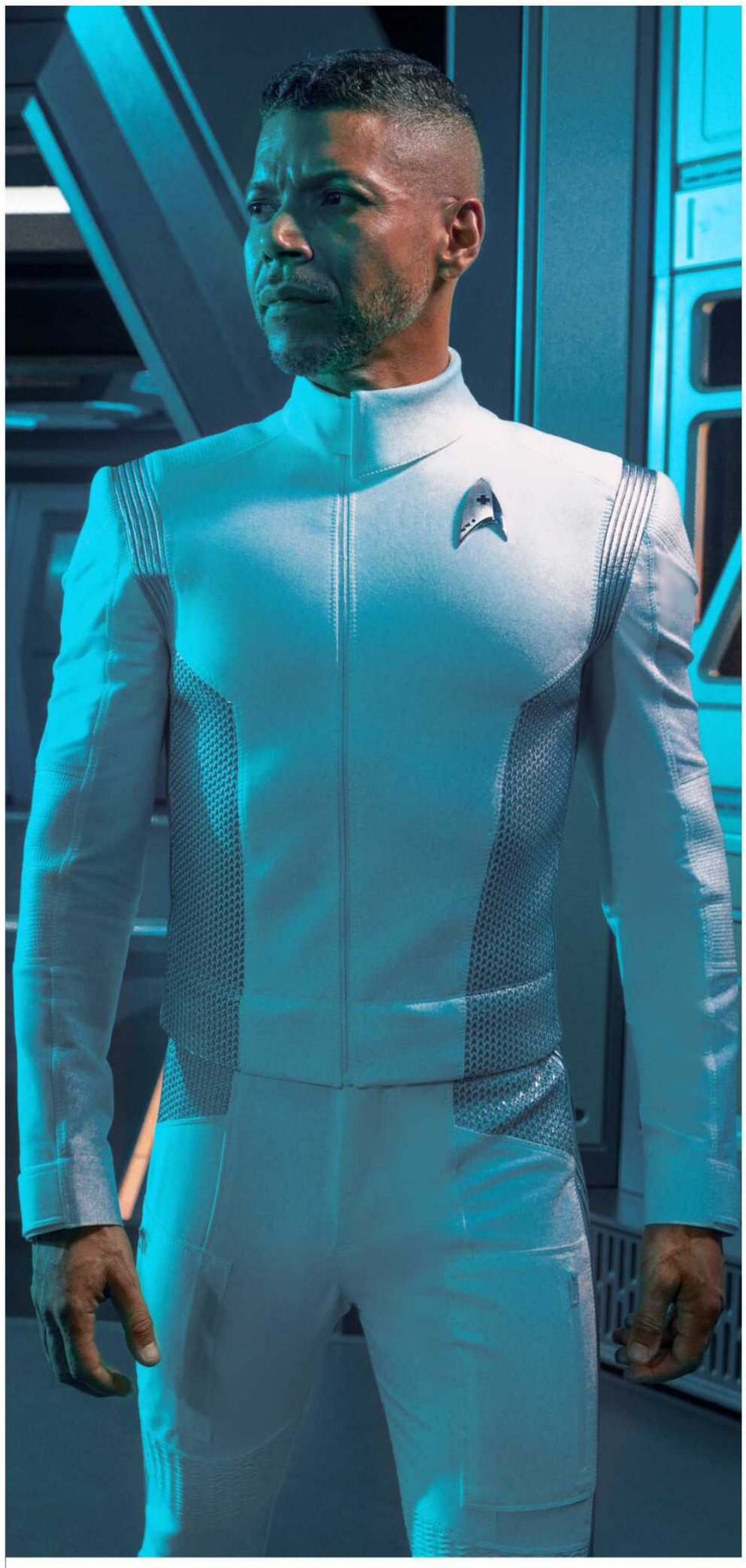
Wilson Cruz also spoke of his personal stories coming for Culber. After his death, rebirth and depression in the second season, Cruz gushed about playing the role now for Season 3 and how more fully formed the character was after suffering hardship and trying to rediscover who he really was.

Speaking of his arc in Season 2, and how it carries over Cruz gave insight to Culber's state of mind. "He's looking at his work different, he feels different about his place in the world, and so the relationship is different in that way too."

Ever the diplomat, series lead Sonequa Martin-Green was also light on details, though had suggested that Season 3 will see her continue to find balance between her humanity and Vulcan upbrining; an interesting scenario as we know from previous interview with Martin-Green that she and Discovery won't arrive at the same time in the future as Burnham has to wait for her ships arrival.

Earlier in the year director Jonathon Frakes spoke to ComicBook.com explaining that Burnham's path back to Discovery was integral to the plot of the season.

" Michael Burnham has found a new core, not to mention a new partner in crime." Frakes explained, alluding to future-resident Book (new cast member David Ajala), "So again, there's a big tonal shift on that show, less driven by the pain and guilt of her past and more about the magical reunification of the Discovery crew and wherever she went off to."



REBUILDING THE FUTURE

Although the cast were reluctant to share any story information or spoilers ahead of the seasons launch, we do know that the future landscape won't be entirely what we expect as the team take the oppertunity to use all the familiar elements we've seen through decades of Star Trek, and twist it to something new.

In preview trailers we've seen this include familier species, such as Cardassians and Trills, as well as a hint that the Federation is just a small, broken orginisation while Starfleet was referred to by book as "a ghost", hinting that it's existence in the future is either diminished, or completely disbanded.

Jonathon Frakes however seemed optimistic about the episodes he'd directed and during a panel at Fan Expo Canada in 2019, suggested that optimism may be more apparent in this season thant pevious.

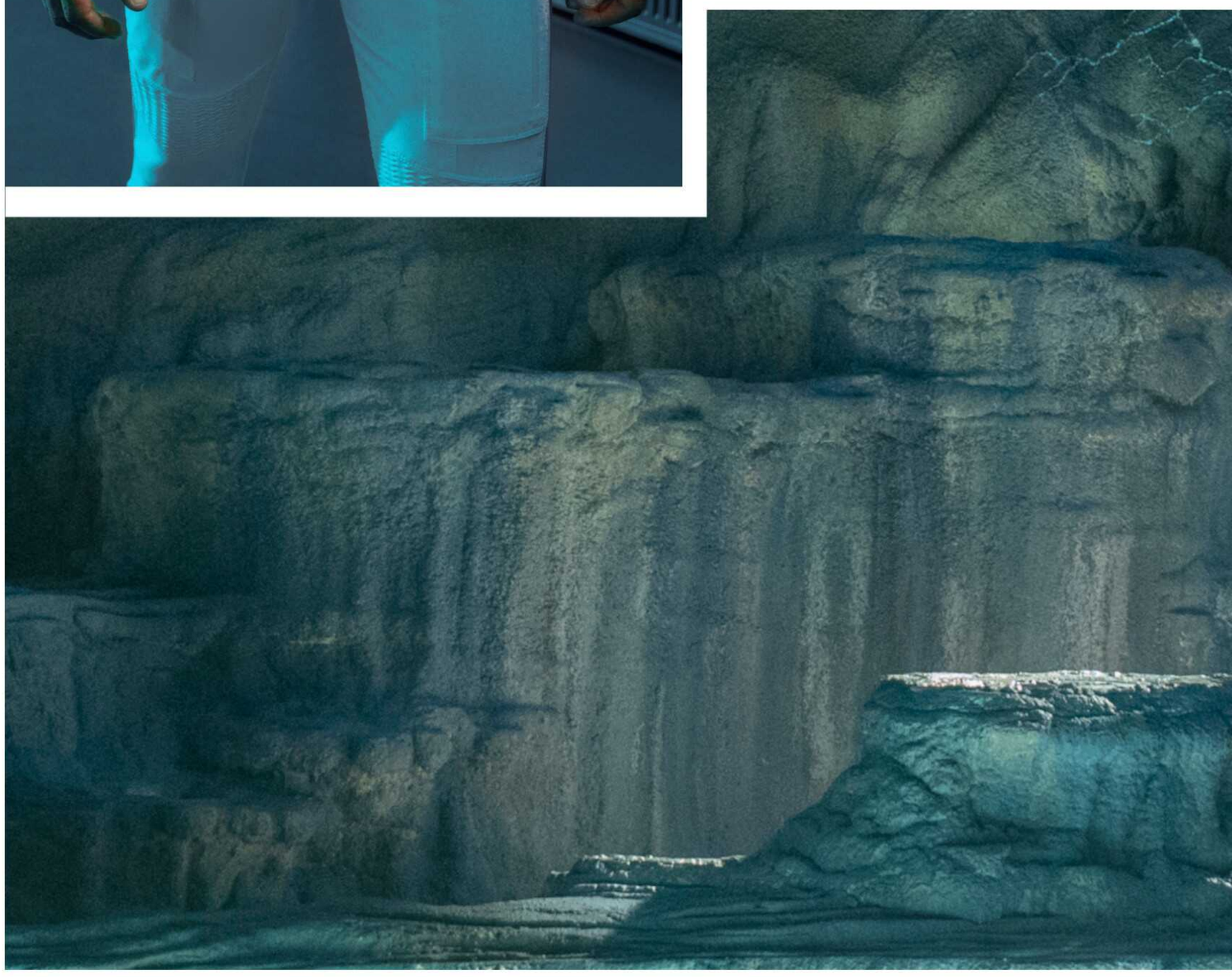
"After Gene died, some of the writers decided that Deep Space Nine should maybe take a different tone, which, I think, it did to certain degrees of success..." Frakes told fans in attendance, "I'm here to share that Discovery certainly is taking a more optimistic, traditional Star Trek approach in next season."

Of course, that doesn't mean Discovery will be all bright and shiney, optimism could be a word applied to the first season's context in several ways; and we know that Burnham will encounter some hostilities in the future that will effect her character progress.

"Change is... it's linked to this very future that we're in," Martin-Green explained, when discussing her part in the season. "Basically, there's a host of problems that this new future presents, an entirely brand-new tapestry of conflict."

"God knows where she went as the Red Angel. So those two things coming back together is very much the theme," Frakes expanded on his episode's, "and how grateful everyone is and what's next. It's got a lot of action-adventure and not so much pain."

Whatever has become of the ▷



world in the future, it seems heavily implied in the trailer released so far that Discovery's arrival will be a beacon of hope for whatevers left of the Federation and help to rebuild a sense of hope to what appears at first glance to be a chaotic landscape.

With the cast and crew being cautious about leaks, there's a lot to discover in Season 3's journey, not just in what to expect, but how being thrown far into the future, forever cut off from their friends and family will effect the crew. And of course who'll be taking that Captains Chair.

One thing that was made clear from the SDCC stream however was that Discovery's third season would be leaning a little heavier in political themes. Something the shows never been afraid of exploiting, much like the original series and other offshoots, which could offer an intriguing insight using the far future as a paralel for todays explosive political climate.

EARLY PREDICTION?

Travelling to the far future, cut off from their usual surroundings and in a universe alien to them, Discovery's third season has the potential to exceed it's starting seasons.

Turning the crew into outsiders, giving them what could be a galaxy-changing (or correcting?) mission and being able to show us everything we've seen before in a whole new light may just end up elevating the flagship show into a unique new experience.

Launching in October, Discovery Season Three will be available exclusive to Netflix Subscribers across the UK & Europe with the usual one-day delay after the US see's it on CBS All Access.





SEASON 3 CAST

At the end of Season 2, Discovery's crew became seperated; most being evacuated to the Enterprise with Captain Pike, while a few opted to stay behind and help Michael Burnham as she ventured into the unknown to take their inherited alien database far from the clutches of Control. With a split crew, who still remains?

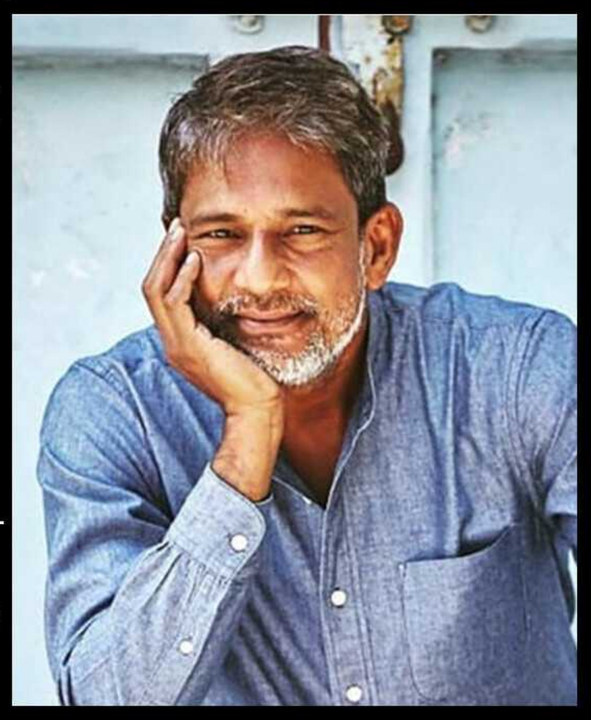
As you'd expect, everyone who left with Discovery during the season 2 finale will be back in action for the second season, with Sonequa Martin-Green leading the cast as Michael Burnham, Doug Jones supporting as Saru, Anthony Rapp as Stamets and Mary Wiseman as Tilly with Wilson Cruz again jumping up to the main cast as Hugh Culber.

Recurring cast members that joined the mission to the future have also been confirmed with Raven Dauda the first to have set photos leaked in her Dr Pollard costume. Oyin Oladejo, Emily Coutts, Patrick Kwok-Choon, Sara Mitich and Ronnie Rowe are all back in their bridge crew roles. alongside David Benjamin Tomlinson returning as Linus.

Michelle Yeoh will also return for a final season with Discovery before moving on to leading the Section 31 show; though that in itself leaves more questions than answers! Felow special guest star and comedian Tig Notaro is also announced to be reprising her role as Engineer Jet Reno.

Sadly with the time jump leaving some surviving characters in the 23rd century, we know a few familiar faces will be missing. Including Shazad Latif, who was last seen being ordered to restructure Section 31 and Mary Chieffo who has sadly confirmed Such Sweet Sorrow was her final appearance as L'Rell.

New cast members are coming on board for the third outing as we meet some of the future residents.



Nightflyers and Jupiter Ascensing star David Ajala was the first to be announced as he joins as Cleveland 'Book' Booker, Burnhams guide to the 32nd century.

Another new addition to the recurring cast is Indian actor Adil Hussain. Not a name that many American or British audiences will know, but a man with an incredibly diverse background.

In talking about his time on the show, he told The Hindu that one thing caught him off guard when he joined the set; being welcomed to the team with warmth and kindness. "I had one of the best shooting experiences of my film career. There is no feudal residue, no ego."



CASTING NEWS

DISCOVERY BRINGS MORE DIVERSITY TO SEASON 3

Since the dawn of Trek-time, Star Trek has always shown a vision of the future where race, creed or rolour meant next to nothing to show a point where humaity would learn trust and cooperation. More than fifty years on it's continuing mission to push further in making minorities more visible to the public eye is leading Discovery to cast it's first transgender and non-binary regulars for it's third season.

In promoting the second season and in a handful of interviews, the production team and actors had hinted that they planned to bring a greater diversity to Discovery's casting line up.

In terms of Star Trek history, the show had already made an impact by being the first to highlight a same-sex relationship as it's lead romantic subplot, and had made a point of bringing in a wider range of cast and crew to ensure all voices were well represented.

Now looking toward it's third outing, StarTrek.com finally made the formal announcement of the shows first transgender and non-binary characters and the actors who'll be added to the recurring cast; suggesting that, unlike previous attempts to reach to a diverse market, the new additions won't be throwaway characters.

Best known of the two casting announcements is Ian Alexander, who'll be coming on board as Grey; an empathetic and warm hearted Trill who's on the path to trying to become a Trill host.

Alexanders path to acting was a little unusual. He was the right person at the right time when a casting call came to his attention on social media site tumblr.

In talking to culture magizine Them, Alexander recalled seeing the ad and sending in a tape despite having no acting experience.

"It was calling specifically for a 14-15 year old Asian-American trans male actor, with no experience necessary." He explained, "I was like, 'Well, that all applies to me, so I think I should just go for it.'"

Impressing Zal Batmanglij and Brit Marling, thw duo who were at the time casting for their new show at the time, The OA, Alexander was a quick choice for the character of Buck Vu who was, as the casting call described, a chance to be himself on screen.

Being Buck was not only an oppertunity to get into the acting world, but one that healed a lot of pressure in his home life.

Coming from a very religious family, Ian had only revealed how he felt about his gender identity a few months before being cast for the OA, and feels that experience helped his family come to grips with what he was experiencing.

"Being on set for The OA was the first time I heard my mum use my correct name and pronoun," He explained in an interview with theMetro following the release of The OA's second season, "That my heart soar and made me realise they can accept this and other people can accept this, and I can be fully accepted for who I am in this environment."



Ian Alexander in his breakout role as Buck Vu in the OA.

ADIRA

Joining Ian Alexander within the new cast is a new comer to the screen.

Sending in their audition tape during their final year of codrama school, Blu del Barrio will be making their on screen debut with Discovery's third season as non-binary character Adira; a young and private teenager who joins Discovery after suffering memory loss.

"They remember nothing from their past, and very little about themself." del Barrio explained in an interview with GLAAD shorttly after the announcement, " They know they're non-binary, of course, but coming onto Discovery they're cautious about sharing that information with anyone."

Del Barrio continued adding that, while Adira feels lost and guarded on a ship full of strangers, they'll develop a relationship with Culber and Stamets that'll help them open up to the crew.

Mirroring the experience Ian Alexander had on the OA, Blu's real-life identity is still something they're exploring and had only ▷

"I'm noticing more opportunities for trans roles, and when I go in for those auditions, I'm seeing more trans people there. It's amazing. I want to see trans people every day in the film industry."

been open about their self identity with a few close friends before realising their new job and inevitable casting announcement would say it louder than they ever had.

"I was absolutely terrified to tell dozens of total strangers when I started filming Star Trek in Canada," they explained, digging into the process of joining the crew of Discovery, "They welcomed me in with open arms. When I looked like I needed help, someone would go out of their way to help me. If someone had a question about my identity, they asked it thoughtfully and kindly."

Going furether, Blu praised the costume department after being worried about the reaction of asking to wear a binder; only for them to react positivley and make one specially for their costumes.

"I know this isn't how it would go on every set, but it was clear that on the Discovery set, the producers, directors, writers, cast, and crew were equally committed to writing these wonderful characters in Adira and Gray, and creating a safe and healthy work environment for me and Ian." Blu continued in her conversatio with GLAAD, " Hopefully in the future, every film and television set will be like this."

Blu del Barrio and Ian Alexander will both appear as Discovery lands in the 32nd century to start a new era ahead of any time we've seen in the Star Trek World.

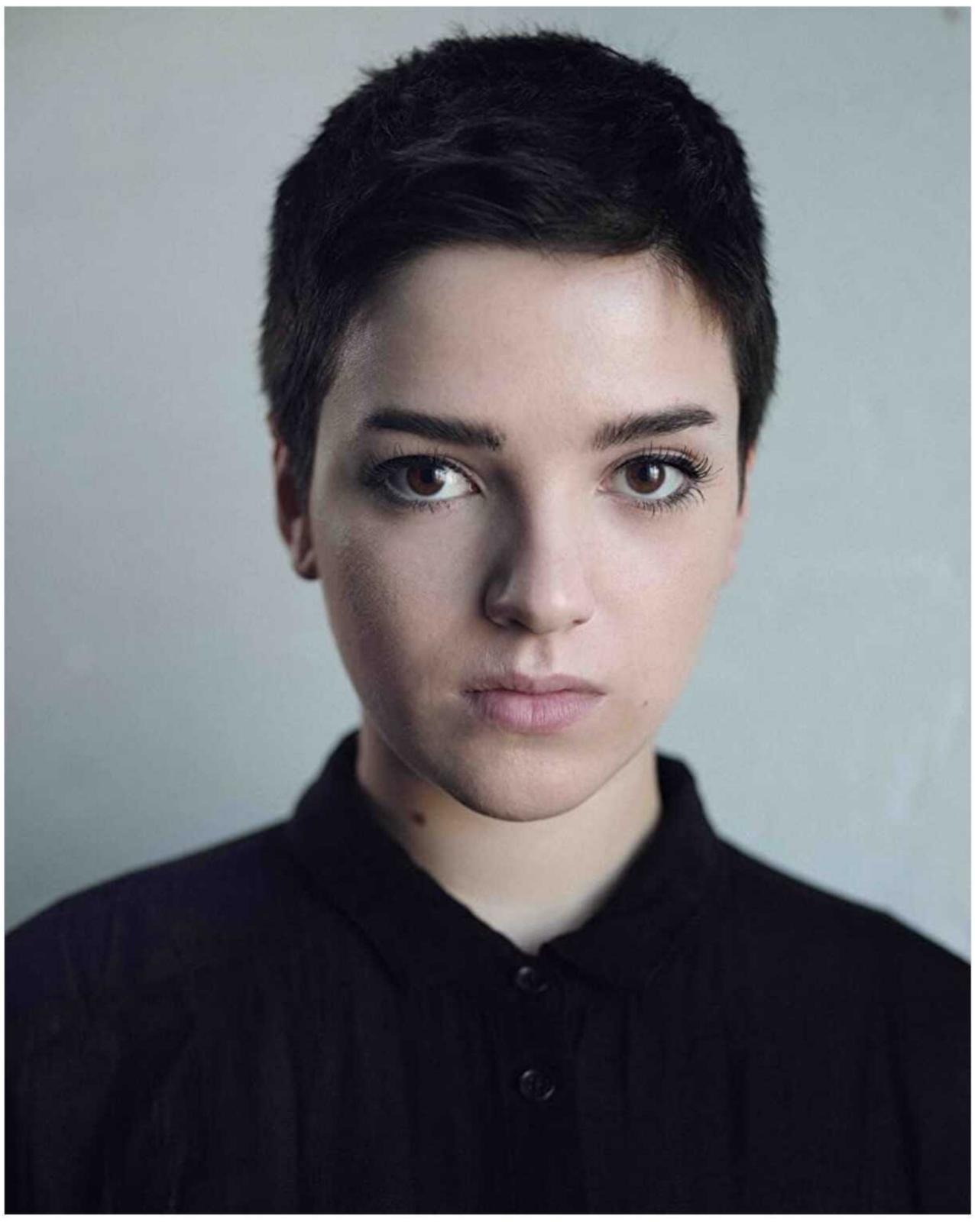
FIRST?

The casting options and new characters being the "first" of both trans and non binary characters has been debated within the fandom since the announcement.

Next Generation dipped it's toes into non-binary and gender identity before, though it was not well recieved with star Jonathon Frakes calling the producers reluctance to go further as "cowardly".

DS9 saw Quark transition in a comedy caper, which was again not a favoured representation of the struggles of transgendered people and even the Trill, who have been hailed as trans icons by some, weren't really matching.

In a new era of Trek, Discovery's aim to push representation is a bold step forwards that mirrors the choices of Trek since it's inception and a chance to now do it right. ■





CASTING NEWS

KENNETH MITCHELL RETURNS TO DISCOVERY

As Discovery brings in some new cast members, they're also making sure to bring back one of the more popular recurring actors as Kenneth Mitchell is set to appear for a third season, and another new character, in Discovery.

First appearing in Season 1 as war-lord General Kol, the story seemed to be over for Mitchell after Kol's death at the hands of Discovery, but was then revived as Kol'Sha, father of Kol and new head of the household in Season 2.

When he was killed off, again, he later appeared as Tenavik, the son of Voq and L'Rell aged by timey wimey shenanigans but it seems the producers just can;t get enough as he's announced that he'll be back once again; and this time without the make up.

"I'm playing a human character," Mitchell told Star Trek Magazine. "It's beautiful, and I'm excited for the fans to meet him."

Mitchel revealed early in 2020 that he has been diagnosed with ALS; a motor neuron disease that causes gradual weakening of the body's muscles.

Despite being diagnosed late in 2018, and now requiring a wheelchair on a day to day basis, Mitchell has remained positive in his outlook and has continued working; making an appearance for Star Trek: The Cruise soon after he went public with his condition and as recurring character on CW show Nancy Drew.

Filmed before his first publioc appearances since being open with his condition, Mitchell's scenes minus the makeup will be toewards the latter episodes of Season 3. ■



IT'S ABOUT...

THE BEST OF THEM...

As we prepare for another round of Discovery this October, we're taking a look back at their journey before their travels through time.

The second season was a dramatic mystery with Captain Pike taking temporary command of Discovery to track down a series of mysterious signals, find what they discover is a "Red Angel" and how knowing about it has driven Michael Burnham's forter brother Spock to the brink of madness.

Filled with action, excitement and a good few laughs, Discovery's second season helped push the show from it's tense origins and after giving us a chance to see Burnham redeem herself after her actions on board the USS Shenzhou, followed a more personal path.

Reconnecting with family, some she thought long gone, Burnham stood at the centre of personal change within the crew as they battled against a rogue AI that threatened the future of all organic life, whilst piecing together how it all fit with the Red Angel itself.

Looking back at the season, we've picked out just a handful of the memorable moments from touching, to bold and just plain nostalgia enducing....

THE TOP TEN MOMENTS

DISCOVERY SEASON TWO



FEARLESS

An Odol for Charon

Pulled towards an ancient alien sphere that ends up gifting Discovery it's knowledge to live on, it's effects have a weird impact on Saru.

As he falls ill, and enters what he knows to be the last stages of Kelpian life, Burnham stays with him to his last breath. The bond between them is a touching moment; more so as he realises he's not dying, but reaching a new evolution most Kelpians dont live long enough to know of.

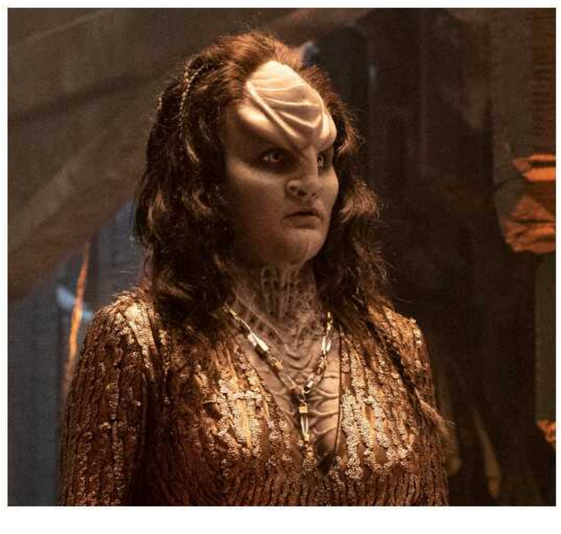


REJOINED

Saints of Imperfection

After Ash Tyler/Voq killed Culber in the first season, Stamets had fallen into a state of depression. Unknown to him, the mycelial network had done something a little weird; recreating Culber within it's realm.

Discovering his love inside the realm after the being within asked for help; and while the return wasn't as happy a journey as he'd hoped, that moment they were brought back together was a heartwarming sequence.



MOTHER....

Point of Light

Positioning herself as Chancellor of the Klingon Empire at the end of the first season, L'Rell has a long way to go to unite the houses.

L'Rell had a bit of a rough time coming to terms with Voq, with hiding her secret offspring and ensuring there was no weakness to exploit.

With a little help and some Klingon politics, she secured her sovereignty by announcing her son was dead and in a glorious moment, declared herself "Mother" of Qo'nos.



BE BOLD, BE BRAVE

Project Deadalus

Since the season kicked off, Pike showed guilt and remorse for missing the war. After learning about Section 31's secret base, Pike tore into Admiral Cornwell for how low Starfleet would sink to get the results they need and she cut him down right back.

"You're the best of us." She declared, explaining if they lost, they needed Captains like him to rebuild and lead the way. One of the few moments Pike was outmatched, and simultaniously touched.



FUTURE IMPERFECT
Through the Vallery of Shadows

Captain Pike's dirst appearance in Star Trek was a man confined to a support device after a horrific accident. As Discovery's second season is set years before that event, we all knew where Pike's life would end. But he didn't, until he entered the Klingon sacred grounds of Borath.

Hoping to be given a time crystal, Pike is warned that once he does, it'll show him a vision and he won't be able to change it. That vision he saw? The accident that hadn't occured yet, the reason we first see him in the chair.

It's a harrowing moment played to perfection by Anson Mount as Pike realises there's no going back after having insight into his horrific fate.



PREVIOUSLY ON STAR TREK
If Memory Serves

It's not exactly a secret that Star Trek's first pilot, Captain Pike's mission to Talos IV, was rejected and cut up into an original series episode.

When Spock took Burnham to Talos to help find peace in his mind, we all waited on the edge of our seats to see them return to that once forgotten world.

Though how the next episode opened was a striking moment of nostalgia as it recapped that pilot episode with original scenes, actors and uniforms before taking us through a long awaited, and unexpected, sequel.



AIRLOCK
Project Deadalus

Compared to most other Star Trek shows, Discovery's the oddity that doesn't focus much on the bridge crew or senior staff. But through Season 2 we did get a little bit more time with the leading bridge members.

After being compromised by control, we were given some insight into Airiam's past; why she was cybernetically augmented. But as Burnham and Nahn were on an away team with her, Control took over and there was only one option to save the crew; airlocking her into the void of space.



FAMILY
Perpetual Infinity

Throughout the season we had a lot of moments that dug deep into an early, less matured Spock and how his relationship with Burnham during childhood shaped them both.

Revealing his insecurities, from his dislexia to not feeling enough thanks to harsh words from a young Michael, there were tense moments between them as they tried to overcome their past.

Though no moment as comforting as them reconciling and being open for the first time, rekindling their sibling-like bond.



FIGHT CLUB
If Memory Serves

Struggling with his death and ressurection, Culber can't keep his cool any longer and blows up, provoking Ash Tyler into a fight as payback for his part as Voq - in his murder.

As saru holds back the crew from interfering, letting it "play out" Culber lays into Tyler, Tyler fights back and as they struggle Culber breaks.

It was a strong and powerful moment for Culber as he began to try and re-establish his life and purpose. And a rare moment between the two as both of them realised they were both struggling with identity.



FIGHTING WITH HONOUR
Such Sweet Sorrow Part 2

Star Trek and action often go hand in hand in a variety of ways, from the tense final battle in The Undiscovered Country, to the harsh ground combat in DS9. Despite being set in war time, Discovery's first season didn't really focus on the war or extensive battles. Season 2's finale did, however, with the longest action sequence to date in Trek.

As the crew scramble to build the Red Angel suit and make their move towards the future, there's loss, heartbreak and reconcilliation. But as things get tough, they get a helping hand and a sneap preview of peace to come in fifty years when Chancelor L'Rell enters the fray, her fighting alongside Discovery, the Enterprise and even the Kelpians as they all come together to take out the galactic threat Control posed.

DEPARTMENT

SPECIAL INTEREST & NEW MERCH



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A quick dive into new theories and speculation on the theoretical phenomenon.



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Joining the cast as the new young protoge of Spock, who was Saavik and where did she go?

THROUGH THE WORMHOLE

REPORT BY EMERGENCY SCIENCE HOLOGRAM

Wormholes are a common sci fi trope; tunnels connecting far reaching regions of space that can be traversed in seconds. From the Bajoran Wormhole in Deep Space Nine, to the conduits of Contact, they're a magical plot device thats become common knowledge.

However, in reality the truth of wormholes has always been less fancy than in film or television. For a start, there's no actual proof they exist. They're as much a theoretical fantasy as warp drive or Orlando Bloom's ability to have a third facial expression.

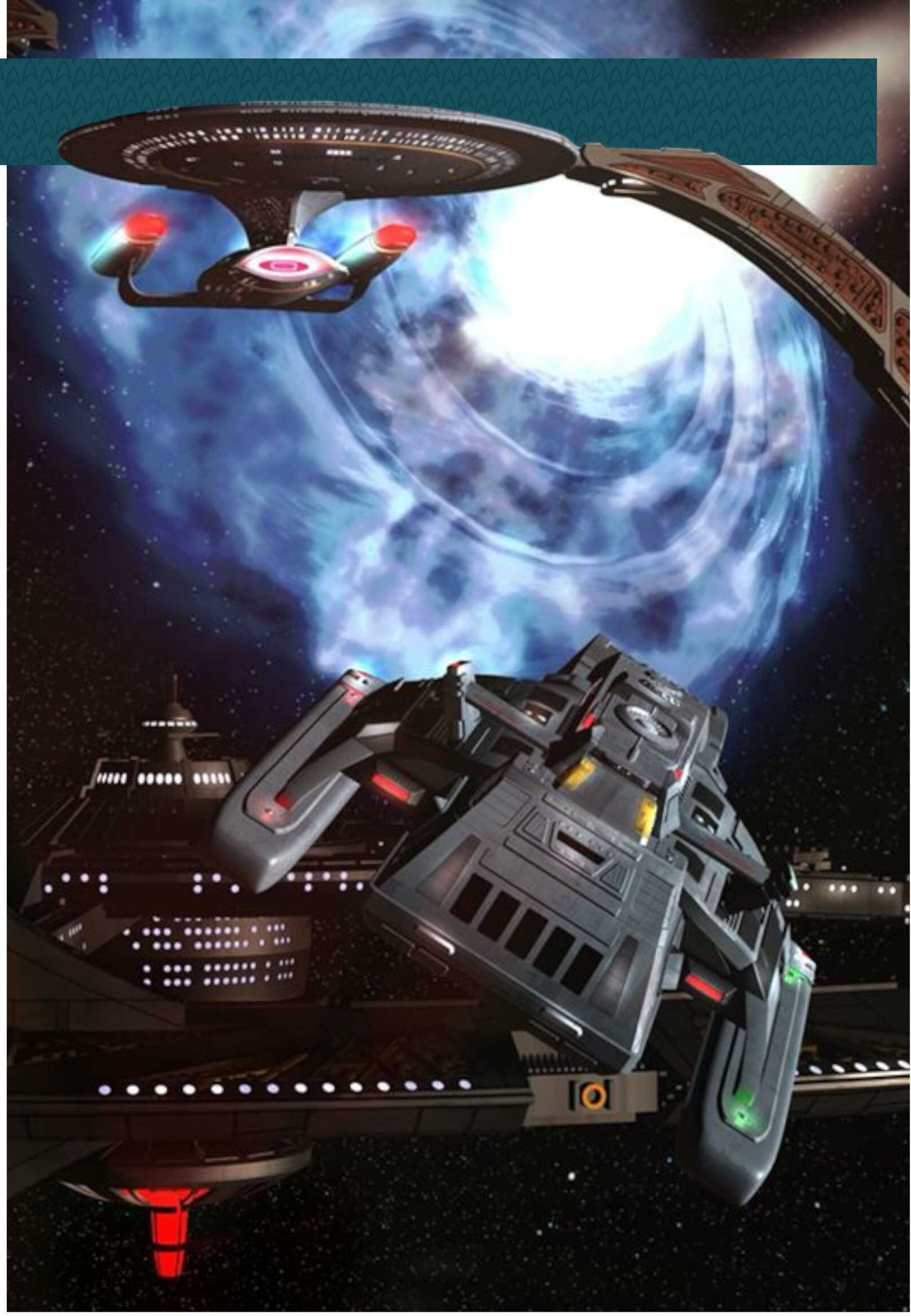
That doesn't stop astrophysical minds ticking away at the possibility, and theorising their likelihood and function. One of the most accepted theories is that, while we see them used for travel in media, hypothetical wormholes wouldn't be a speedy solution or usable. They're thought to be both microscopic in size and less of a shortcut through space and more of a longer way between start and destination.

"Usually when people discuss wormholes, they have in mind 'short' wormholes: the ones for which the travel time would be almost instantaneous even for a distant observer." Juan Maldacena of Princeton University explained to Sci Fi Wire, “We think that such wormholes are inconsistent with the basic principles of relativity.”

Though that may not be the end of the theorising. Larger wormholes are thought to exist in places that contain dark matter or have extradimensional geometry. This would allow for both larger wormholes are potentially safe travel through.

"The problem is that every object which enters the wormhole will be accelerated to very high energies," the scientists said. "It means that a wormhole must be kept extremely ”clean”to be safe for human travel."

While it's all theorising, just like the in-development warp drive, it seems anythings possible. ■



SCIENCE *FACT*ION

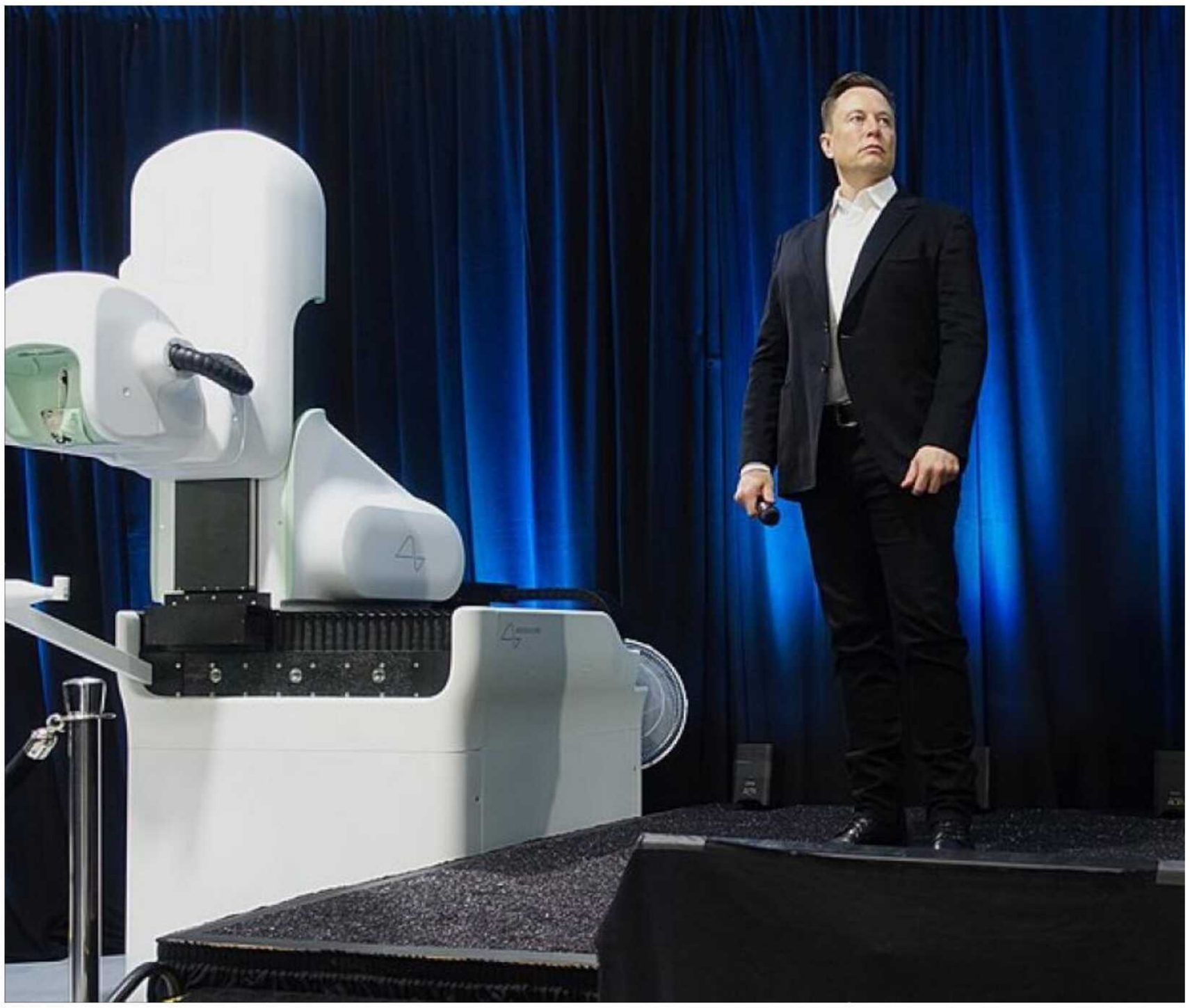
Once upon a time there was an asteroid hurtling it's way towards Earth and the only person who could save the day was Bruce Willis and a rag tag team of deep core drillers. Armageddon was the movie that put Michael Bay on the map, and his first big film to portray his love of over the top everything. The story goes that NASA's finest, their best of the best, can't figure out how to work a massive drill. So instead of learning how to switch the drill on, they instead train deep core drillers to become astronauts in quick time.

It's a dramatic film that see's the drill team struggle to come to grips with their new mission, NASA try not to implode as their lack of training or focus and of course it has them all zoom off into space to plant a nuclear warhead into an asteroid to save the day. It's a dramatic and emotional tale. Better yet? It's shown as part of NASA's training program.

So why do young astronauts have to sit through it all? Is it to learn how to be heroic in the depths of space? Or are they just there to learn how it all could be possible? Well, no....

Armageddon is shown to new recruits because it contains many elements which are scientifically impossible. Wannabe astronauts have to identify those impossibilities - all 168 of them - in order to demonstrate how much smarter they are than the writers! ■





NEURALINK LIVE DEMO

THREE PIGS ONE EXPERIMENT

AUGMMENTATION

It's a project that echoes fears of the Borg and Airiam-like levels of human augmentation. Neuralink is one of the many projects under the financing of futurist entrepreneur Elon Musk and after a lot of secrecy around the project, he presented it's first live demo at the tail end of August.

Neuralink Corporation was founded by Musk and several others back in 2016 with the goal of creating an implant that could be placed within the human brain. This implant's long term goal is to bridge the gap between human thought and artificial intelligence with a short term goal of boosting medical technology including advancing the tech that allows people with artificial limbs to control their prosthetics, as well as delve into other conditions through a direct connection tothe brain through veins and arteries.

It's an ambitious goal for the San Fransisco based company, with their first live demo back in 2019 being described by Musk as creating a "FitBit for the Brain" as it offered the chance to record groups of neurons firing.

The latest demo was far more impressive as they unveiled a fully fundtioning base prototype of the device by showcasing pigs who has the current iteration of Neuralink connected to their brain. The device itself is a coin-sized implant with wired reaching just a few millimetres into the brain and was showcased by a trio of animal testing.

Of the trio of pigs used, Gertrude, had a neuralink connected to a live feed showing signals sent from her snout as she ruffled through hay. Another, Dorothy, had previously been given the tech and was shown after it's removal to demonstrate how unaffected she was. And a third, Joyce, had never received the impact and was shown to interact with her friends demonstrating no social difference was made despite the upgrades.

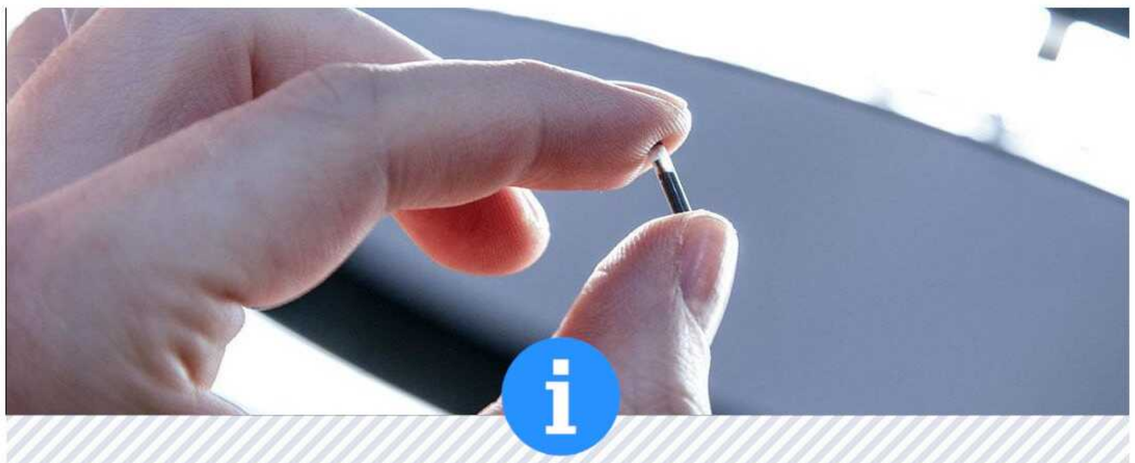
While on the surface it seems an impressive step forward, there are still questions that can only be answered with human trials. Such as how the implantation would effect a persons speech and thought process; things we can only know with a human perspective.

Another issue is that having insight into such bran functions is, right now, extremely limited. Neuralinks technology is impressive and has real potential for future development as well as putting a massive spotlight on neuroscience itself.

However, the down side right now is that the technology has advanced beyond our knowledge of how to use it. Much of ou brain functions are still an unknown quantity and while we can now track and monitor behaviours in real time, the knowledge needed to translate those signals beyond cosmetic readings is still a good while away.

Neuralinks abilities to read the pathways and functions is just one aspect of what we need to understand out noggin and how it works. Kevin Tracey, a neurosurgery professor and president of the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research, argued that there are three fields of study at play - olecular medicine to make and find the targets, neuroscience to understand how the pathways control the target, and the devices themselves.

Musks long term goal of linking man with machine may require a lot more work than we'd anticipate, but much like other cybernetic-marketted devices, it offers a unique idea that could potentially open the door to a new augmentation. ■



While not on the level Neuralink wants to achieve, technological implants are available now with companies such as Bioteq in the UK offering small implanted devices that allow a user to unlock phones, computers and even doors. using RFID microchips inplanted between your thumb and index finger.



EARLY SPACE EXPLORATION

HISTORICAL REPORT

As I write this in the "real" world, the Space X Dragon is due to complete its first test mission by touching down off the coast of Florida. For a bit of fun, I thought I would take a look at the early space exploration missions seen in the Star Trek universe. Spoiler, they don't seem to end well.

BY DANIEL ADAMS

Voyager 6 19??

The Voyager missions were a series of satellite launches by NASA. The sixth probe, named Voyager 6, left the solar system, and eventually fell into a black hole, where it emerged near a machine planet.

The residents of the planet "upgraded" Voyager, which now called itself V'Ger, where it returned to earth in an attempt to deliver its knowledge. Sadly, V'Ger's way of compiing data was to destroy the item being scanned, and recreate within its vast energy cloud. It also considered carbon based life forms to be inferior.

The entity merged with a human, Will Decker, and evolved further.

DY Ships 1996 to circa 2200s

The DY spaceships were an early spacecraft used in the 20th and 21st Centuries.

The most infamous of which is the Botany Bay, in which the Dictator Khan Noonien Singh fled following the Eugenics Wars in 1996.

Khan and his followers were revived and attempted to capture the USS Enterprise 1701 some 200 years later. Khan and the rest of his crew were exiled to Ceti Alpha V, to live aboard the remnants of the Botany Bay.

Other DY vessels include the DY-500 SS Mariposa from the 22nd century, this ship was able to make two stops, firstly at the planet Bringloid V where a colony of low tech settlers was established, and the planet Mariposa, half a light year away. The ship crashed, and only five crew survived. They resorted to cloning to keep the colony alive.

Saturn Missions – 2000s

The Enterprise had another brush with space flight in the 21st Century, as they encountered John Christopher following a time warp accident.

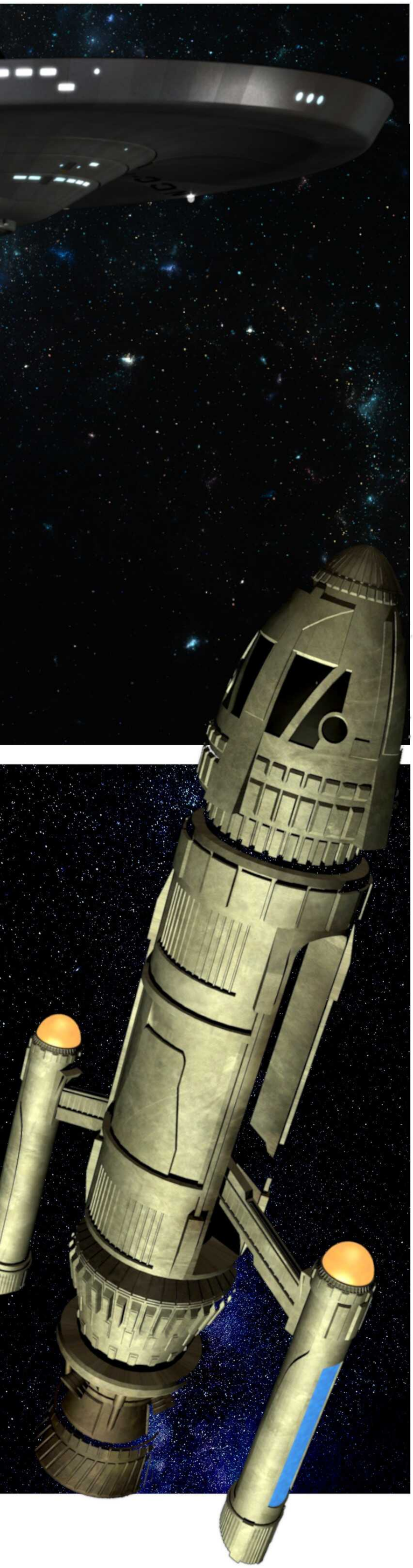
Initially reluctant to return Christopher to his proper place and time with knowledge of the future, the crew discovered that his unborn son, Shaun would lead the first mission to Saturn The elder Christopher was returned, and his son was born.

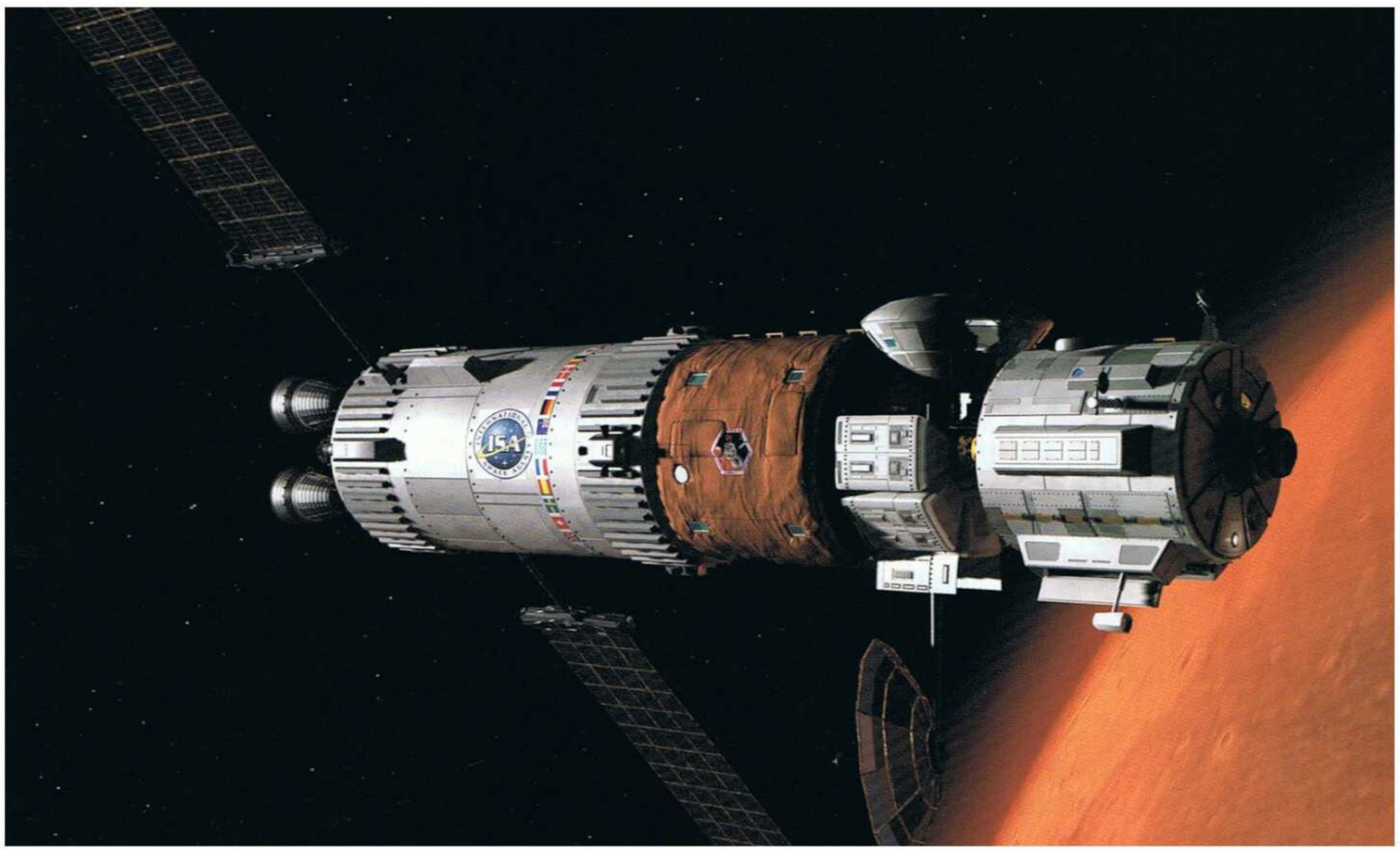
Nomad - 2002

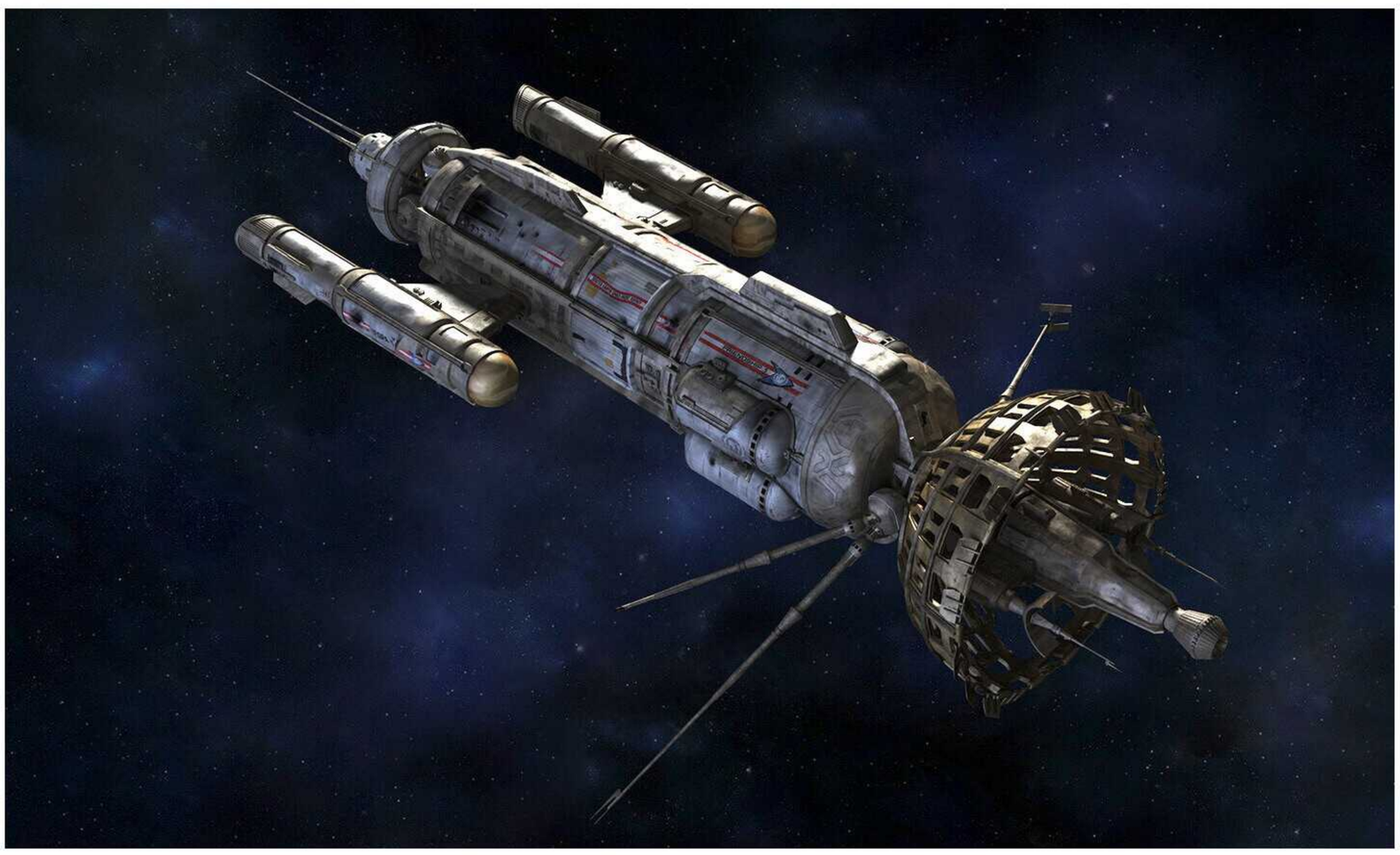
In 2002, the Nomad Probe is launched from Earth. Contact was lost, when the probe hit an asteroid.

It merged with another probe, known as Tan Ru, and a new entity was created.

The new creature was flawed, believing organic units to be imperfect, and capable of destroying them. The







unit was outwitted by the USS Enterprise.

Ares IV 2032

Ares IV was a mission to colonise Mars, Ares IV travelled to the red planet While two of the crew were stranded on the planet, the ship itself was caught in a gravitron ellipse

The ship's fate was discovered by the USS Voyager in the Delta Quadrant.

The ship's one occupant, Kelly, survived several days after the ship was lost.

Charybdis 2037,

NASA's third attempted at a manned mission outside of the solar system.

The mission fails, when the ship is transported to the Theta 116 solar system.

The ships lone survivor, Stephen Riche is cared for by a benign species that creates a simulation of the novel he was reading.

Phoenix - 2063

Following World War III, the most important chapter of human spaceflight took place when Zefram Cochrane completed the first warp flight aboard the Phoenix.

The mission led to first contact with the Vulcan people, and would provide the foundation for the alliance that would become the United Federation of Planets.

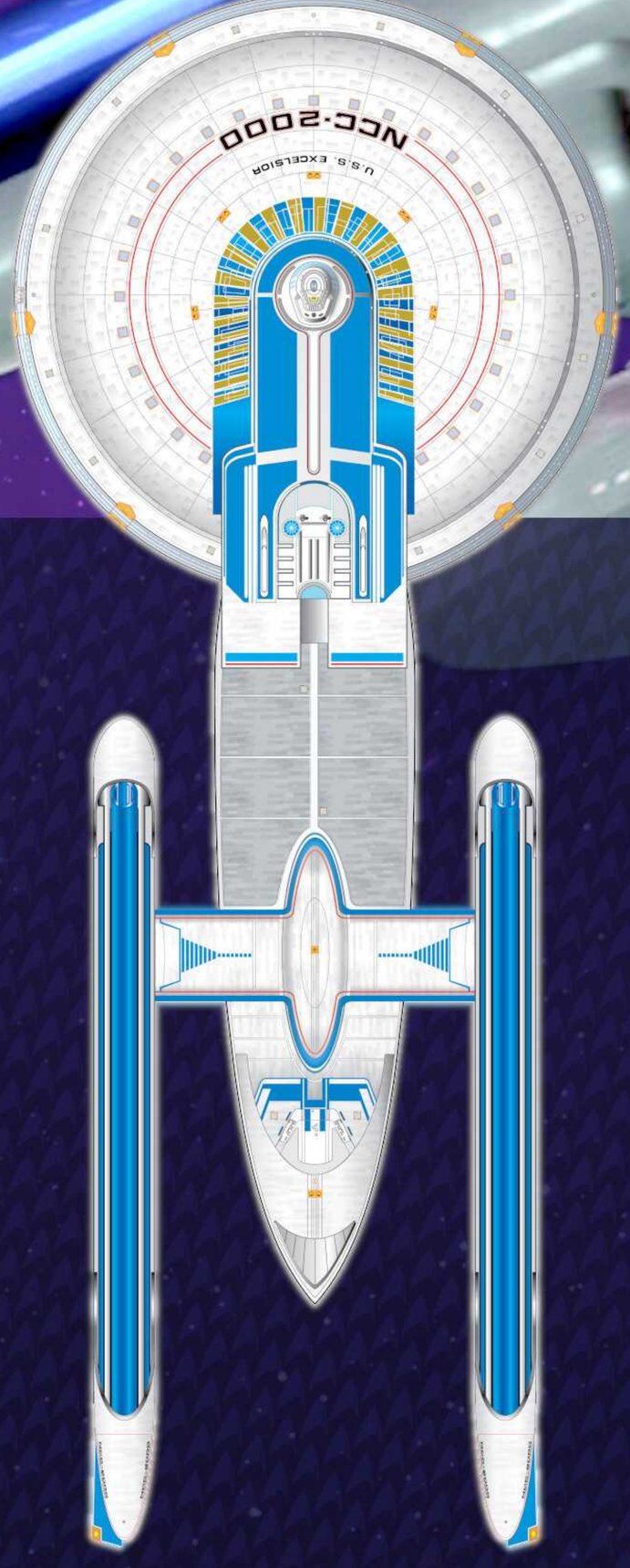
Friendship One – 2067

Four years later, a new Earth would establish the United Earth Probe Space Agency and launch its first probe, Friendship One.

The probe made it as far as the Delta Quadrant, where it crashed. The native people of the planet that discovered the probe attempted to reverse engineer the anti-matter power system and apply it to their own grid.

Sadly, the technology failed and led to massive planetary disaster that was discovered by Voyager.

Daniel Adams is the serving Executive Officer of the USS Sovereign & resident Trekspert who only the bold and the brave challenge in a trivia quiz!



Perhaps the most enduring design within Starfleet's arsenal the Excelsior Class was once the "Great Expriment" designed to replace and surpass the Constitution Class and ended up becoming a base ship that would survive for many generations.

Designed in the latter half of the 23rd century, the Excelsior was a unique ship for the time. Following everything that was disovered in the five year missions of the Enterprise and it's fellow Constituion fleet, the ship was to be of a new breed for Starfleet; taking everything they'd develped and turning it all up to 11.

onstructed at the San Fransisco Fleetyards, the Excelsior Class was designed to be a new breed of Starship to replace the outdated Constitution class models, taking on board their research and service history through their five year mission cycles to help move forward with a new type of propulsion system.

The prototype Excelsior was designed with a game changing transwarp drive; a form of warp that would allow the ship to travel well beyond the usual range of warp speed to near infinite velocity. It was a bold step forward, and did offer a new model of warp drive for future generations. But it didn't work as expected and the experiment was considered a failure.

Despite the experiment not bearing the results Starfleet intended, the Excelsior's space frame was adjusted to still operate as a successor to the constitution classes with a fleet moved into production by the time the Constitution Class Enterprise-A, a recommissioned refit of an earlier model, was retired from service.

The Excelsior class was larger than refit constitutions, measuring a little ▷



under 467 meters in length with 34 decks in total. Despite the larger internal volume then it's predecessor, Junior and Enlisted officers would share bunks in open quarters while senior officers and captains would have their own, albeit small, cabins.

Originally the Excelsior class had five type eight dual phaser banks and several torpedo launchers, the two most prominent on the ribbed neck of the ship. However with the ship design being in use for over a century, many upgrades were implemented to ensure it's specs were up to current standards; best demonstrated when the USS Lakota got into a fire fight with the overpowered unofficial warship Defiant near Earth in 2372.

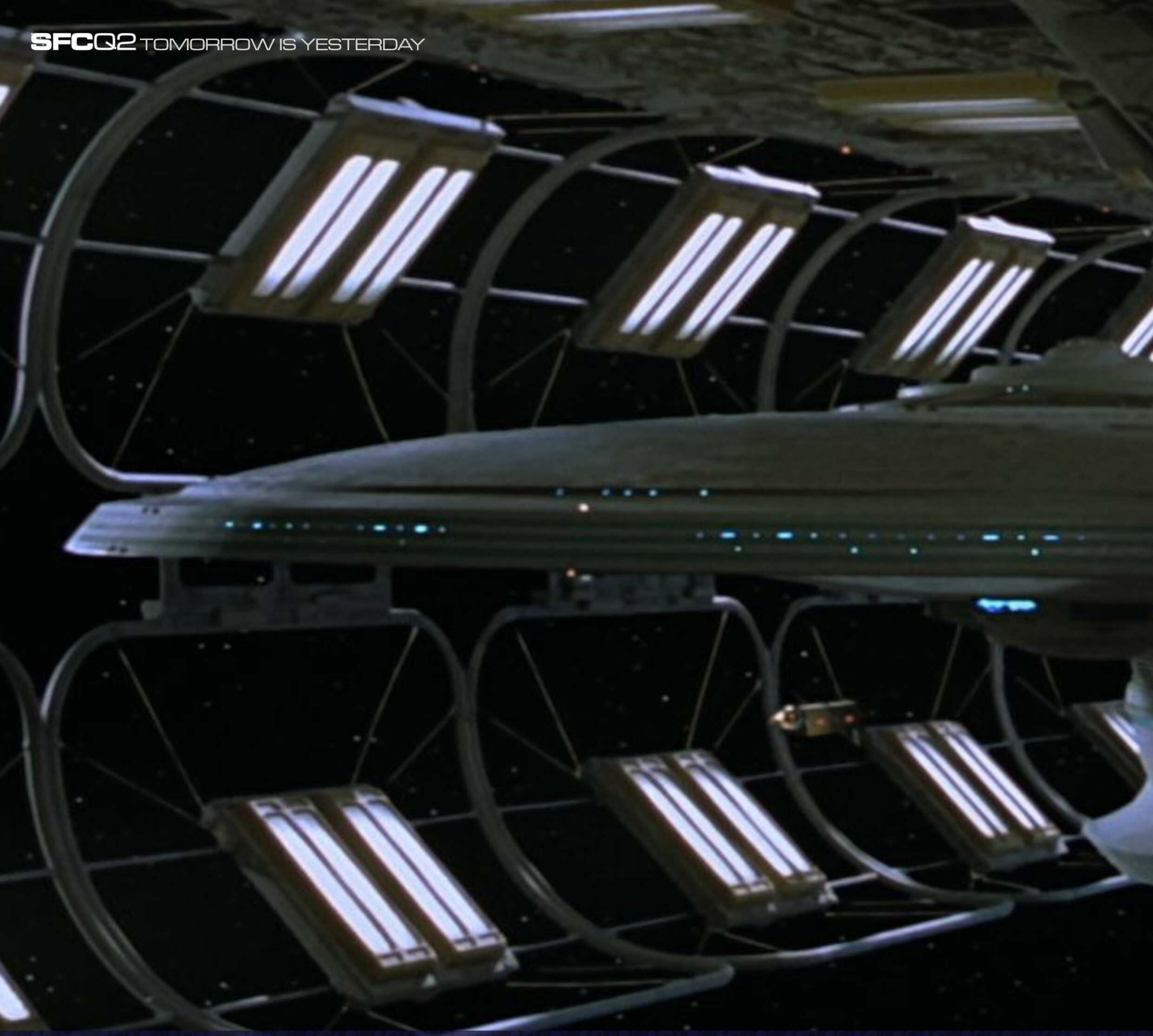
Modular and adaptable system design lent to the ships constant ability to be upgraded in both active and pre-production forms allowing further upgrades to be implemented to ships in service as well as raw space fames. Of the upgrades available included recrystallisation technology within the dilithium chambers, a standard feature for mid-late 24th century vessels including the advanced Galaxy and Sovereign classes.

That adaptability was the key to turning what could have been another quickly retired design into one that would last the ages. Unlike other classes of starship which were quickly outdated with limited upgrade availability, such as the Walker from the early 23rd century, the Excelsior class was able to survive and adapt to multiple technological advances. Even after being surpassed by the Ambassador and Galaxy classes as a front-line unit, the Excelsior class starships were still being adapted and constructed as new well into the latter half of the 24th century.

DESIGN

Approaching the design of the Excelsior was fairly simple; it had to outshine the Enterprise and make it look obsolete so when we saw our first glimpse of it, we knew it was the superior model.

It wasn't a design that came easily however, and a lot of early stages took a vastly different and more extreme approach than the final model. Early ▶



sketches and study models featured an elongated and thin design, with one example having a more rectangular primary hull similar to the Reliant while others had a four-nacelle set up placed far from the primary hull.

Some of the concepts would be seen in the background with a few turning up in the “Starship Graveyard” Surplus Depot Z15 in the Next Generation, however when it came to what we now know as the Excelsior a completely different approach was taken.

Offered the chance to come up with his own idea, visual artist David Carson didn't try to add a more alien look to the ship, but ground it in the familiar shape of the Enterprise, retaining the same base layout, but a unique idea. Carson was a fan of Japanese style and design at the time, which often came with sleaker lines than the industrial-looking Enterprise so he began to construct the look based on the idea, “What would the Enterprise look if the Japanese designed it?”

Building a study model of his sketches, director Leonard Nimoy choose his sleak design, which Carson has often assumed due to it's familiar lines in comparison with the other options, and thus the most used model in all Trek history began production.

The final Excelsior's thinner primary hull and flat secondary with a smooth, concave deflector dish and the first to have L-shaped nacelle pylons. Some of it's more unique aspects were a cargo bay on the underside of the hull, behind the deflector area, and a hub recessed inside a curved shuttle-bay at the dorsal end.

Between it's original appearance and it's return in The Undiscovered Country, the Excelsior model was given a few revisions. The “tail” of the ship originally had a semi-circular insert, but was later given a flatter, more rugged module that would be further revised for the Enterprise-B modifications for the first TNG feature film Generations which began with a good old fashioned flashback to the launch of the vessel..

The ships bridge area was also heavily revised between films. In it's first appearance the bridge of the ship was designed to be a huge room with a lot of fancy tech and a viewscreen that would take up half the front section of the room. Only a portion of the bridge was built for Star Trek 3, just giving a hint of the volume of size as well as a sense of being brand new with a white paint job and slightly fancier graphics.

Externally the large room was reflected with a huge dome. However in it's subsequent appearance in The Undiscovered country, a new set was created by redressing and moving elements of the Enterprise bridge so the model makers replaced the dome with a module that better reflected the new, smaller bridge.

Part of that bridge came with consoles from the Enterprise-D to help ▷



illistrate the difference in tech between the aging state of the Enterprise compared to the super-advanced Excelsior class.

REFIT

Further revisions were made behind the bridge module to freshmen up it's look, though even more dramatic revisions would come in the form of the “Excelsior refit”. The Refit style was designed for Generations and only seen again, on screen, in the form of the USS Lakota during Deep Space Nine.

As the Excelsior model was used rather excessively as a cheap option to show on screen, the decision was made to give it a few revisions to freshen it up to represent the,, until then unseen, Enterprise B.

Due to requirements in the story, the hull around the deflector needed some beefing up, resulting in one of the most obvious changes; two bulky fins reaching out of the curvy secondary hull to allow it to be damaged in the teaser section of Generations. Designer John Eaves took great care working alongside Mike Okuda to ensure that, while they created additional elements,the basic lines of the ship remained in spite of the added heft.

“The added girth increased the overall size of the vessel, while still retaining the original Excelsior design.” Eaves explained in his Next Generation movies sketchbook, “We made a few other design changes, such as taking two fins off the top of the saucer, and putting in two major impulse engines, one on either side of the existing impulse engines.”

Those extra impulse engines again added to the weight and bulk of the ship, but were designed with attention to detail in mind; that if there was a saucer separation, the added impulse decks would allow more power in a crisis.

Caps were also placed in front of the nacelles, creating a bridge between the Motion Picture and Next Generation era while the ships bridge module would remain similar to the Undiscovered Country version, but with an added console behind the Captains chair to mirror the Next Generations bridge layout.

LEGACY

Excelsior ships have been used well into the 24th century as capitol flagships and despite the age of the design, remains one of the most elegant and timeless within the fleet.

Several units within SFC have used the Excelsior class. While outdated compared to such ships as the Inquiry or Nova, remains one of the most iconic and memorable styles ever to enter the fleet. So much so that even during the Dominion War the class was still in service on the front lines.

A timeless classic and iconic, sleak design, Excelsior may have failed it's initial concept but remained a triumph. ■

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATES



JOIN THE COMMS RELAY

JAMES TYLER | DoFC

As part of the evolution and extension of the Comms element of SFC, we have always invited members to contribute, take part and be able to ensure a wider view of the fleet. Now we're taking it a little bit further as we open the doors of SFCQ2.com to the fleet.

Everyone likes tot contribute their thoughts and their time, and many within Q2 have expressed interest at being able to contirbute more to SFC as a whole.

As such, we've made it a little bit easier to get involved with the Communications arm of SFC and offer your view, your insight and your uniqueness to our output by opening up a submissions section of the SFC Account panel.

Once any member logs in, they can visit "Relay" within the section menu and find out more about how to post.

Members who wish to use the SFC site to submit reviews, blogs, commentary or any type of feature whether one off or regular can apply by checking the "Blog Post" button.

For a first time poster, you'll have to apply for access but once thats been granted you can submit a post at any time to the site and we'll take care of the rest!

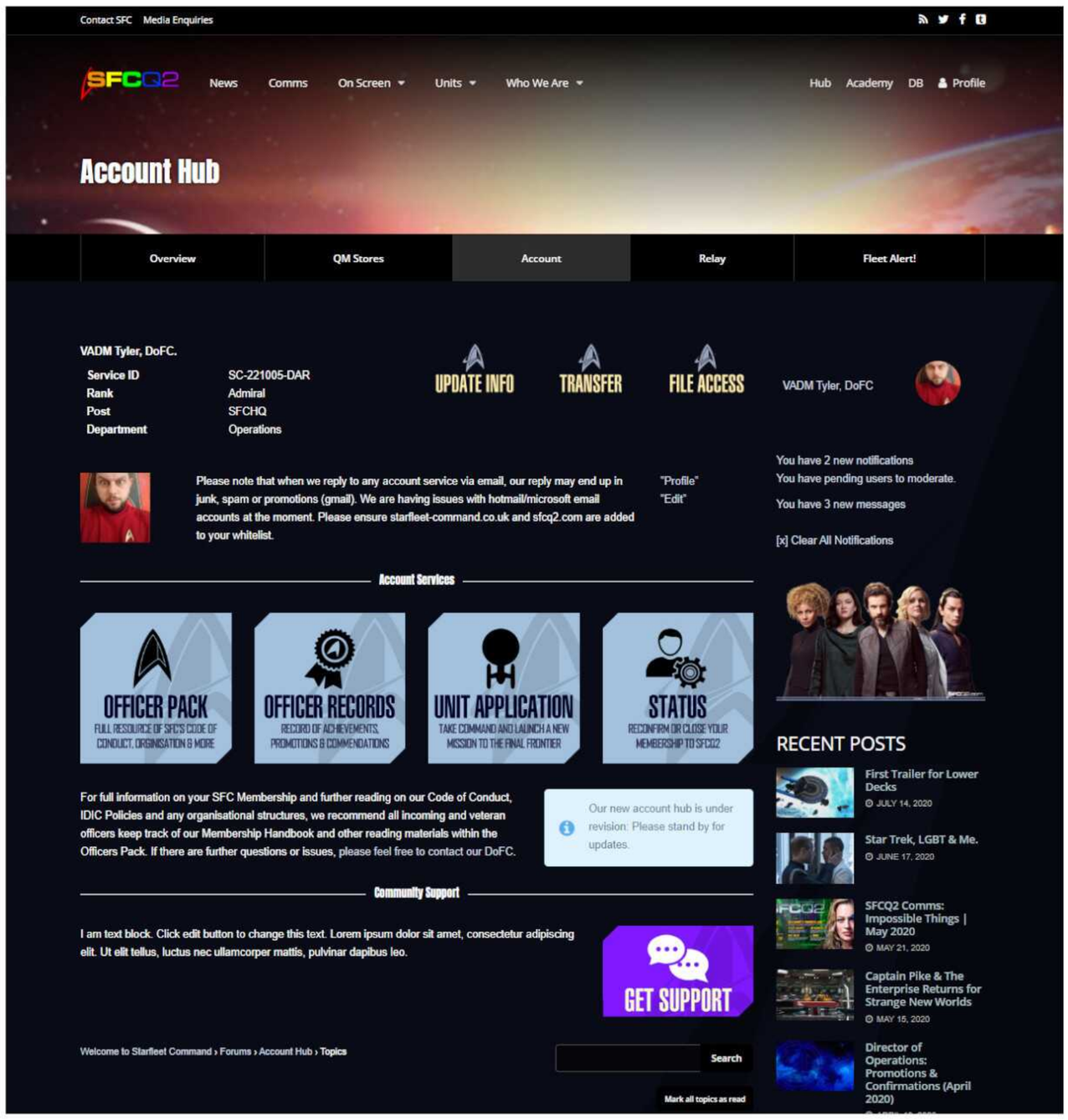
Posts can be submitted either through a simple text form, or by submitting a document file that we can paste in. The upload also allows for any images you'd like to have added.

Aside from offering a chance to take part in the fleet output, the main reason we wanted to put this into place so that we could ensure SFC represented everyones views, opinions and experiences; as we've seen so far with posts submitted by memebrs such as Sam Lewis and Stephen Lester.

The option is open for every member to take part if they want to, though we do have an appproval system in place in both gaining acccess and in posts going live - which is for practical reasons as well as caution. The system is now live and operational and can be acccessed via the Account Hub.

Approved posters will have their site accounts upgraded to "Contributor" and given reasonable free reign to add commentary, reviews, personal insights and more.

Further information is available in the Relay section, but any questions or curiousities can be sent directly through the form or via DoFC.



HUB UPDATES

SFCQ2.com/hub

After a long and painstaking process, oiur new membership hub has begun go take shape after takking on a lot of feedback to help streamline the service.

For those who don't use it regularly, our Membership hub has always been intended to be an easy and accessable place to update information, gain support and more. However, over time it got a little cluttered as we moved away from the inactive forum based members section.

Having almost fully retired the forum archive and moved the Database informatiton archive into it's own section, we've been able to clean up and simplify the Hubs functions.

The bulk of those functions can be found under "Account". Unlike previously the accouunt section will display all your membership information - including rank, position and ID number and allow quicker access to membership functions, such as requesting a transfer updating your membership info and allow officer level members to complete a new unit appliccation if they want to advance to Captain.

Members can also request File Access, which is basically a Subject Access Request or change their status from active, to on leave or even formally deactivate their membership.

Further features are in progress, though with soem extra steps to be fully complete. Officer Records is pending, but when active will show a list of downloads unique to the user that will store any submitted paperwork such as commendation or promotion certificates if the originals are lost.

While all acccount functions are contained under the Account section, the Members Hub has also had the QM Store added for fleet patches or any limited offers, a seperate fleet Alert section thatt hosts any and all updates from the Admiralty or HQ and Relay for anyone who wants to take partt in Comms online, or in our regular issues.

In comparison to our previous Hub, the new streamlined section is going into a testing phase with feedback welcomed for a full breakdown and refinement early next year. However early feedback has so far been positive and we'll continue to ensure everything you need will be available.

COMMUNICATIONS DIVISION
QUADRANT TWO

DIRECTOR OF FLEET COMMUNICATIONS

Redeveloping the SFCQ2 Members Hub is one of many projects that falls under the responsability of the Director of Fleet Communications; a role which requires a l;ot of time, patience and dedication.



ROLE & RESPONSABILITIES

Responsible for disseminating information within the organisation, the DoFC is tasked with ensuring that members are aware and informed of fleet matters and supported projects as well as managing and editing official communication tools, Comms Quarterly and sharing administrative duties.

The Members Hub is one of the key components to help distribute information, offering a secure and private place where mebers can access new and info at their leisure, however time is often shared bwteen mailouts, welcoming new members and answering any questions Cadets and Officers of Q2 may have.

Aside from handling Fleet Communications and Alerts, Comms and the Comms Relay email list fall under their responsability, as well as technical support and media enquiries and contacts.

THE DIRECTOR

The current Director of Fleet Comms is James Tyler who was offered the role in 2015.

With a background in various forms of media and marketing, James joined the board early in his career to lend support to various projects and aspects of SFC. Managing all communications channels, James is often the first person you'll make first contact with whether official comms or replying to a tweet!

Currently based in South Lanarkshire, James also currently doubles up to act as Interim Director of Administration, which has allowed an ease of contact and swifter processing of new members.

CONTACT

The Director of Fleet Communications, regardless of who holds the position, can be contacted through comms@starfleet-command.com. Further contact information is available in the Fleet Hub.

QUARTERMASTER STORES

FOLLOW THE WARRIORS PATH WITH KLINGON BLOOD WINE!



Lets face it, we've seen the Klingons shugging bloodwine by the barrell for years now. Whether it's in a big special ceremony commemorating true warriors, over the bodies of their enemies or even just kicking back and relaxing at Quarks while scouting for a scrap.

The favoured drink of the warrior is one of the most talked about and mentioned in the Next Generation era of Star Trek. Mostly as Klingons are everywhere and like to slam their fist on the ground and demand it at any oppertunity.

Going into battle? Bloodwine. Victory? Bloodwine. Good news? Bloodwine. Sulking alone in your quarters waiting for O'Brien to notice? Definately bloodwine.

And I'm fairly certain that if a true Klingon warrior stubbed his toe, they'd crack open a bottle for that occasion as well. Well, that or stab something....

After hogging it all to themselves for years, finally us mere humans can finally get a taste of the warriors drink!

From the same company that produced the special reserve for the launch of Star Trek Picard, Wines That Rock are bringing their interpretation to their Star Trek Wines collection, complete with a specially crafted bottle with waxed cap to seal the cork for extra effect! The bottle itself comes with the immortal Empire logo surrounded by the Sword of Khaless with it's name in Klingon language on the front.



Inside the bottle, the wine is a vibrant Cabernet Sauvignon with bold flavours and a dark chocolate aroma (not lilac, to Bashir's upset).

To mae it even more fun, each cork comes with a Klingon proverb, with four different proverbs at random. The wine is available for pre-order for $50 from Star Trek Wines.

If the Klingon taste it soo much for you, don't worry, they've also made another one just for our palletes.

Made as a companion to the previous line, a new Federation Special reserve was released just before the Blood Wine. The Sauvignon Blanc version is a limited run, with each bottle specially numbered with a bottle to mirror the idea of being used at diplomatic functions to show the galaxy just how fancy we are! Unlike the zinfadel releaed earlier this year, the Sauvignon Blanc comes with a label designed to reflect the TNG era uniforms instead of a printed marker.

The new special reserve is available to order now for $40; though if you haven't picked up the original set - which included the Chateau Picard line, you can grab all four released fo far for $190.

Produced in conjunction with CBS Consumer Products, Wine that Rocks take special pride in delivering their high quality work to the fans.

"Our goal is always to create great-tasting, limited edition, collectible wines that we as fans want to own and enjoy." Wine That Rocks President Howard Jackowitz said upon release, " As Klingon Warriors would say Qapla'!"

For more information or to purchase any of the collection, all four wines are currently available to buy now at StarTrekWines.com ■

As always, we'd like to remind all officers to drink responsably and ensure you have your alcohol inhibitors at the ready - Blood Wine is strong stuff, so beware drinking too much at once and of any random Klingons looking for a fight after!



NEW TRICORDER REPLICA FROM THE WAND COMPANY

Having already released a phaser and communicator, the Wand Company quickly gained a reputation for their excellent work and attention to detail.

Now the set will soon be complete as they've caved to fan pressure and will be launching their version of the Tricorder next year.

Developed after years of research, the replica will upgrade the printed screen of the original with some modern technology, a full colour LCD display and functions that will mirror what the prop demonstrated on screen. This'll include recording audio, scan radio frequencies and give you stats of the enviroment around you.

It might not be a fully functioning piece of 23rd century kit, but after their impressive work with both the phaser and the bluetooth enabled communicator that let you sync up with your phone to create a practical communications device, the final piece of the puzzle looks to be an exciting addition!

Taking interest lists, The Want Compan expects the final product to retail for approximately £250. ■

FANSETS
OUR PINS HAVE CHARACTER™

After impressing fans with their character and episode pins, and more recently their Star Trek Picard pin, Fansets are continuing to dominate the market when it comes to wearable Trek Merch!

Launching their Lower Decks line last year ahead of the shows launch, FanSets already have an impressive catalogue including every major Trek character to show up on screen.

Now adding to the collection of the four lead Lower Decks crews, they've released character pins of the entire crew for fans to pick up.

More intriguing is their version of the late 23rd century Delta pin, which unlike QMX comes with a matte/dulled finish to replicate the resin pins on show. Despite earlier protests, the team are working on magnetic pins including the style seen in Lower Decks and the All Good Things era. ■



FLEET STORES



DISCOVER MORE FLEET PATCHES

After a series opf delays and production issues, we're finally able to announce that our Fleet Stores have been replenished with the well-overdue new patches based on the designs of the mid-23rd Century Discovery Era.

The Fleet patches are 9cm in height and width, stitched and come with an iron-on backing for those who don't like to pull out the needle and thread!

The Fleet Patches come in Base SFC crest; a celebraatory Pride flag version and a two-tone blue Tactical Version.

With the patches already pre-ordered, those pre-orders wioll have priority while the remaining stock will be placed in the SFCQ2 Account Hub for all members.

Patches will also be on offer via Starbase Europa with more potential items coming later in the year.

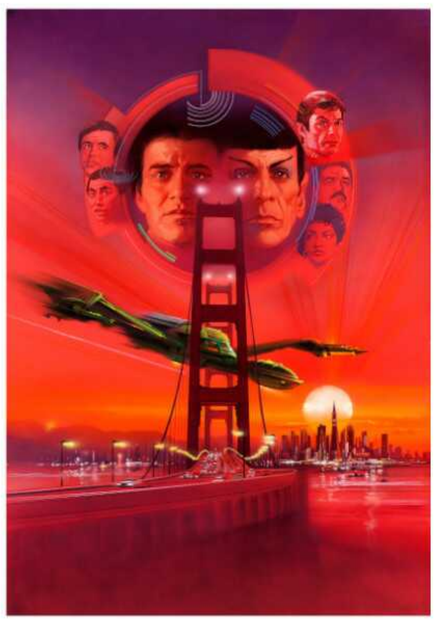
STARFLEET PRIDE

While we try and ensure SFCQ2 items are exclusive for members of the fleet, our SFCQ2 Pride patch will be available to non members.

As a symbol of Starfleet's core ideal of equality and respect, the Pride patches are a represssentation of our strict IDIC policy and one of a few items that allow fans to show off their accepting fandom with Pride.

All patches are set at £5 for members (inclusive of postage), while the Pride patch will be available for £6 to non-members.

Sometimes a space adventure see's you battle Klingons, Borg or unknown forces. Sometimes you find an alien life that evolved from a core origin on Earth. And sometimes, you just have to slingshot around the sun and save the whales as Leonard Nimoy brings the Prime Directive back to Earth to fight for the future...



STAR TREK IV
THE VOYAGE HOME

Directed by
Leonard Nimoy

Written by
Steve Meerson & Peter Krikes and Harve Bennett & Nicholas Meyer

Original Release Date
November 1986

Viewing Order
- Follows STIII: The Search For Spock
- Next: ST:V The Final Frontier

- Stardate 8390.0 (2286)

Starring
William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForrest Kelley, James Doohan, George Takei, Walter Koenig, Nichelle Nichols

Co-Starring
Catherine Hicks

"YOU'RE PROPOSING THAT WE GO BACKWARDS IN TIME, FIND HUMPBACK WHALES, THEN BRING THEM FOWARD IN TIME, DROP 'EM OFF, AND HOPE TO HELL THEY TELL THIS PROBE WHAT TO DO WITH ITSELF!"

Completing an accidental trilogy, The Voyage Home began where previous film The Search for Spock left off. After Spock sacrificed his life in Wrath of Khan to save the crew from Khan's stolen Genesis "weapon", Admiral Kirk is spurred onto a personal mission to retrieve Spock's body from the new-formed Genesis planet. Starfleet said no, Kirk did it anyway, hijacking the Enterprise one last time to find that Genesis had revived Spock.

Taking his body back home, the Vulcans realigned him with his katra – his essence and memories deposited in McCoy - and the crew were reunited, allowing Kirk to beat death once again.

Unfortunately it came at a cost. Entering Genesis was illegal, and Starfleet expressly forbid Kirk from going there. As it turns out, stealing the Enterprise is also illegal. As is sabotaging the only other ship that can catch them. So he may have saved Spock, but in ding so Kirk and the crew who followed him knew they were breaking all the laws to do it. And in The Voyage Home, they were ready to face justice.

Most Star Trek movies are stand-alone pieces and work best when they tell their own story. The Wrath of Khan linked back to the original series, but you never needed to watch Space Seed to know who Khan was and why he was connected to Kirk: The movie told you. Similarly First Contact also reached into the past, but the key point of Best of Both Worlds was explained. Even retold in the movies opening scenes.

The Voyage Home was a bit different. It did open up with the key points, a montage of what had come before. But as a continuation of a story that began with The Wrath of Khan, it wasn't technically the easiest to get into.

Previously, Khan submitted one huge plot point. Spock died. Which, in terms of plot, is fairly important. During the Search for Spock, turned out he came back alive. Again, fairly important plot point as it not only gives the basis for why TVH starts with Kirk on Vulcan, but why Spock seems to have reset to a more logical, less emotionally receptive version of himself as he retrains his mind.

Oh, and the minor plot

HIGHLIGHTS


"GRACIE IS PREGNANT"


"KEYBOARD? HOW QUAINT"



"GENTLEMEN, WE'RE HOME"

point that during the Search for Spock, Kirk encountered Klingon Commander Kruge who wanted Genesis for himself which resulted in a switcharoo: Kirk beamed to Genesis while surrendering to Kruge, letting his Klingon crew get blown up by the Enterprise's self destruct sequence; later allowing Kirk to steal a second ship in Kruge's Bird of Prey.

So for the first time, Kirk was without an Enterprise. He and his crew knew they had to face the law, and flew home in the Klingon ship as they'd broke their own ride.

There was a lot going on before the credits rolled. Even with a recap, it was a heavy plt that wouldn't sell well to newcomers. It also had some other rarely seen qualities. The main one being there was no villain; the predicament was circumstance, not evil.

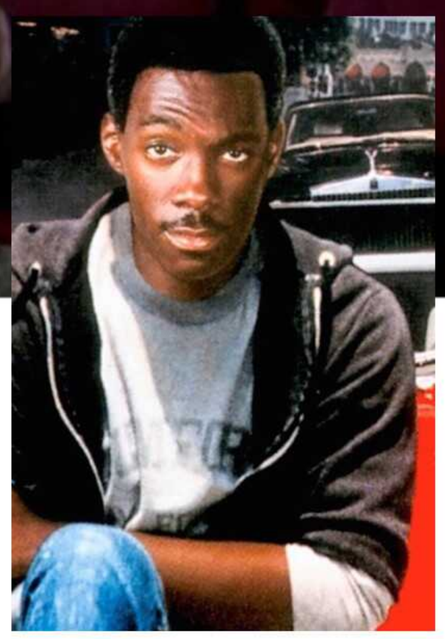
As Kirk and crew made their way home to face trial, something weird happened. A probe arrived at Earth, shutting down everything that approached it and sucking up the planets oceans while emitting a signal no one could understand. That was until Spock cracked the code, figuring out that the message wasn't for us. But another resident of Earth, it's sort of intergalactic pen pal: Hump backed whales. A pen pal that has stopped replying as they'd been extinct for centuries.

Once he'd figured that out, Kirk gave the word: The rogue crew would travel back in time to find a group of humpbacked whales to bring to the 23rd century and answer the calling the hopes that the probe would stop wrecking everything and let humanity live happily ever after.

HISTORY

"I wanted people to really have a great time watching this film, to really sit back, lose themselves and enjoy it. That was the main goal." Star and director Leonard Nimoy told Cinefantastique in 1987, "And if somewhere in the mix we lobbed a couple of bigger ideas at them, well, then that would be even better."

The original plan for the fourth Star Trek film was dramatically different than what eneded up on screen. Initially the plan was a court drama,,, assessing the capabilities and history of James T Kirk himself featuring multiple cameos including Roger C Carmel as Harry Mudd. But, aside from Carmel's ill health at the time of planning (he sadly died soon after), it wasn't an exciting idea.



Early plans for The Voyage Home featured a scientist obsessed with finding alien life played by Eddie Murphy. Leonard Nimoy pitched the idea in a meeting with Murphy,, who was interested, but eventualy declined as his star was rising and this was a bit-part in an ensemble cast for him. He ended up replaced by a new character portrayed by Catherine Hicks and insyead made the Golden Chikld; a popular film, but one Murphy deeply hated.

So time travel came into play. Eventually the idea that the past – or in writing terms, the present – could have the key to saving the future, and the concept of extinct species came into play.

Thus, "the one with the whales" was born. A species being hunted into extinction seemed to be the hefty topic Nimoy wanted. Though the path to it wasn't easy. Nimoy had screenwriters Steve Meerson and Peter Krikes pen the finalised idea, but eventually handed their work to Harve Bennet and Nicholas Meyer to take the best of their work and ditch the rest; with Meyer taking everything based in the modern world and Bennett writing everything in the 23rd century.

In the end it was a bit of a mix of every idea. The initial pitch of Kirk on trial was retained for the final act. Spock's rebirth arc was pretty much wrapped up in the first, and right in the middle Kirk's crew travelled back to 1986 – exactly 300 years – to find humpbacked whales to bring back to the future to regenerate the species.

It wasn't an easy development. William Shatner made notes on the script in part inspired by his one-man-show based around whale song,

which Harve Bennet would incorporate. Nimoy would direct and act, whilst scouting locations and taking criticism from environmental groups for filming too close to the endangered species of whale in spite of him only filming models; A testament to the prop builders.

This was Nimoy's second time behind the cameras for Star Trek, though unlike the Search for Spock, which he was barely in as the titular character, it was a lot more taxing an experience being within the dual role of director and leading co-star.

SAVE THE WHALES

One of the films biggest achievements was changing the tone of the original cast movies massively. The crews first outing on the big screen in 1979 was a sombre, more high-brow concept whilst the Khan sequel changed everything towards a thoughtful movie in a submarine warfare setting.

Even the Search for Spock, while it had it's lighter moments, had a very sombre core with a good chunk of action thanks to the volatile Genesis planet and even more volatile Kruge as Kirk's foe. As the Enterprise crew went to the past, there was again a serious undercurrent - an alien probe putting the entire planet at risk looking for it's friend. But putting the tough, reasonably professional 23rd century crew into a world they both knew, and yet didn't recall understand, brought out some real fun that the previous films sorely lacked.

Taking the adventure to the "20th century streets of San Francisco, The Voyage Home became a typical "fish out of water" comedy that hit a lot of lighter moments; from hospital chase scenes to the sight of Chekov, a Russian in the mid-80's – asking a local copper where they kept the nuclear vessels.

That comedy makes up for some of the best moments in the film. It's not laugh out loud funny or aiming to create a stand up comedy routine like we've seen from Lower Decks so far, but focuses more on a comedy of circumstance, of seeing the saviours of the universe who can turn rocks into replicators suddenly realising they don't understand how to get a bus.

Such moments make the film memorable from a rose tinted view. At the time it was the funny one after two serious films that sort of seemed to escalate towards a higher levity. Decades on, not all the jokes land, not all will make you laugh. And some you really need to know the characters to get it; such as Spock's inability to comprehend "colourful language" and how to use it after his brain was essentially rebooted.

Some of that needed history was a bit of a crutch, but with the characters – particularly Spock and Kirk – being well engrained in pop culture, there's no real need to have a deep knowledge; nearly everything you need to know is given to you through the initial catch up and passing familiarity with the core few characters. Spocks the logical one who struggles with humanity. Kirk's the heroic leader. McCoys grumpy. And Scotty likes to play with the transporter. Easy.



Catherine Hicks auditioned for her role as Gillian Taylor at William Shatner's ranch as director Leonard Nimoy wanted to ensure chemistry between the two actors. She later described Shatner as a natural entertainer and Nimoy as a kind and compassionate director.

One of the bonuses of this film is that everyone gets their moment and feels more like an ensemble cast whereas previously, particularly in the series, the screen time was always focusing on the leads. Scotty and McCoy are on a mission to make a whale tank, which see's Scotty struggle with using an 80's computer interface while McCoy questions the need to give away future secrets to build a suitable tank. Sulu gets to show off his pilot skills as he steals a helicopter and Uhura and Chekov get to board the US Navy's USS Enterprise to steal materials to help re-build their warp drive while Scotty coordinates everything from their Bird of Prey – cloaked from sight.

In giving everyone their unique missions throughout, it not only helps break up the story of Kirk and Spock trying to find and



In the films second act, Scotty offers the construct for transparent aluminium to a company producing glass. It was one of several temporal loops in the Star Trek world as later in Voyager it was revealed a crashed 29th century ship began the micro-computer generation.









Despite being based in San Fransisco, The Voyage Home spent only ten days filming at the location. The area used for Golden Gate park was Will Rogers State Park in Los Angeles. The "whales" were filmed in a tank custom built in Paramounts car park.



capture the whales they need to speak to the probe in the future, but offered the full cast something to sink their teeth into. Out of that supporting cast, Chekov and Uhura's mission made up for their lack of time in the previous film, particularly Uhura who spent most of the Genesis mission off screen.

Their was also the only part of the plan to really go wrong, with Chekov captured and having to escape being interrogated by US Navy officials; one of the first action sequences of the film as his chase leads to him being hospitalised, and then saved by the rest of the crew who have to stage a breakout from hospital (and saviour from primitive 20th century surgery!).

The hospital sequence in particular is a lot of fun filled with little moments such as McCoy giving a suffering patient some 23rd century medicine, and the doctors stunned that she grew a new kidney, to bolting out the door with a doped up Chekov. Fun does come with a down side though,,, and that was in these climatic moments not having much tension or any sense of real suspense.

Another down side was that the 1980's scenes were a lot more fun than the 23rd century scenes. Rewatching it, the crawl to the time travel moment feels like it takes forever, and once the crew finally return to Earth to face trial, that epilogue slows down entirely.

It's inconsistency is a little more obvious in rewatches. One of the main reasons to revisit this film is that it's relaxing. It's familiar. It's a fun trip through time with something you know and love. But that happens as soon as you get to 1986. Everything before and everything after, despite having meaning in setting things up at the beginning to the big trial at the end, is just a bookend for what we all fondly remember. So going back there makes the 23rd century scenes feel like a slow march to the inevitable.

In spite of all that, The Voyage Home's levity did make it one of the most fondly remembered entries of the original cast movies and it's more down to earth setting made it one of the most accessible to a wider audience who, in large part, often remember it as “the one with the whales.” It might feel like an eternity when you know whats coming next and you're waiting for the boring setup to pass, but when you get there, it still has that fun vibe to it.

Underneath all that, the ecological theme is something somewhat rare for Trek but still fits into the narrative of it's overall mission.

The 233rd century has advanced to become somewhat of a technological and social haven. Yet, the mistakes mankind had made in the past had cursed it; hunting a species into extinction that would become key to saving the world. As a sci fi, that threat is obviously blown into a huge sci fi setting which may be a bit

unbelievable in the real world, but does raise the point of humanities arrogance; that we're the only ones on the planet who really matters.

For the usual social justice themes Trek is known for, it was an oddly nice change of pace to have them focus on something often ignored or passed over.

There may not be excitement and tension in the idea of saving the whales, but whaling and hunting other species into extinction, as well as the mistreatment of non-human life, is a theme that still resonates in a world where we're still seeing species on our planet facing extinction or sitting debating fox hunting bans as if it was pefectly fine and normal.

For it's light tone, that serious message plays out in the background. And there are some great Trek beats as Spock re-engages with his human side throughout the mission, rediscovering the value of his friendship with Kirk. All of which begins with the Vulcan re-education of his mind and perfectly bookended by an appearance from Mark Leonard reprising his role as Sarek. In a way finally letting go of his distaste for Spock's human side.

It's also the film thathighlights the comradery between the crew more than any other which was more central to the Kirk and Spock dynamic with abit of Bones thrown in.

OVERALL

The Voyage Home was released when I was only three years old. By the time I was in high school I'd worn out a VHS copy I'd recorded from one of the many ITV Christmas broadcasts. As a kid I'd watch a lot of the Trek films onth a loop, and TVH was always one of the most fun of the bunch to rewatch as I was growing up; even if I was only able to see a proper widescreen edit years later.

Watching at such a young age always put these films in a certain rose tinted light. Trek was always a big deal for me at that age, and even though I'd watched it multiple times into my twenties, it wasn't a film I'd revisited for a long while.



At the climax of the film, Kirk is demoted from Admiral to Starship Captain, putting him back on a new Enterprise - the first to retain the original registry; a tradition that would live on for generations to come.

Looking back after a long while, it still held up surprisingly well. Even though some jokes, such as “Nuclear Wessels!” or even “LDS” might be lost to a modern audience. But it's still a lot of fun.

Knowing all the fun elements comes from their experiences trying to fit into the alien world of 1986 San Francisco, it does feel like it drags a bit getting there; like you're watching a Batman film where Batman himself doesn't show up for half an hour. Knowing whats coming, all you want to do is have them land in Golden Gate Park and go on a Whale hunt.

Thats not really a fault of the script at all. Early on recaps where the Search for Spock left off and tells us the current situation. We also get introduced to the big cigar-shaped alien probe and some rare shots inside Starfleet Command back on Earth as they struggle to understand whats happened.

The addition of Gillian Taylor, a cetacean biologist who acted as a guardian to the whales, made for a nice part of the cast and a perfect person to represent the 80's era; someone Kirk could understand and connect with, deeply connected to her work and with the same kindness and compassion those from the future had. Her scenes with Kirk and Spock as they try and convince her they're the best option for whales George and Gracie future show an incredible amount of chemistry and she fits in remarkably well with the rest of the cast.

Even the missing element for a Trek film, the long lost Enterprise destroyed in the battle with Kruge in the previous film, doesn't seem missed as we see ▷







the crew as outcasts – in both era's – with a larger bond than in previous films which had more focus on Kirk and Spock with a McCoy side salad. The ensemble antics really helped to make a difference within thie kind of story to lighten the mood and offer everyone more time to bring their unique talents to show a unified crew beyond it's core.

That bond and friendship really helps pull all the elements together, from their initial briefing on Vulcan to wandering the streets trying to figure out what "exact change" means when failing to get on a bus.

It's the odd one out in Trek films for being the only comedy of the bunch, and lands more jokes than other attempts at bringing a laugh on the big screen (looking at you, Insurrection boob jokes!). I've always found The Undiscovered Country to be the best of the original run. It's deep, it's got a great political theme and it deal with the idea of getting older better than the usual fan favourite, Khan.

But when it comes to a film you might want to just sit back with and enjoy, without having to overthink, The Voyage Home has just the right amount of light hearted moments. It draws you in slowly, giving you a smile before bringing some action – which is also fairly light.

THERE BE WHALES HERE!

Star Trek is often put on a pedestal for it's serious sci fi. Quite rightly, in some cases. Though one of the major draws has always been within it's fun and comradery. The Voyage Home has that in spades, and although there is a serious ideological topic at it's core, it's not a film that sets out to lecture the audience or lay out big speeches about abusing the planet or our fellow inhabitants. Instead, it wraps it all up in a bit of fun.

And sometimes that fun is far more educational and enlightening.

Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home is available to own on DVD and BluRay as well as to watch aloongside the other five original-cast movies on streaming services.

TREK TRIVIA

Before the film begins there is a dedication to the crew of the Challenger. In January 1986 the Challenger space shuttle broke apart just over a mminute into it's flight. All seven of it's crew were killed in the disaster resulting in NASA grounding all shuttles for three years to ensure it never happened again.

During Kirk's attempt to convince Dr Taylor that he's from the future, the meal of choice was pizza. Unfortunately the filming location was a resteraunt that didn't actually own a pizza oven. Paramount gifted the resteraunt with a pizza oven to ensure the scene was authentic. It was only visible for around five seconds of screen time.

Enviromental activicts and animal welfare groups condemed the film makers for getting too close to the endagered hump backed whales in the wild. The scenes under fire were actually four foot long models; a compliment to the efforts on making them look realistic!

To film the model whales, one of the parking areas at Paramount was utilised after the producers discovered there was a pool underneath used for filming decades beforehand. The models were also filmed in San Fransisco Bay but their wires were caught on a nuclear submarine while filming and were almost hauled into the Pacific ocean.

In an episode of Deep Space Nine, Kirk is noted for being one of the worst offenders of time travel mayhem. In this film however, it's Chekov who causes the biggest problem by leaving a phaser and communicator in the hands of the US Navy and Scotty who helps Plexicorp invent transparent aluminium. Meanwhile McCoy treats a 20th century patient with 23rd century tech.

This was the third and final appearance of Saavik in the Star Trek universe. Saavik was initially considered to return for The Undiscovered Country, but ultimately the writers opted to replace her with a new character in Valeris.

SPECIAL FEATURE

FOR THE UNIFORM

THE EARLY YEARS

FOR THE UNIFORM
THE EARLY YEARS

Over the centuries Starfleet has had multiple looiks and styles to represent their mission of exploration as they travelled through the stars; Though their first steps towards those strange new worlds.

After looking through the ever changing Starfleet style, For The Uniform comes to a close with our final feature looking back to where it all began; the era's where Starfleet developed their mission and put their mark on the universe.

Unlike other era's, the early days were less bold colourful with more down to earth tones and styles. Though the definitive outfit of the early Starfleet era was the one wheee it all began as the orginisation came together, found it's feet and launched it's first mission into the deepest, darkest corners of the universe....



FIRST SMALL STEPS...
2140's-2160's

Way back in 1968 episode, The Paradise Syndrome, there was a peculiar line that seemed a touch odd. Miramanee, the woman who finds a dazed and confused Kirk who's suffering amnesia, takes him to their village and proclaims him as a divine figure.

Thats not the weird bit, obviously. Thats fairly standard fare for season three of the original Trek. What stood out as weird was a comment of not knowing how to get his clothes off. Not quite an “Oh Matron” moment, but more a comment that Gene Roddenberry buried in there o hint at one of his weirdest predictions about he future; that zips would become obsolete.

It might sound cool on paper, but that idea is a costume designers nightmare. Decades later Avery Brooks would have multiple costumes made up for his undershirt in Deep Space Nine. One closed with an invisible zip and snaps. One open ever so slightly, and others a lot deeper with no zip just to mimic this idea that there was something more subtle, more futuristic than the plastic teeth of a very convenient tool.

Of course, that rule didn't always work. Discovery has some very nice and very obvious invisible zips. Doctor Crusher, in the second episode of Next Generation, pulls on her zip to flirt with Picard. Zips were very obvious in First Contact, and in the iffy recreation of that uniform in Star Trek Picard.

And of course, they were obvious in Star Trek Enterprise; but instead of it being a costuming error, it was, for the first time, intentional.

Throwing out all the Roddenberry rules, Star Trek costume veteran Bob Blackman made sure this anti-zip agenda was long gone. The vision was for a future beyond all our technologies and conveniences, which in large part has become obsolete. Designing for Enterprise was a nightmare as 21st century technology had outshined what the 1966 vision of the future was. Sets were designed with a ▶

FEATURE | FOR THE UNIFORM



Starfleet officers serving on board the Enterprise and other assignments all wore their Starfleet jumpsuits, however Phlox as a civilian doctor would wear Denobulan garments and standard medical gowns. T'Pol would eventually gain a Starfleet field commission and wear patch and pin, but was cursed by the Berman Rule and as such, only ever wore catsuits.

half retro, half real world inspired ideal that seemed to be a step up from what was used in real-world spacecraft of the time.

The NASA inspiration didn't stop there. In terms of costume design, the era reflected a world closer to ours than of the simple jumpers of the original series. In coming up with the look of the Enterprise era, the first Starship crew venturing into the unknown, the vision wasn't to creae a precursor to the bright and shiney velour of Kirk's crew, but an evolution of our real-world space aviation outfits; a bridge between the Star Trek world and our own.

For that link between sci fi fantasy and reality, the key to attaining that was the thing Roddenberry never wanted to see; zips.

Conceptualising the bridge between the exploits of NASA and the eventual Starfleet, most of the inspiration came from our side of the timeline; bringing the look of the first Starship Enterprise back down to Earth.

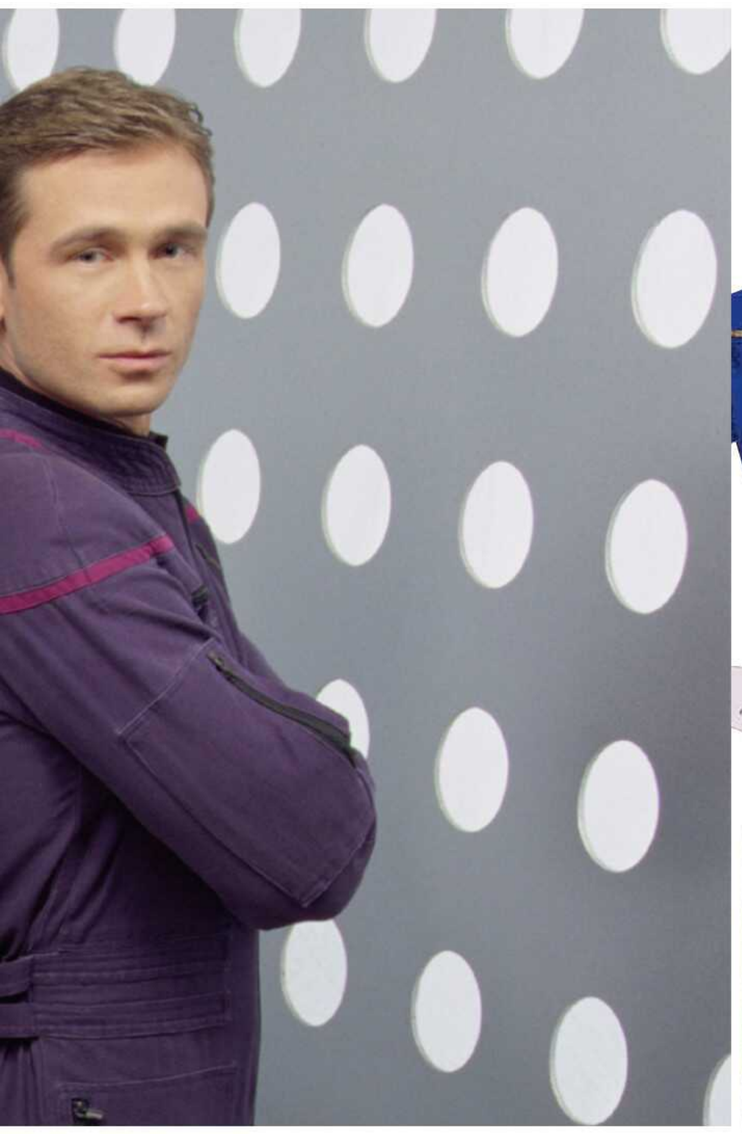
22nd Century uniforms were a form fitting space suit, a hard wearing flame retardant fabric that was designed to be a thick, heavy duty second skin. Spandex and shiny space fabrics were out the window, but the base idea of a fitted jumpsuit was still prominent.

Mirroring flight suits worn by pilots within the US Air Force as well as NASA, each was tailored to fit the actors frames while adopting the NASA colour scheme, showing a direct link from the worlds most famous space organisation and the unified and brand new Starfleet representing all of Earth's united nations.

Though one of the most visual differences was one thing people wearing Starfleet garb on camera had wanted for years; Pockets.

“I had spent, at that point, twelve years trying to make everything look like you didn’t know how they got into it, that they were just wearing it.” Costume designer Bob Blackman told StarTrek.com in a three part interview about his career, “ So I said, There’s going to be zippers. There’s going to be pockets. There will be things for equipment.”

Overall the uniforms had thirteen visible zips. Some fot hem were for show and sewn ship, but having options for pockets made the uniform far more fpractical than most within the Star Trek Universe, particularly with the left bicep zip pocket being used to ▷







store their hand-held communicators.

With various panels connecting he jumpsuit and a tight belt sewn-in around the waist, one of the defining features of the outfit was it's layered shoulder panels which came with good old fashioned department colours.

An outline across the shoulder signified department colour using a merger of Next-Gen era and Classic colours. Command, much like Kirk's era, was back to golden yellow. Operations and Science departments used a more Next-Gen tone with a berry/wine red for the former and the green-teal for the latter. Though against tradition, this was the first Starfleet uniform seen on screen that didn't come with a traditional Starfleet delta...

STRANGE NEW WORLDS

In this era Starfleet was in it's infancy with the Enterprise being it's very first Starship, rushed into action in the shows pilot episode Broken Bow. Without the traditional delta symbol being envisioned, in Trek-world terms, on every uniform, real world connections to our current era of space exploration came into play; Mission patches.

Instead of a Starfleet Delta, the Enterprise crew would wear a circular patch on their left shoulder with the ships name accompanying a rough outline of the ships top-view. And each ship would have their own patch.

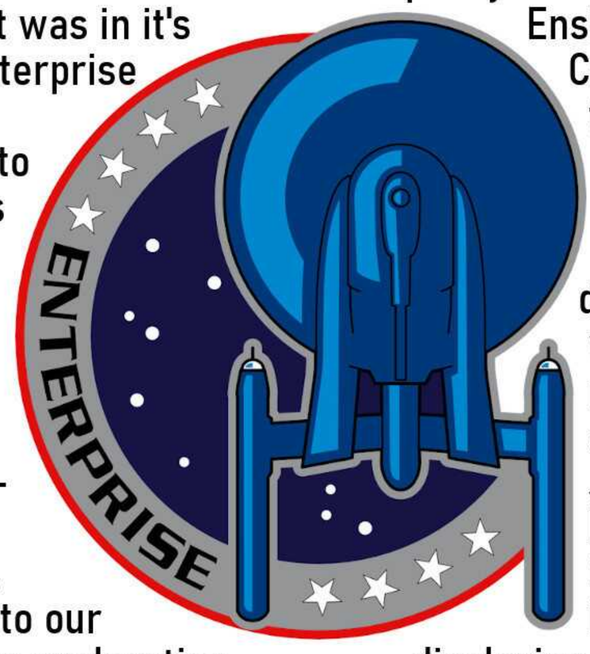
Designed by graphic artist Mike Okuda, peripheral patches for other ships or departments all came from their own real world inspiration. The Intrepid was based on the real world patch for the US Navy ship of the same name,, while Columbia – the sister ship of the Enterprise – followed other USAF and NASA inspiration.

Other service patches would be introduced, including oval-style patches for the Earth Cargo service ships Fortunate and Horizon, as well we outposts including Cold Station 12. Though the good old Starfleet Delta would also be seen in the patch for officers serving in Starfleet Command featuring a tilted, elongated Delta over a star-field with the only words reading “Ad Astta Per Aspera” which, the Starfleet motto that roughly translated means “through hardships to the stars.”

The MACO's, an independent service of Marines, were also issued their own patches and space-camo uniforms; though the entire service would later be disbanded with willing officers absorbed into Starfleet.

Other insignia would of course include ranks. Though while all other Star Trek shows presented a six-level line officer ranking system, Enterprise strangely only ever displayed four officer ranks within their four year run.

Following in the logic of the Next Generation era – which would later be picked up by Discovery's rank system – the rank insignia again focused on a four-pin system, starting with Ensign as one pin and Captain at four. This time-however they were rectangular with a humped (careful, now!) detailing. And there were, seemingly, no half-ranks such as Lieutenant Junior Grade of Lieutenant Commander; instead only displaying Ensign (1), Lieutenant (2), Commander (3) and Captain (4).



Countering the light number of line officer ranks, Flag Officers seemed to continue the full four-level system from Commodore to Admiral, while enlisted crew were only ever seen with three classes of Crewman signified by a USAF-style patch with a circled delta image featuring up to three "wings" on the left side; signifying three classes of crewmen.

Ranks for all levels of officers were framed on the chest within the department stripe; a first for on-screen Trek that would inspire rank placement for online multiplayer game Star Trek Online, as well as the IDW version of the late 24th century uniforms and eventually the 2399 iteration seen in Star Trek Picard.

While the placement may have inspired future generations in the Trek world, the raised rectangular pins were a one off and would later be replaced by stripes and pips. ▶

VARIANTS

As always, suitable variants appeared when needed with the Admirals uniform being anmother callback to modern-world design.

Flag officer uniforms were a more formal alternative to the flight suits, but were still based on military styles. Coming as a two-piece navy coloured uniform, the top was based on a basic flight jacket with an open collar. The jacket was longer than used used today, without any pockets to bridge formal and casual USAF styles and had a similar shoulder stripe to frame the chest-mounted rank pins used to denote departments on service uniforms. However all flag officers hasd a swhite and red stripe instead of individual specialities marked.

Cuffs also had a red and white band while the under-shirts were the biggest difference as all flag officers wore a formal white shirt with navy blue tie.

The same style of cut was used for excursion jackets for line officers. Excursion jackets had the same length and collar as the flag officers uniform, but came with departmental stripes and two zip pockets; one vertical on the right of the chest, and a diagonal on the right hip. Mirroring base service uniforms, unit patches were also included on the left bicep.

Two types of excursion jackets were issued to Starfleet personell; both in a blue-grey waterproof fabric but with one with minimal padding and another that came with quilting for cold weather.

A third version for desert worlds was later introduced retaining a similar style in beige-khaki colours. Matching trousers and an alternative high-collar under-shirt was also issued for use with the jacket.

The base service uniform also had it's variants. Ten years after the launch of the NX-01, there was minor tweaks made to highlight the time shift. This included adding epaulets on the shoulders, and a dark blue rectangular patch with the officers name in red print framed on the departmental stripe on the left of the chest.

Starfleet Command patches were also added to the right bicep to mirror the mission patch placed on the left.



THE FRANKLIN

2160's(?)

Lets get this out of the way now. These uniforms were introduced in the Kelvin Timeline movies. So not everyone considers them “Prime” canon and an off-hand comment by co-writer Simon Pegg is often used an an excuse to remove all of the Prime-elements in the Kelvin movies obsolete in the “true” canon.

However, as much as there will be disagreements – as there have been since the dawn of fandom – the Kelvin Timeline began with the attack on the USS Kelvin in 2233; therefore everything that came before that moment has a shared history. The USS Kelvin existed in both, Admiral Archer existed in both and of course, the events of Beyond that spoke of the MACO absorption into Starfleet, referencing both the Xindi and Romulan conflicts, existed in both.

So when it comes to cataloguing the many looks of Starfleet in the prime universe timeline, Franklin's is part of the ever-changing lineage and brings some intriguing elements into play.

Franklin itself has an interesting history in terms of design and lineage. The idea behind the ship was that it pre-dated the Federation, and technically the NX-Class of Starships seen in Enterprise. It was a transport ship, hosting freight mostly but occasionally members of the MACO's. In around the 2160's, the Franklin was reclassified and brought into Starfleet. Former MACO, Edison, was given command as a token of thanks after being absorbed into Starfleet and the old ship became part of a new armada for Starfleet as they changed from an Earth-based organisation, to the combined force of what would be founded as the United Federation of Planets.

The ships history was solidified and confirmed by the production, though only snippets of that history would appear on screen; this was part of a new Starfleet, a Federation Starfleet. Logical speculation would ▷

Only ever seen in Star Trek Beyond, the Franklin crew uniforms were only seen in archive footage on it's crew, but when Spock got injured and his standard uniform covered in blood, he wore one of Franklin's uniforms in storage. Scotty also pilfered himself a Franklin-branded bomber jacket while archive footage showed Captain Edison in a plan black coat while stranded.





surmise that the uniform worn by crewmembers of the ship in it's archive footage was that which replaced the NASA blues and became the first uniform of this new and improved Starfleet force.

Going in with that history, the uniform makes a lot of sense in bridging the gap between NASA-inspired Starfleet and the Federation era of it coming into it's own. Primarily with the hard-wearing denim-like fabrics which mirror those used in the Enterprise era.

Instead of using the previous blue base, the Franklin-era had grey which, in the film, served as a nice link between the utility variant of the Kelvin-era 23rd century. It also had, potentially to Blackman's delight, zips!

Sanja Hays, the costume designer for Star Trek Beyond, had put a significant amountof effort into her wardrobe choice. Aside from costuming for this film, she'd previously worked on Start Trek Insurrection which she described as “bigger than life” and her passion came through in spades for the concepts for Beyond's incredible design work.

Fort he Franklin uniforms, it did follow the Enterprise era in some elements. It was, as is standard, a jumpsuit with obvious closures. It had zipped pockets on the hips and chest and a few panels which were more minimalist than the “First” Starfleet uniform.

Following the same pattern as the Enterprise-era, the base was highlighted with Departmental strips. These were brighter than the colour scheme used in the Enterprise prequel, moving more closely with the Original Series shades, with chunky panels stitched onto the shoulders and cuffs. Further

The Franklin-era uniform was just one of several designed by Sanja Hays for Star Trek Beyond.
Coming into the project to take over from Michael Kaplan, Hays introduced a more formal and plain version of the Kelvin Timeline Starfleet uniform, as well as other variants including the utility service uniforms worn on Starbase Yorktown and the popular Survival Suits worn by Chekov and Kirk after the destruction of the Enterprise.
Hays first Star Trek credit was Star Trek Insurrection where she created fresh concepts for Starfleets dress uniform.



piping was added around the chest – kind of emphasising pectoral muscles in a triangular form, and as elongated hexagonal styles down the legs.

Most of the uniforms from the era were seen in obscure ways. Captain Edison was only seen in archive footage that Uhura had uncovered, and the main three crew members were only seen in profile headshots. For the most part, the uniform was best seen when Spock was injured and his uniform ruined – so he was given the closest fit on hand to him, an Operations uniform minus ranks.

Ranks were never see on the uniform on screen; either due to not being in focus enough, or the production not wishing to place ranks on Spock's borrowed uniform. However Hays had planned rank stripes in her concept sketches; a series of bronze cuff stripes mirroring the Kelvin-era from the 2230's.

Following the mission patch concept from the Enterprise Era, the Franklin comes with a mission patch on both the left and right shoulders, showing a retention of that early Starfleet era's traditions with a simple delta over a circle with the ships name and registry. However, for the first time in recorded Starfleet history, to date, the now traditional Starfleet Delta made it's first appearance on the left of the chest; a basic chrome pin with no detail symbolising the first icon of what was now the Federations Starfleet. ▶







Far from the first uniforms of an emerging Starfleet, Voyager episodes Futures End and Relativity gave us a glimpse of a potential future of the fleet through Captain Braxton and the USS Relativity.

An initial version appeared briefly in Futures End but it's reappearance in Relativity allowed costume designer Robert Blackman to refine and perfect the outfit. The uniform consisted of a plain cotton jumpsuit with a black base and featured a division contrast that would begin diagonally at the base of the next to underneath the right armpit. The departmental colour, which was quilted in a diamond pattern, would extend down the right sleeve.

Much like uniforms from the 2230's, the command department shade was blue, and the science division was highlighted with grey while Operations was burnt orange in tone. Each uniform had a contrasting stripe across the chest and shoulders mirroring the TNG-style shoulder yolks.

Chevron-style rank insignia was worn on the right hand side collar, much like the TNG-era, and the Starfleet delta came on gold, tilted 90 degrees to face sideways with a silver trail.

Based in the 29th century, the Relativity was of an era where Starfleet had mastered the exploration of time as well as space. And as always in Star Trek, futures can change so much like the outfits designed for All Good Things, the image of the future can change and never come to pass.

However, this was still the furthest look we'd seen of how Starfleet may evolve over the centuries and a unique design that, while barely seen on screen, made a great impact.

"THERE IS NO HELP FOR US OUT HERE"

(2230's)

Again thanks to the Kelvin Timeline movies, we have our final uniform in the pre-TOS era list, the uniform used in what was the final prime-timeline moments in the movie section of the Star Trek universe, worn at the point the timeline split between "the" trek world and the alternate reality the Kelvin trilogy was set in

In approaching the Kelvin Timeline movies and their overall design, Michael Kaplan aimed to update the original look of the all too familiar original series uniforms while studying and researching fashion designers of the 60's to help influence and overall world.

When it came to designing the Kelvin's uniforms, set in an era before the USS Enterprise was launched into service, Kaplan again looked to real-world comparisons. Not by looking at 60's fashion designers, but at costume design in an era before Star Trek brought their bright jumpers to the forefront of sci fi.

Kaplan's aim was to ensure there was a visual time gap in style between his reimagined Original Series Uniforms, and the era where George Kirk and Captain Robau had their final mission. To achieve that, Kaplan looked at the era the era of 50's sci fi movies to help inform the design, letting Starfleet be inspired by science fiction that inspired Star Trek itself.

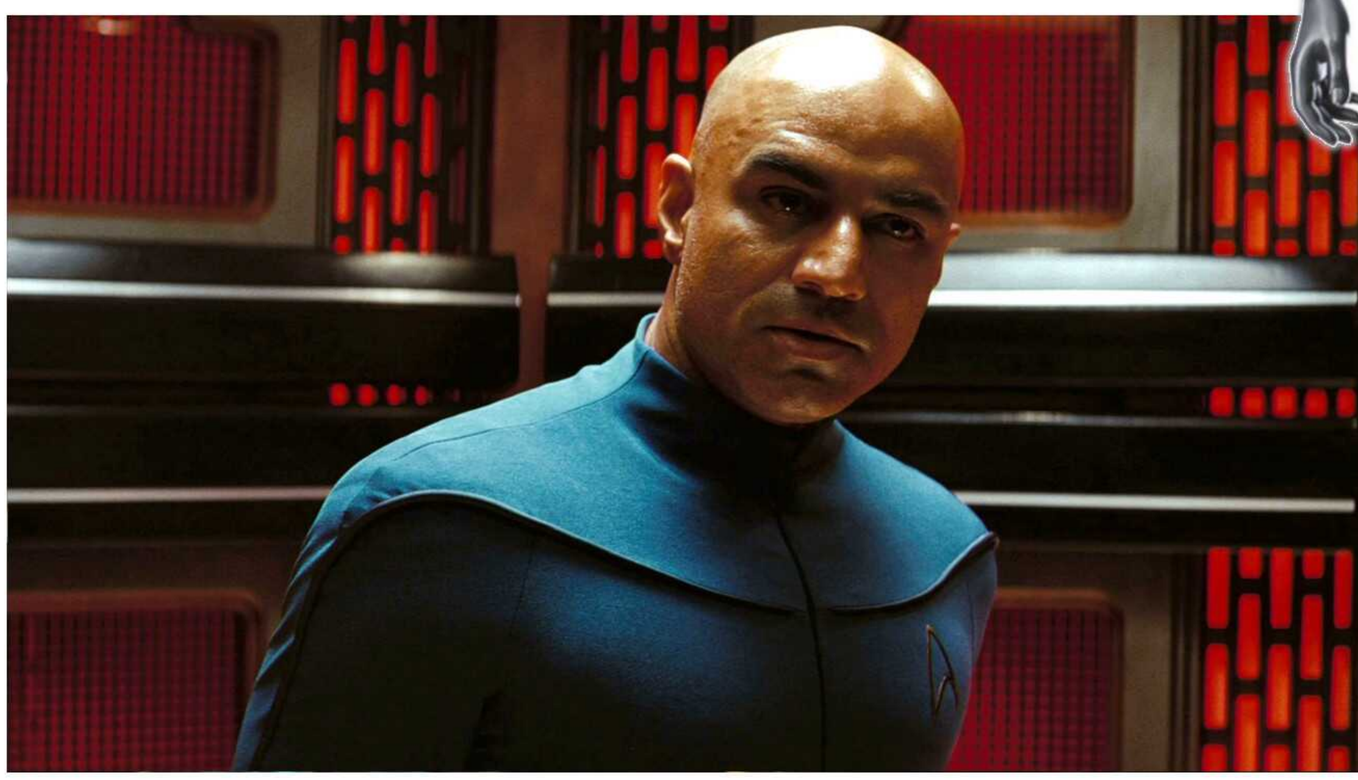
The results were both with a sense of futurism and simplicity. And of course, yet another skin-tight jumpsuit!

On screen the uniform was a skin-tight two-piece that seemed to have the shirt tucked into darker-coloured trousers. The costume itself though was a one-piece outfit made from two shades of wool sewn together at the waistline. A belt was mounted over that waistline to help give the illusion of it being a shirt and trouser combination closed with an invisible zip from the crotch to the collar.

While detailing was minimal, the top half had a padded piping later matching the trouser colour following a Next-Gen era pattern; moving across the chest and shoulders before turning down into the upper-forearms. The belt buckle was again a plain choise, a thick black leather belt and matte black buckle with bronze highlights. The bronze would match up with an oversized outline of a Starfleet pin on the chest and bronze rank stripes on the cuff.

In terms of lineage, this was the first uniform chronologically seen to have abandoned the idea of mission patches and move ▷









towards a more simplistic cut, allowing the now traditional Starfleet delta to be the prominent factor.

Much like the uniforms introduced in the Wrath of Khan, thay also brought a completely unique colour scene into the mix. For the most part Starfleet has chosen a tri-colour system based around reds, blues and golds. Even in the Discovery era, which would follow, their copper, cilver and could still had links to that system.

Where TWOK experimented with colour schemes, turning gold command into white as one example, the Kelvin-era was a strange jump point between Enterprise and later eras. Choosaing a more unique colour scheme than standard, the Kelvin era chose to represent their command department with a blue shirt and slightly darker blue trousers; Operations officers wore a green khaki shade up to with olive below while science officers wore two-tones of grey.

This era of Trek, just ten minutes of film, was the only time this look was seen and there's no definitive timeline of we it was introduced, nor when it was phased out.

When Lieutenant Phillipa Georgiou answered the call of a curious Kelpian, she was wearing a Discovery-era science uniform, signifying that the Kelvin standards were out of service by 2239, leaving her Starfleet Blues in service at least until the late 2250's. ■

NEXT!

Having covered all era's, all styles and dropped into two different universes, we're at the final phase and closing the doors on the feature. All sections will be added to our fleet Database alongside our revised uniform guide in the near future.

Next up we'll have something completely new as we dig into the designs and era's of Starfleets most symbolic element; their starships.

We'll be looking at the origins of the Enteprise design by Matt Jeffries, straight through to the new fleets being designed by John Eaves and his team for Discovery and Picard - and throwing in everything inbetween from the hero ships of the line, like Voyager and Defiant, to the weird monster fleet that gave us the Curry and everyones favourite, the Yeager!

The Ships of the Line feature begins in the Holiday Special edition of Comms!



BADGEYS NOTES

In total we've seen 15 different eras of uniform in service over eight TV series and several movies; excluding variations seen in the Kelvin Timeline and alternate futures.

Both the Prime and Kelvin movies show more variation in uniform than any other era; with the Kelvin Timeline movies being just ahead in how many variations there were.

In universe the "Monster Maroon" uniforms were the longest serving, being introduced in the late 2270's and lasting up until the mid 24th century.

The shortest serving uniform was seen in The Cage and early episodes ot he original series, featuring muted loose fitting turtlenecks. Discovery revisited the TOS era but opted against using these for Pike's Enterprise crew.

Discovery's re-imagining of the 23rd century include new TOS era uniforms. There's no indication, as yet, that these have replaced the original outfits in the almighty and much debated "Canon"

Some see Generations as a "transititon" of the uniforms as two types were worn. However, both were in service showing a variation closer to real world orginisations and miitaries.

Uniforms made for the late 24th-early 25th century first appeared in All Good Things and would be used in Voyager's Endgame and DS9's The Visitor. All glimpses were a potential future, and have since been replaced on screen by new uniforms seen in Star Trek Picard; based in the same era.

Star Trek Picard has seen the most uniforms used on a single season. New uniforms were designed for 2399, while flashbacks showed a different uniform in 2385. Dreams also saw Picard and Data wear their TNG era uniforms, as well as Data's uniform as worn in Nemesis

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Star Trek Online starts their Year of Klingon with bhoth a bang and a whimper...



123 A NEW INQUIRY

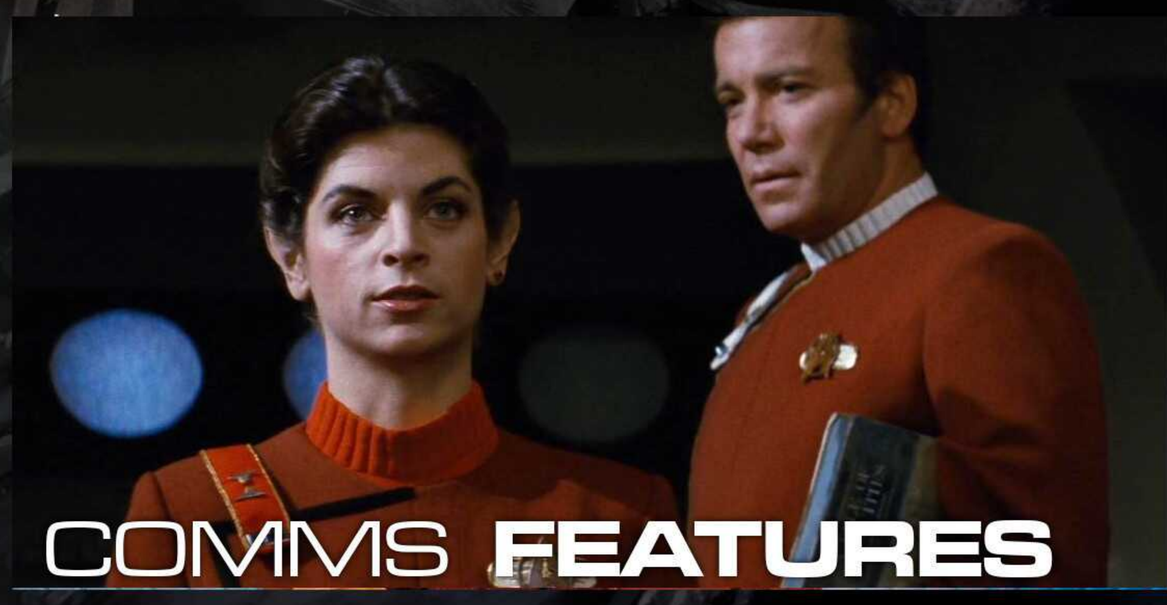
Based on the new super-ship commanded by a familiar face in the Star Trek world, the Inquiry comes straight form Star Trek Picard to Star Trek Online. But is it any good?.

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Joining the cast as the new young protoge of Spock, who was Saavik and where did she go?

STAR TREK ONLINE



For years now one of the biggest complaints within Star Trek Online was that it was very Starfleet focused. Which is understandable. Star Trek itself is, by design, Starfleet focused with even the retired Picard having the job at his core years after giving up the uniform. But for a game that launched with a choice of factions and the change to experience the Klingon perspective, the content focus was always an unfair one.

JT

Now however, the team at STO are making up for neglecting the enemy turned allies with a years content designed to focus on the Empire and improve the experience for players.

Over the past few years the team have made a huge effort to revive and rebuild a lot of their games core elements. This has included both streamlining and remastering story content, and slowly but surely upgrading old ship materials to a more screen accurate and high-res standard. One of the most obvious of which was the upgrade to the Miranda and variant class ships which were previously very, well, ugly. But now closely match the physical and CGI models used both on screen and in modern artwork.

The vast difference between content made years ago to new content has been highly visible; particularly with the STO team providing high quality original models and being pushed by the access to CGI assets from current productions.

Having an upgrade to Klingon content may not seem like a massive priority, but it was one part of the game that was left lacking. Even with the limited Jem'Hadar faction, or the often forgotten Romulans – not to mention the Original Series and Discovery era introductions - Klingon players were left behind with outdated stories, low res ships and untouched graphics while seemingly everywhere a Starfleet pin could be found was remastered to near perfection.

Thankfully not the team are finally getting to our Sons of qeyliS' as they revise the concept from te ground up by streamlining the Klingon experience, remastering some obviously out of date content and environments and throwing a whole new story on top to sweeten the deal..

A HOUSE DIVIDED

It's been a while since we've seen a good old Klingon power struggle and the new content brings the Klingon Empire back to the forefront with Deep Space Nine's JG Hertzler returning as Martok to find a new enemy with an all too familiar face.

Continuing seamlessly ▷



from the Age of Discovery content, House Mokai leader, and sister of T'Kuvma, continues her campaign after jumping ahead to the early 25th century. J'Ula has a new ally at her side to lay her claim to Martok's throne as she brings Gowron's ancestor from her time with her to aid in battle.

The first part of the new arc begins in the Great Hall within the First City of Qo'nos in Centre Cannoy hold, a chapter that see's the Federation send their finest to meet with the great houses. J'Ula stealing spore drive tech has been a major part of her story as the classified and assumed long buried tech was at the core of her campaign against the Federation, as well as the key to her finding her way into 2411.

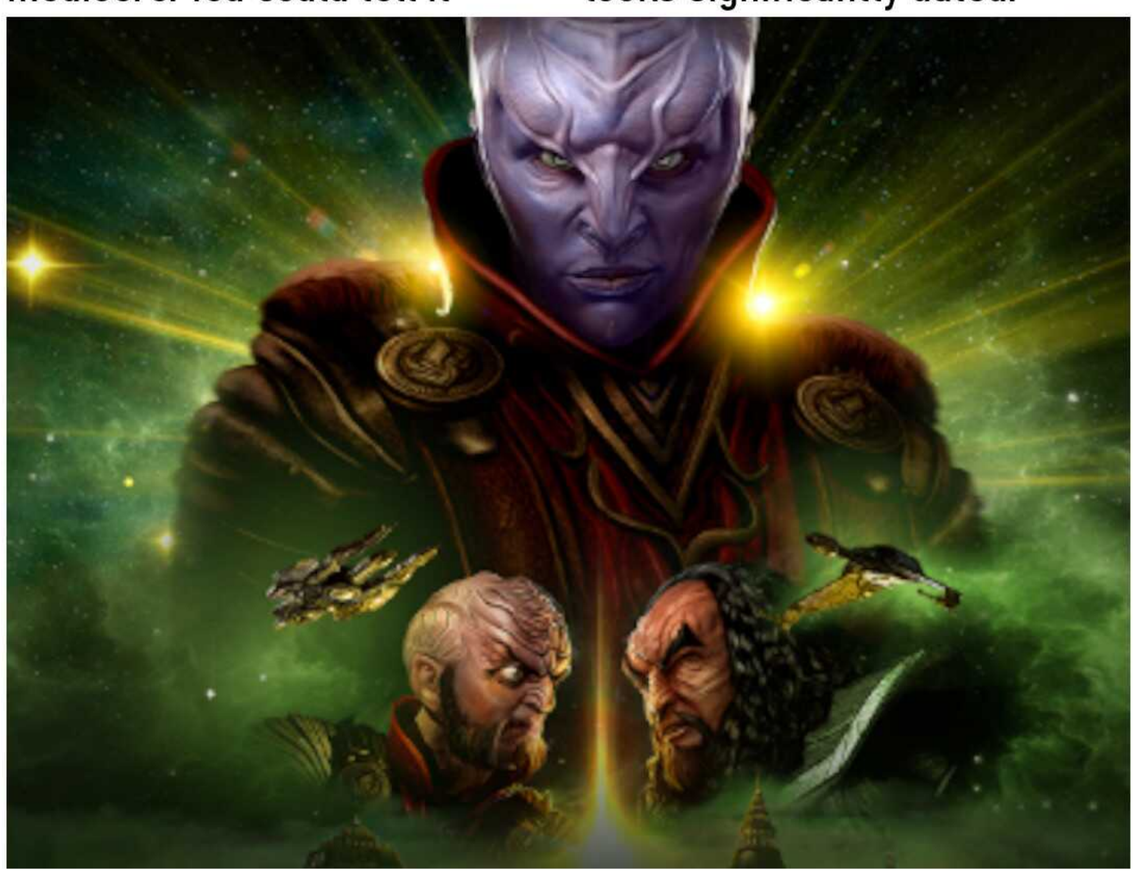
Backed up by her powerful tech, J'Ula wants a seat at the table beside all the great houses, including Martok's and the House of Duras. But as is the way, it's all about honour and there can't be honour without blood. Also, there can't be an STO mission without combat so obviously the blades start swinging.

If you've played any of the Klingon content, it's going to seem rather familiar. Though the story is a lot of fun and, along with some retextures, it's nice to play something new and get awazy from the plethora of the usual Federation content. Though I won't spoil too much of it, this is just part one so it's not much of a spoiler to say J'Ula gets away again to bring us to the second phase.

Chapter two takes us to Khitomer where everyone's on the hunt for J'Ula. And I mean everyone. Having a raging maniac from the past with her sights set on ruling the world and taking Klingons back to their old ways does tend to get all the factions and major powers together for a chinwag.

Khitomer Discord has a bit more fun to it with a lot of interactions between you and the Klingon leaders, and some nice space action above the planet. Which, lets be honest, is far more enjoyable than anything on the ground.

One of the things that had always bugged me about the Klingon side of thing was that a lot of the story was a bit mediocre. You could tell it wasn't a massive priority and while the faction does have it's good moments, such as the hunt for the Sword of Khaless and Martok's big story, a lot of the base content didn't line up in quality with the ever evolving Starfleet side. Even by the time the Romulan expansion was introduced, which isn't a huge arc, they had a much more interesting introductory arc before it ends and you have to choose a side.



Carrying on the J'Ula arc and merging it with the ever-argumentative battle ready Klingons made good sense, and with her already causing a massive threat in previous instalments, it made good use of her presence to not only cause chaos within the Klingon empire, but giving a catalyst to have the major factions come together to re-create their Dominion Alliance. Except with it's ow unified ships and uniforms because this is STO and it's physically impossible to introduce anything to the game without us playing Space Barbie!

Another nice improvement, outwith the creative additions, are the new looks and textures which are slowly being introduced to revitalise the original base-game content which – like many things in the game – looks significantly dated. Especially on modern high performance machines. Using Khitomer as a meeting place, the planet that hosted the original treaty confirmation during the Undiscovered Country, was also a nice touch to Klingon History and one of the best original series films.

Of course, it's not all story content as we get the usual base Task Force Operations where you can blow up Klingons above the infamous Rhure Pente; Another nice nod to the Undiscovered Country's contributions to Klingon lore.

Overall the playable content isn't too groundbreaking, but it is a lot of fun. Not just because we ▶

STAR TREK ONLINE

get two of the most iconic Klingon actors in the TNG era – JG Hertzler & Robert O'Reilly - back in game, but it offers a nice new dimension to both the Klingon presence so far as well as something fun and new to do. Which has been thin on the ground in recent years.

One of the most fun things about this new story is the typical STO time travel trope in bringing back Robert O'Reilly, and their resistance to just recycling Gowron after his death near the end of Deep Space Nine. Adding O'Reilly to the Discovery-era factions was a nice touch, rekindling their old feud while adding another dimension to the growing tension between the two era's of Klingon Great Houses.

KLINGON REVISIONS

This is just the beginning, however, and there's more to come from the arc which will be slowly dropped piece by piece alongside improvements to Klingon-based maps, characters and editors.

Launched alongside the House Divided starter missions was a new tutorial for Klingon Captains, giving the starting point a much needed update.

Initially Klingons were a simple part of a Players versus Player ideal. In the olden days you'd have to level up to 25 in the base Starfleet campaign to begin a Klingon career. That requirements been long gone for some time, and dropping it so you can start right off the bat was the last major update to the Klingon experience.

Adding to the revised starter missions is another long overdue update unlocking more options for new and existing Klingon characters in the tailor, primarily adding a larger variety of hair and face options; something that was always extremely limited for Klingon players.

The new revisions have also been used to spruce up some character models in game, including making sure Worf looked more accurate and upscaled likke his old Starfleet buddies.

Character models weren't the only parts to get an upgrade. Alongside certain scenery panels used within the first chapters of House Divided, the developers and enviromental artists have made an effort to go back to several iconic ships and give them a bit of a makeover.

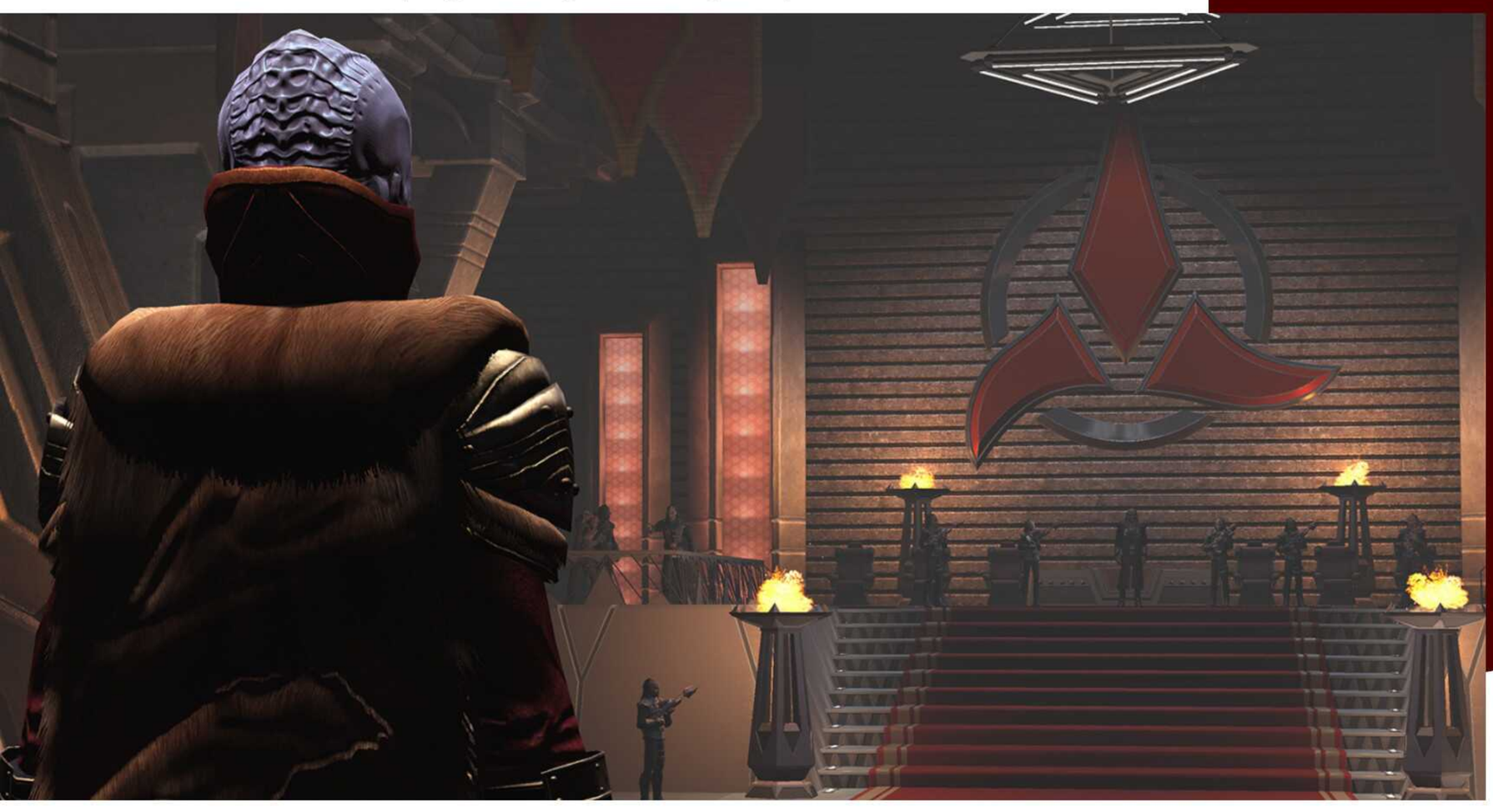
Much like Starfleet ships, such as the Excelsior and Galaxy Class upgrades, several Klingon ships have been completely retextured to bring the quality up to the games current standard with the B'Rel, Vor'cha and several others including the iconic D7 now having much more accurate and far better textures; which makes a huge improvement! ■



Joining an already impressive roster of guest stars, and being reunited with former DS9 nemesis JG Hertzler, Robert O'Reilly is a welcome addition to the cast.

Last seen on screen in DS9's ten-part final arc, O'Reilly finished the Gowron character in the same political shadiness as it began. After intentionally sabotaging Martok's battle strategies to diminish the Generals reputation, Worf challenged him to a fight to the death, claiming the Chancellor's seat for Martok's house.

Star Trek Online isn't O'Reilly's first time playing Gowron in the gaming world. He previously revived the role for the Star Trek Klingon and Honour Guard PC games, while taking on other roles for the TNG Interactive board game and as Krindo for the popular Elite Force II.



KHITOMER ALLIANCE

Alliances are nothing new in the Trek World. During the Dominion War the Federation teamed up in a coordinated effort with the Romulan and Klingon Empires while the enemy brought the Breen to their side. In game the Delta Alliance came together to defeat the Vaadwuar. Now however, the Klingon-Federation have become far more unified...

Harking back to the ceasefire forged between Chancellor J'mpok and Admiral Quinn during the Iconian invasion, the Alliance has been slowly teased throughout the game.

Although the new looks and styles focus on the Klingons, the Khitomer Alliance represented dozens of worlds including the Romulans, Borg Cooperative, Talaxians and many more. Named after it's core home base, the planet where the Klingons and Federatio originally signed their peace treaty.

Working closely together to lead the allied force, the Klingon Empire and Federation began joint operations upon the arrival of J'Ula and towards the early part of 2411, their joint efforts were formalised with the launch of a new class of Starship, build with joint technological research and build teams to encorporate the best of both Starfleet, and the Klingon Defense Force; along with contributions from all other Alliance members.

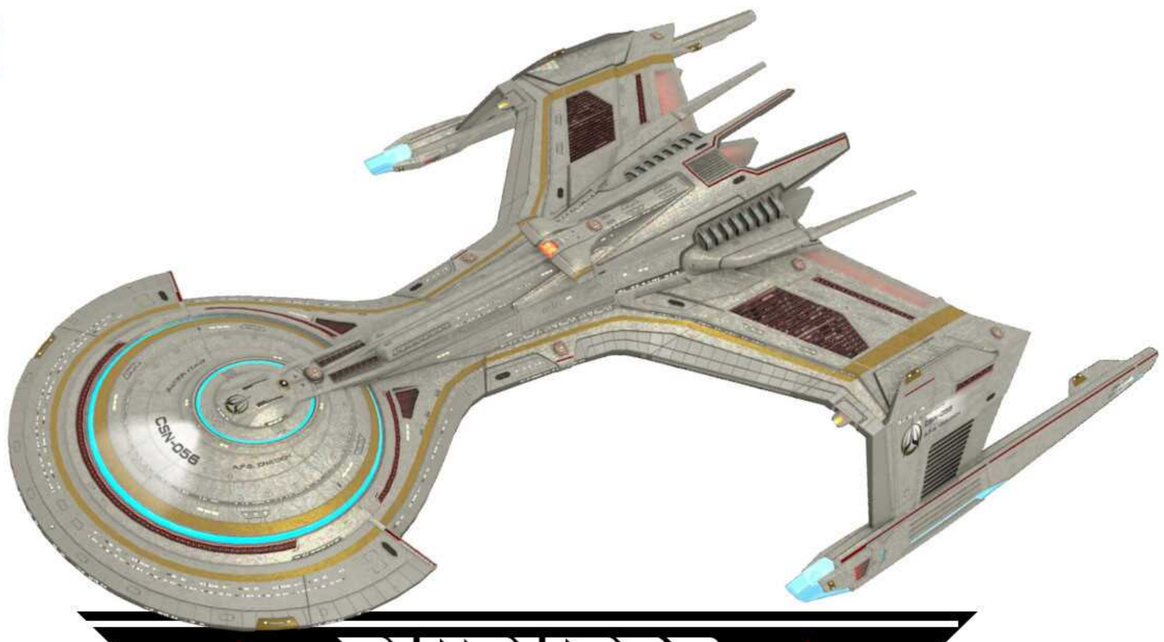
Nowe a formalised power,, the Alliance acts as a joint independant military force, with their own ships and designations - AFS instead of USS or IKS - ;ed by the AFS Khitomer.

With a central base of operations at Khitomer itself, the Alliance ships and bases are staffed by officers volunteering from all nations and fleets, with Starfleet, Klingon and more working together as one. These joint crews are issued an Alliance uniform, created with a mixed and unified look merging styles from varying members and a unique chest pin merging both the Starfleet and Empire details as a nod to where their alliance began.

Officers serving the Alliance can display their home nation patch on their uniform and perate as their own force.

The Alliance uniform is available for free to all players in game with Alliance ships available for purchase in the C-Store. ■





SHIPYARD

Designed by a combined engineering force, the Khitomer Class is the first rollout from the Alliance force, represented by the AFS Khitomer prototytpe.

Listed as a Tier 6 Battlecruisr, the Khitomer class isn't faction locked and can be used by any type of player. Joining the new scaling system, it can be unlocked for beginner players but will only reach full specs as you level up in your career.

At full specs it's a good ship to get hold of with a hull rating of 56,250 at max level (43,125 at level 50) and offers +10 bonus power on shields and weapons with a 1.3 shield modifer.

Above level 40 the ship comes with a 5/3 weapons layout, four tactical and engineering console slots and three science. In addiction is allowed one Lt Commander level Tactical seating, One Commander Engineering, two universal slots - Ensign and Lieutenant - and a Lt Commander Science/Command specialisation.

The Khotomer Class' unique universal console, Aligned Antiproton Shielding, offers 17.1% bonus in both shieldss and antiproton weapons, which is a real boost to AP weapons set ups and can be stacked with other consoles to cause huge damage to opponents.

As another added bonus, the ships comes with it's own cloak which is a huge advantage for Federation players utilising an Alliance set up.

It might not be the best or strongest ship in game, particularly in comparison to R&D Lockbox or Lobi ships of a similar stature, but the Khitomer does pack a punch and can be an excellent base for an anti-proton assault vessel that can take as much damage as it can dish out.

Star Trek Online is free to play on PC, XBox One and Playstation 4. For more information you can read more or download at startrekonline.com or search in the console storefront.

STAR TREK ONLINE



INQUIRY BATTLECRUISER

Joining the ever growing shipyards at Star Trek Online, the Inquiry class is the first new Starfleet ship to be introduced throughout Star Trek Picard with a whole fleet showing up to save the day at the climax of the first season. Now they're available to fly in Star Trek Online! At a cost, of course...

Launched in 2399, the inquiry fleet were streamlined down to be smaller than the average 24th century ship, but still be faster, more powerful and generally the toughest ship in service.

It also happened to look kinda like a ship already in service in the STO game. So the developers have decided to re-write their design history to have the Inquiry being the first in the Avenger battlecruiser line with the new offering being a retro-fied revival of the original style.

Joining the Battlecruiser line, the Inquiry is the new prime-universe skin fore the Avenger (Tier 5), Fleet Avenger (T5/6) and Arbiter (T6) classes already in game and as such, uses some of their base skins and styles, including a free Avenger class skin along with the Inquiry.

Of course being a new shiney, it does have some unique traits such as it's universal console, Variable Assault Deflector Array which blasts a huge burst from the deflector dish to cause significant damage to the enemy.

The VADA comes with the Deadly Maneuvers set, which can be set several different ways alongside cruiser commands. The ship can also use the universal cloak typically found on the Galaxy Dreadnought and Defiant Retrofit.

As an added bonus the Inquiry also comes with "Innovation Effects" which offers a bonus dependant on whatever combination of bridge officers are active at any time. It sounds good on paper, in practice it's a bit underwhelming. the boosts still don't quite match up to other methods, such as ships with dual hangers.

For the size the hull can take a decent amount of damage with it being 65250 HP at max level (65) though as a scaling ship that'd ▷



be quite a but lower (50k at level 50). Though the 5/3 weapon layout can be helpful depending on playstyle - especially as it can equip dual cannons for extra punch for forward facing attack.

Bridge officer layout is a little bit weird with two speciality slots. The main one if a Commander level Engineering-Miracle worker special, while the other is a Lt Commander Universal-Intel.

The ship also comes with an Ensign universal, Lieutenant Science and Lt Commander tactical. So there's good potential for a bit of variety. Especially with consoles which offers four tactical boosts, five engineering and while only two science slots are available, but there is an additional universal to boost that if you want.

To fly it's decent. Not spectacular, so it's nothing too much you'd miss out on if you didn't pick it up. But it flies fast, has a good turn rate and if you like your ships to be mansuverable and powerful, it's not the worst option - and does work well enough as a replacement for the Arbiter and Avenger.

Of course there is a down side. And thats cost.

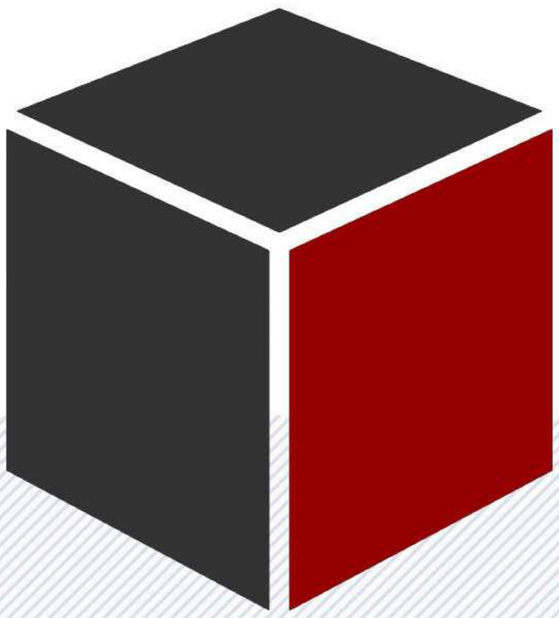
For some maddening reason this isn't available in the C-Store. Which is incredbly short sighted. Being the only canon ship that fits into the Star Trek Online era, which is currently only 12 years after the first season of Picard, it would have made a lot of sense for it to have arrived in the games store.

Instead they've decided to go maximum loot box and stick it, not just in a regular box - but the super-rare and more expensive R&D Promo Pack. Which comes with a similar RNG drop rate as a regular lockbox, but at a significantly higher cost per chance in the gambling mechanics.

To buy outright through converting dilithium into energy credits, due to promo pack ships ranging between 1.1 Billion to 1.5 Billion credits (for reference, mine was 1.17 Billion on the exchange!) that'll mean either a years worth of grinding - perhaps more - or around £200.

To be honest, putting a regular non-hero, non-alien, non special ship into an R&D pack is beyond ridiculous and a horrible precident to set. It follows a pattern of the new producer trying to monetise the game by any means neccesary while cutting off new offerings to the average player.

To be frank, while the ship has a fun element to it, it's just not got the strength, power or enjoyability of a premium ship. It's decent, but in terms of the tier it's on, nothing mind blowing and not one I'd really want to spend that kind of money on. ■



JOIN THE FLEET!

Finding a fleet on STO can be a troublesome task. While we don't have an official fleet, as it would take far too many in-game resources and time (it's not fun building it!) to get to a decent standard.

Thankfully our DoFC has been in charge of a fleet for several years anow and while it's not top of the top tiers, it is a casual, relaxed place where no one places any expectations, no one nags with requests and there are plenty of resources for members - including the much loved special tailor access and ship unlockables.

Fleets aren't an essential part of the gameplay, but they can help offer a few boosts, trinkets and people online who can help when you need a hand!

If you're looking for a fleet, contact the Director of Fleet Communications for an invite or Search out "The Borg Brigade"

The Borg Brigade Fleet is sadly only available to PC players.

STREAM TREK

For players who may need a hand, or members who are on the fence about joining the game, DoFC James Tyler will be arranging a few streams in the coming weeks as we head towards seasonal downtime.

Alerts and notices will be posted closer to the time, however you can join for updattes at twitch.tv/revstjames

Participants in the stream can pick an event, Task Force Operation and even select from a variety of ships and builds if he has it in stock to have a peek at anything you might be interested in flying.

We should probably issue a content/language warning here as, well.... he's Scottish...



HOLODECK

CYBERPUNK 2077



One of the most anticipated titles for the year, Cyberpunk 2077 had suffered from a few delays, missing it's original April release date. But the time is almost here witht he game now confirmed to definately, 100% pinkie promise release this November!

Developed by CD Projekt Red, Cyberpunk is a sequal of sorts basing itself on a tabletop game with links all the way back to Cyberunk 2020.

Set decades after the tabletop experience, the game will be an expansive open world arrangement with a lot of variety in terms of gameplay, appearance and tonnes more.

After a few hours playing a preview, my experience and ways into the games origins got me hooked. But there were so many options and ways to play it everyone else I knew who had a shot had a different opening experience.

After a taster, it seemed to be a fascinating character set up, great story and as we've all seen, some stunning visuals. My only major complaint was not having time in the taster to really dig int the mechanics of points and builds.

The taster was enough to confirm why it was so highly anticipated though and I can't wait for November to come! ■

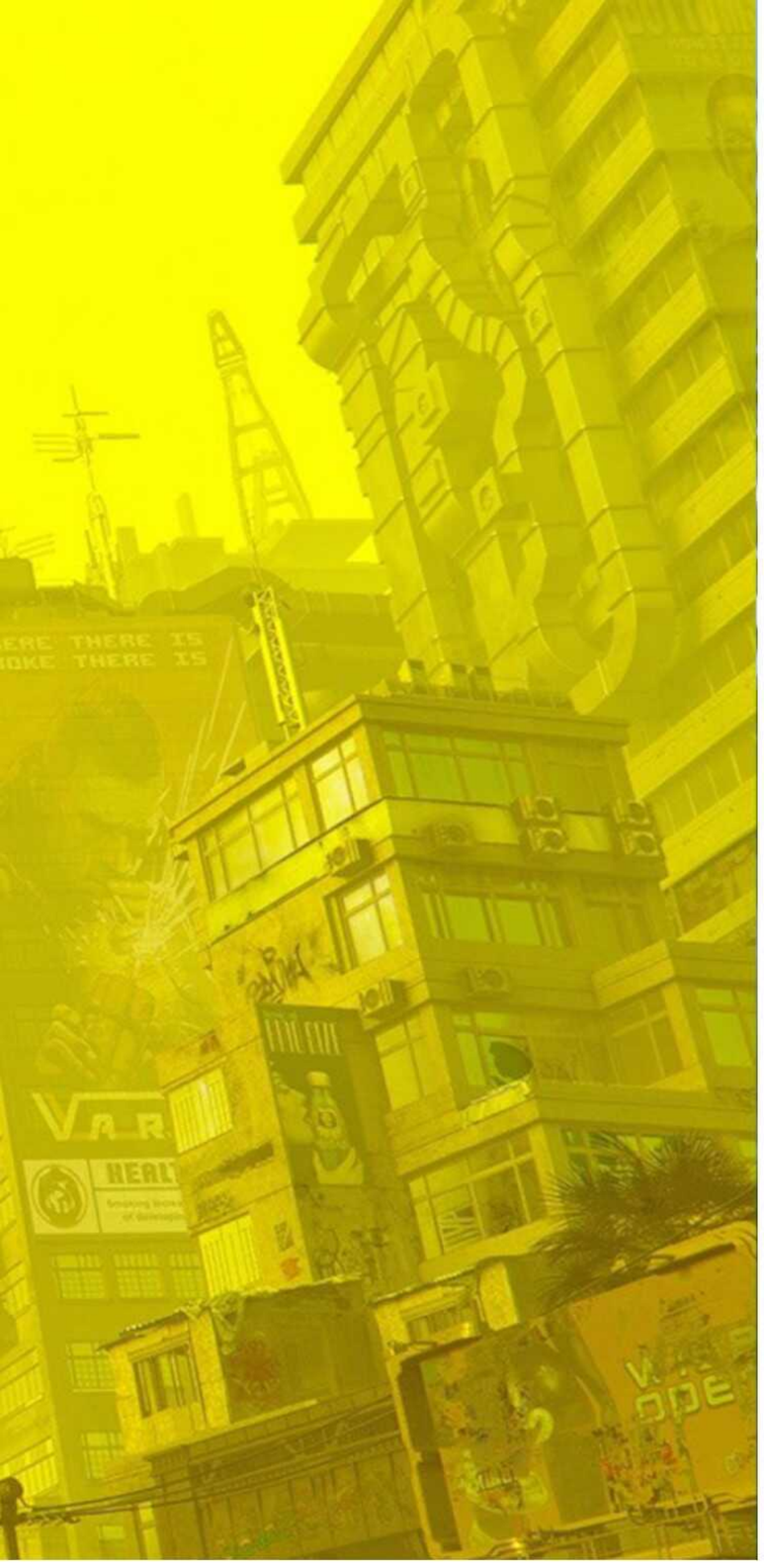


STREAMING NOW SPOTLIGHT!

MAKOSTREAMER

Within the fleet we have man talented officers and in terms of gaming, Sovereign's James Hoadley is high on the list! Hosting regular gameplay streams as MakoStreamer, the cosplayer and Twitch streamer always brings an entertaining time on screen!
You can follow on Twitch and Twitter for updates and streaming times!

Instagram @KaitenCosplays
Twitter @MakoStreamer
Twitch MakoStreamer





FALL GUYS -ULTIMATE KNOCKOUT-

A surprise entry into the "so addicted we can';t stop" category of gaming, Fall Guys looks like a simplistic little game buit in reality it's one of the single most frustrating experiences you'll ever play. And you won't be able to stop....

Developed by British company Mediatonic, Fall Guys was concetualised kind of by accident when one developer, Joe Walsh, compared a game they were working on to the wonderfully weird Takeshi's Castle.

After that comment implanted the idea in his mind, he knocked up a pitch for exactly that kind of game. Two years later, that random comment became Fall Guys.

The game is pretty much Takeshi's castle. As a player you take a base avatar, a Minions-like cute little blob that you can customise to suit, and then you're fired into a group of other players into a random map with the goal of racing to the end.

Much like Takeshi's Castle, it starts with a large group of players and the match ends when a lower amount gets to the end. It's 60 players per game, with the first round whittling it down to 48. Those 48 who get over the finish line in time end up on another map, then another, then another until there's just one player left standing victorious at the end.

Mediatonic's background in mostly mobile and flash games is clear throughut with the game being simple, well designed and utterly maddening.

The worst map for me is See Saw. Which isn't terribly complex. It's just a long line of see saws you have to jump through with them holding the weight of 60 desperate players and throwing you into the abyss.

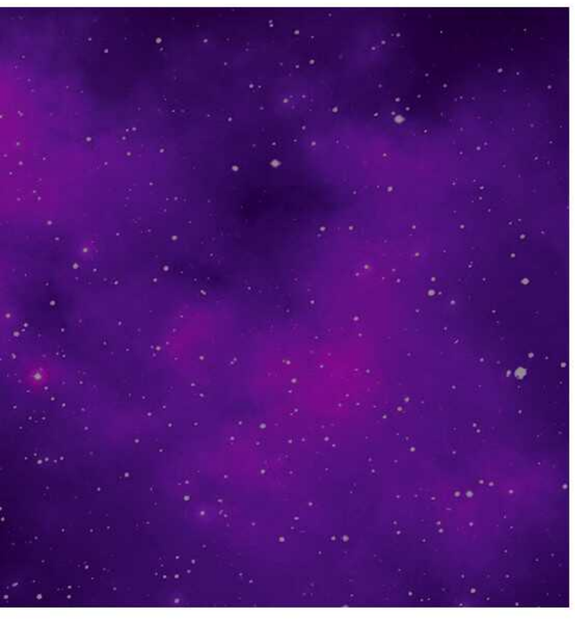
Other maps are slightly less frustrating, such as one that has you race through rotating doors before a gauntlet of swinging lollipops ready to through you off a ledge.

Some are more complex, with some extra themes thrown in that don't involve a race as such. But as easy as it might seem, especially if you watch a preview, it's a lot more difficult than you realise and before you know it "one more match..." becomes an evening of failures in a desperate attemt for a win!

Fall Guys is available on XBox and PC via Steam. ■



One of Cyberpunk's most intriguing and much discussed elements is it's character creation which, aside from backstory options, allows you to mix and match body types and mix up traditional gender roles; though to what extent isn't quite known yet as the team were still working with it late into development.





WASTELAND™ 3

Crowdfunded into existence, just like part 2, Wasteland 3 is the latest in the role playing game. Based in the wasteland of what used to be Colorado, the post apocalyptic game sees you take the role of one of the last surviving members of an Arizona Ranger Squad who's hired to solve a bit of a family dispute!

REVIEW BY CJ

One of the things that appeals to me with the Wastseland games is the element of fun. For every moment of cannibalism and oppression, there's something just out of the box mental. Mutant killer bunnies being the one that gets me every time.

So going into the third instalment was an easy gamble. Especially as this time the scenery gets a bit of a change, from vast deserts to snow and ice which helps make it feel a little less samey as the California and Arizona settings as before. It also adds some character depth as the new environment takes the player out of the comfortable and easy environment into being an outsider having to do the bidding of the local chief weirdo to get home.

The local chief weirdo here is known as the Patriarch. The Patriarch is, as many kings of old were, a bit of a dirty who's spawned a trio of offpsring who really don't care much for him. In an apocalyptic world, they're all complete brats who have ventured off on their own, grown up and who want their piece of the proverbial Kingdom pie.

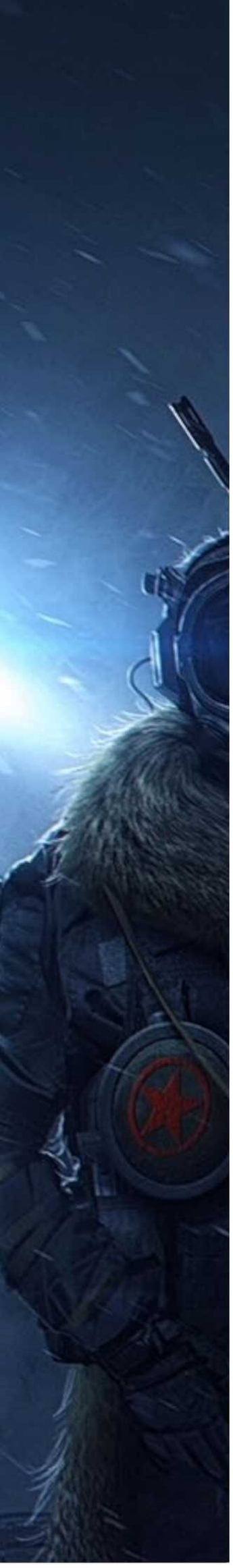
Each of the little kiddies have made their own life outwith the Patriarch. Mostly by joining other cults and factions to raise their own army for a potential power grab.

Your job is to get right into this political nightmare, stop them all and secure the Patriarch power by eliminating any and all of his heirs and impress your new boss so much that he sends you home like the grand old Wizard of Oz. Good luck Dorothy and your fancy new AI car! It's like Knight Rider 2010 all over again!

WHATS NEW

If you've not played this series before, Wasteland is a squad-based RPD with turn-based combat. It's all done in isometric perspective like a good old fashioned mobile tabletop style.

That turn based combats been streamlined from what we saw in the second iteration. It's actually a bit of a relief. Whereas before you'd have a barrage of mainly pointless text, this time round it'll tell you who you can attack as soon as you click on a potential position and offer percentages of your changes of victory. Which makes ▷



things a lot easier to digest, especially for anyone new to the game or the format.

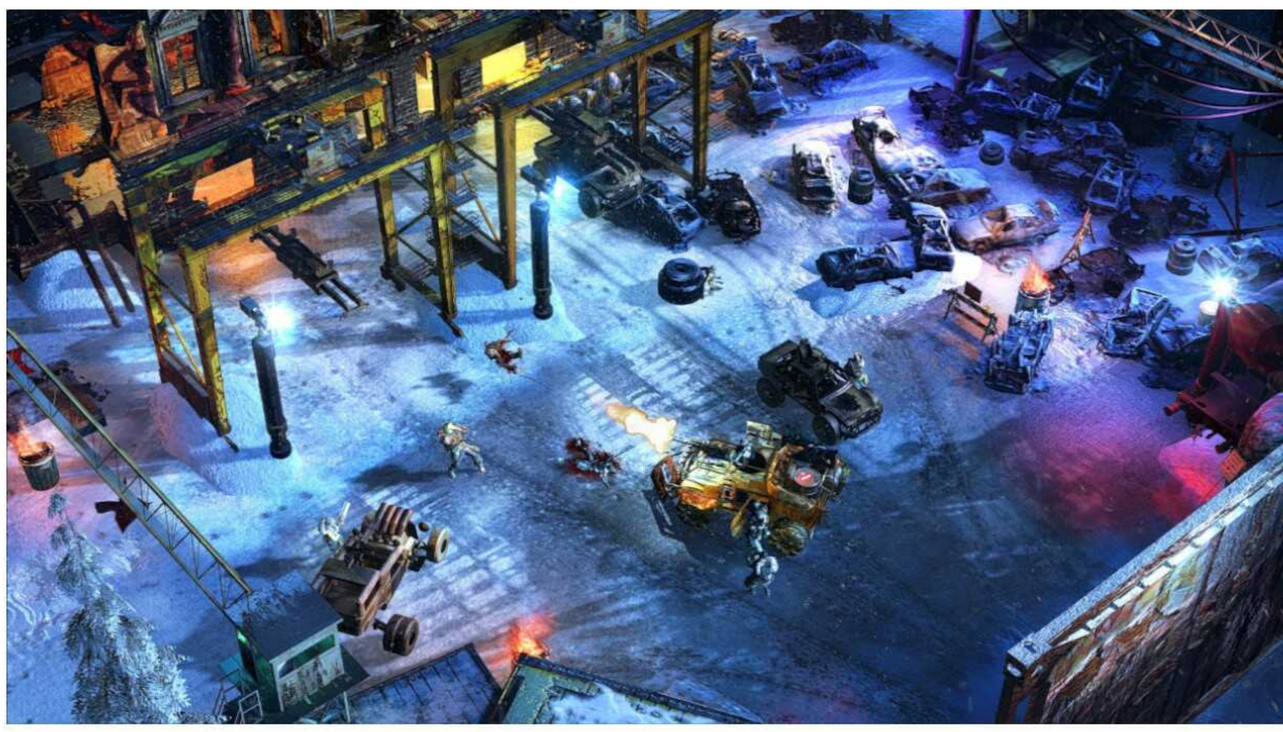
Streamlining is all over the place. Once upon a time opening a loot box was a cycle of madness trying to get anyone with the right skill to do it. Now? One click, auto-select the right person and done. That kind of update is all over the game taking away multiple clicks and frustrations all in one. And abilities are more universal now instead of being ridiculously specific which is significantly better in terms of being able to play without pulling out any hair.

Companions are an unfortunate step back however. None of them seem to be under your control, so while you may have a specific strategy in mind they'lll give you the finger and do what they want regardless. It's easier to just let them fire in and die instead of the constant annoyance of having to revive them and pretend to care. Especially as you can't just take a breather to issue commands – it's all go as it happens.

Other parts of the combat do make up for it. The combat strike meters are a good improvement, including the ability to make precision strikes which can be anything from a headshot, to explosive fuel damage to tinkering with a robots CPU to have them reprogrammed to take out their own master. Weapons are also a lot more exciting and have their own more unique properties, which helps make the game a bit more interesting!

The new styles, tweaks and dynamics really help to ensure you don't get bred doing the same thing over and over. Which has been an issue in the past. By about half way through the campaign it was easy to lose interest, but with all the extra bells and whistles the options offer a lot more variety with a more exciting result.

It might seem a weird cosmetic thing, but with this type of game it does really make a big impact to have more variety in both visuals and more importantly, play







style. I have enjoyed Wasteland games so far, but this is the first time I've enjoyed getting to the end instead of feeling obligued to get there; and these tweaks are a huge part of that.

THE STORY BIT

I'll get this out the way now. One of the problems with the Wasteland games is that the stories are interesting. The characters are a bit of a dull void.

This time round there are a few cliched and easy characters. Presentation of those characters makes all the difference however. Most of it is just a slightly zoomed in version of what you see all the time. But major characters have fully animated dialogues.

Not the most sophisticated, but a mix of an online MMO and a more advanced RPG. Again, a cosmetic thing but it helps to connect with the characters and make them less forgettable. Which is a huge bug bear.

Only a handful of characters get that forever, so it's not a huge improvement. But enough to bring it to life. And the story helps ensure the game is enjoyable and in many ways is far more interesting than previously installments.

Overall Wasteland 3 seems a huge step up from whats come before. The improvements are more than just cosmetic and really help to make the game significantly more fun. ■

Wasteland 3 is available now on PCm XBox One and Playstation 4. Upcoming releaseas are expected for Linux and MacOS systems.



MARVEL'S AVENGERS

REVIEW

If you've ever wanted to experience what it's like to be a superhero (of course you have!), Crystal Dynamic's new Avengers game might be the closest we'll have to putting on the cape.

FEATURE BY CJ

For all the scenario's they could have went with to open the game, starting with Kamala Khan at a superhero convention seems weirdly good. Just enough time to give us a glimpse of who and what to expect later before diving into her origin story.

Kamala is the core of the Campaign. She's the young newcomer in awe of the heroes and trains to be one of them.

The first couple of hours is near perfect, experiencing the game through the eyes of a fan, learning about her powers and offering some Tomb Raider style platform fun.

For a lesser known character than the giants of the Avengers, it's a surprising and perfect way to be introduced to the game and those first hours are really refreshing, fun and with it's own satisfying emotional story.

When you get some time with the other Avengers, they're all obviously looking and sounding a little different from their MCU counterparts, but through a huge list of high profile voice actors, everyone hits their mark nicely with their connections to Kamala being an interesting mix of emotions and acceptance.

There's actually a lot to love about the game. The acting is wonderful, the look is perfect and the action is fun. Of course, a lot of it does come down to being in Kamala's shoes as the story revolved around this new recruit to the point where it's actually bizarre she wasn't as featured in the promotion or having it as a Ms Marvel game with guest stars.

Once you get past that campaign, things start to get a little frustrating. The user interface is far from the best and as soon as the story's done, it feels like you've had a happy, fun and emotional training journey only to be thrown in the deep end with tonnes of gear, options, quests and – most importantly – sameness all over.

It's a bit disappointing that it makes the same mistakes as other games, like the Game of Thrones effort "Winter is Coming" where you end up with about half a million different types of upgrades and points systems with the bare minimum of information telling you what anything actually does.

And really, do we need annother game with another grind?

Most players will jump in, not for the story, but for the Avengers themselves. And you do get a chance to play the full range of heroes with their own skills and abilities. Some are a bit frustrating. Try being Hulk and taking out turrets with no weapons other than muscle and you'll soon realise you should have picked Iron Man with his more vast and fun range of skills.

That kind of imbalance is expected to be fair, but if he or Thor are your favourites to watch, tthey certainly won't be to play.

Overall the game isn't awful, and as per standard routine, there's DLC on the way to expand it a bit (and hopefully a good chunk of bug fixes too). But it does feel imbalanced.

The story is wonderful, a great experience to play through. Everything afterwards feels like it needs a tweak. It has potential, but hasn't quite peaked. ■



GHOSTRUNNER

PC, PS4, XBox One, Switch

Set in the far future, after the world burned, humanities last hope is a massive shelter - Dharma Tower - hosting the last remnants of the people of Eath each divided foercefully by class-based implants.

Your goal is to ascend the tower, fighting through enemies and get to the top. As the hero of the rebellion, fighting to escape your poverty-ridden home, it's all on you to fight your way to the Keymaster and build a better life for everyone; not just the elite.

A demo released back in May showed great potenttial here, and the one-shot-kill system certainly makes for interesting gameplay.

Fighting through bth the physical realm and cyberspace, the game presents a lighting fast pace and stunning settings with a sprinkling of gore and jump scares aplenty.

Ghostrunner launches on Steam on October 27.



GODFALL

PC, Playstation 5

One of the first games to be announced for the PS5, Godfall is a fantasy game where we, the player, take the role of one of the last of the Knights Order fighting to avoid the worlds end.

Focused on melee attacks and upgrading your characters equiptment with mission drops, Godfalls trailer was quick to catch the eye. Not just for it's launch date, but for it's stunning visuals and concept.

The game is a multiplayer enviroment that lets you battle other players as well as a single-player campaign with the option to invite friends to joijn you in the quests.

Promising to make "every hit matter" the action RPG aims to be a rewardingf player experience and is set for launch alongside the PS5 on November 12th but will also be available to PC players.



Not too long ago a popular website polled Sims players on what expansion packs they'd want to see in game. The least voted, bottom of the list option was Star Wars. With thatt knowledge, EA took that on board, ignored it and made it anyway.

The latest offering from the expanding Sims game follows a bit of a game changer in Eco Lifestyle, which introduced zero-energy living, dumppster diving and storage container houses.

This isn't the first time The Sims had had any crossover content, nor the first time they've had Star Wars in the mix. The game came with some exclusive Star Wars looks to choose from and has an unsubtle nod to Han Solo in the astronaut career (they love their references!).

However now you canm experience the Star Wars life with a new set of careeer missions as a rebel against the First Order, unllockables and outtfits including the Starfighters and you can even hang out in the cantina.

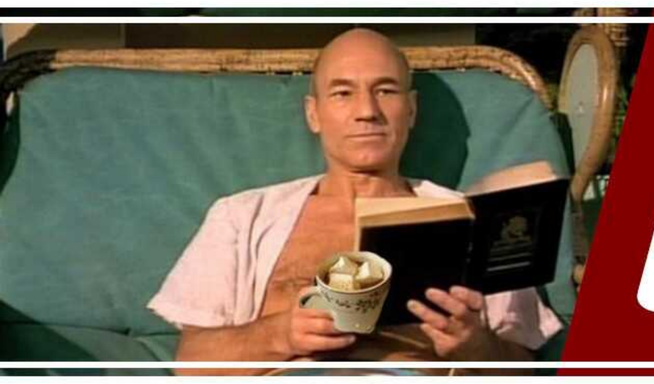
Much like the Sims lets you create your own story and characters, Journey to Batuu lets you make your own Star Wars story.

Unfortunately the world lacks pretty much everything that makes people play the Sims. You can't build your own house, for example. Which is pretttty much 90% of the game. You can't jump into a random building or knock on the townies doors.

Even the aliens arent reallty aliens;l they're just randomly generated costumes making itt all feel like a trip to Disneyworld rather than a fully immersive add on.

The appeal of Batuu quickly wears off. It's wonderfully designed with great attention to detail, but there's no new or tweaked intteractions so it just plays like Strangerville with a new skin and expensive price tag. Core Star Wars elements are also weirdly missing (could "the force" really be thatt hard to chuck in?) so it feels a little too cosmetic and shallow.

It has it's fun side, and it does have some appeal. But as an add on, it isn't engaging or interesting enough to visit Batuu more than once. ■

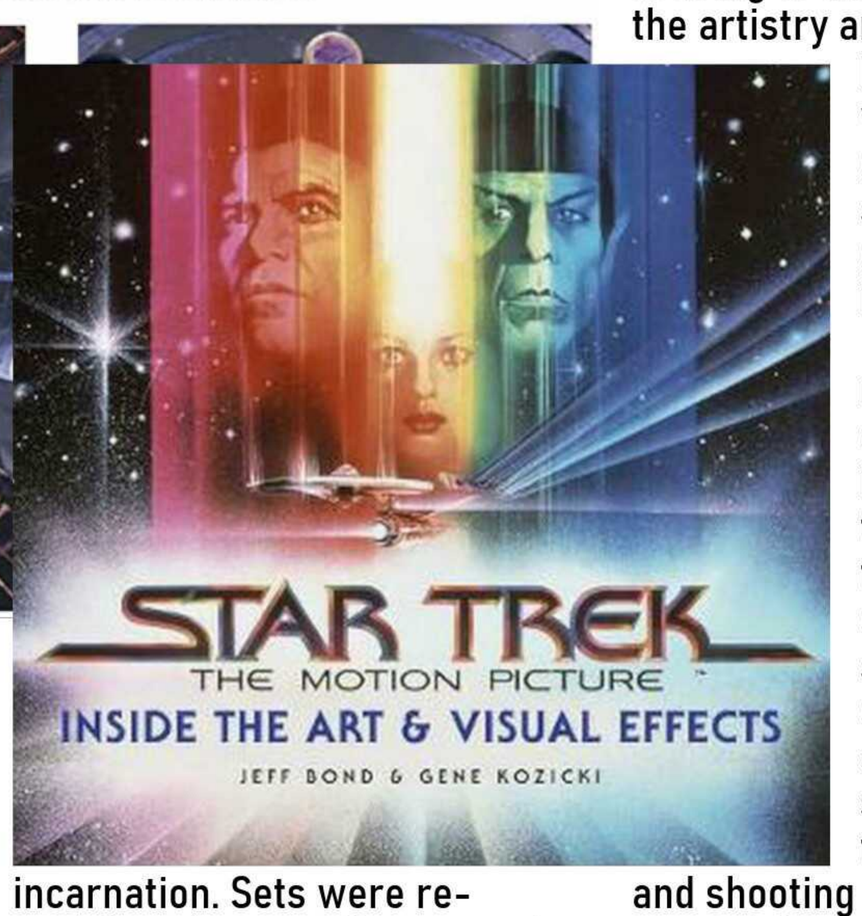


LIBRARY



THIS PAGE: Robert McCall's vivid imagination was firing on all cylinders, though many were left scratching their heads as to how it would all be realized on film.





One of the best parts of Star Trek output within the book world are the never ending art compilations that continue to be released over the years. From deep look at movies, series, starships and even costumes, seeing how the artists and producers came to visualise the stunning images. The latest from Titan Books focuses on one of the most visual entries into the Star Trek universe: The Motion Picture, it's first ambitious entry in the film franchise.

It may be a film that will never win over all the fans, but the Motion Picture was the start of Star Trek's rebirth after it's cancellation a decade before. Bringing a more seasoned James Kirk back to his crew for what was supposed to be one last time, the film followed the idea that a massive alien probe surrounded by energy clouds was making it's way to Earth; and only one man, and one ship, had the experience to stop them.

Everything in the film was retooled from it's original incarnation. Sets were re-envisioned, new uniforms made and a whole new Enterprise came to the forefront. Not only that, but moving into the cinematic world, the effects got bigger, bolder and a bit wacky.

Put together by visual efects artists Gene Kozick and Jeff Bond, the dup spent years going through a largely unseen archive provided by CBS and interviewed the effects team from the Motion Picture to gain an insightful history with some never seen images from concept to creation.

Bond has previously worked in the Star Trek world before, having put together some books before while Kozicki had a deep interest in going through the film; using his own personal knowledge and research as a jumping off point to help pitch the idea.

Using Kozicki's knowledge and contacts, the pair were able to preserve and enhance a lot of the archive which has remained in storage to put together an extensive history of the films visual arts, it's concept and even digging into the VFX team who were initially dismissed from the film early in production.

Through the interviews we get insight into the people behind the stunning visuals of the film, from the not-so-simple simple redesign and upgrading of the abandonned Phase 2 sets, to the incredible images that came together to create the not-so alien probe V'Ger.

Such insight from people who are substantial and prominant names offers a real value to both fans and prospective artists. It also helps to bring to life - even more so - the artistry and style of the Motion picture which would then go on to inspire several generations of Trek itself.

Though what really brings it alive, as you'd imagine, is the treasures within the images; original concept sketches, storyboards, full colour artwork and a load of behind the scenes pictures of filming, refining and shooting both models and sets; giving far more insight than we've seen before, and more of a visual journey than the various documentaries that have popped up over the years.

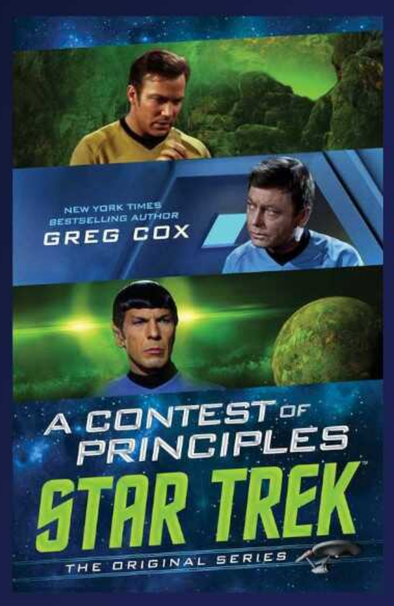
It's a fascinating insight and with over 400 images from the production, an excellent read.

Alongside the release this month, Titan also have the art of Star Trek Discovery for sale written by Paula M Block and Terry J Erdman. Looking at the two back to back is a fascinating journey, watching where the cinematic effects of Trek began, to where the world is now.

It's a magnificent addition to anyones Trek art collection. ■

QUICK PREVIEWS

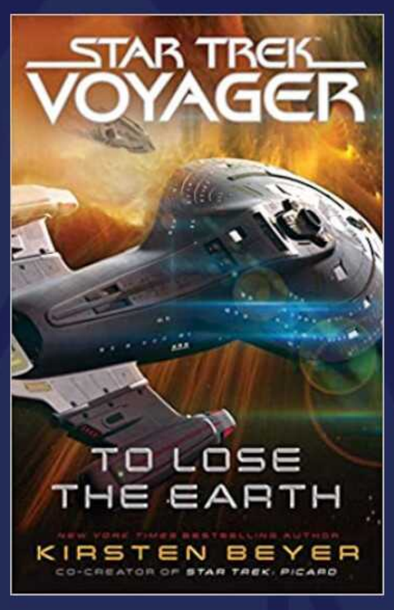
A CONTEST OF PRINCIPALS
Greg Cox



The planet Vok is holding its first free elections after years of oppressive military rule. Captain James T. Kirk and the crew of the Starship Enterprise have been dispatched by Starfleet to serve as impartial observers, but remaining neutral proves a challenge, as Kirk confronts a tangled web of scandal, conspiracy, and assassination plots—with the stability of an entire sector at stake.

Released Noember 10th

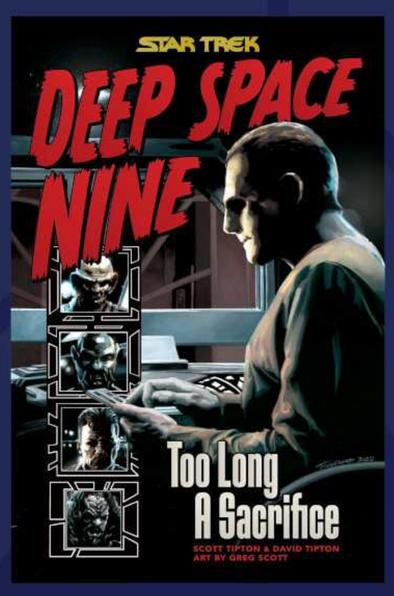
TO LOSE THE EARTH
Kirsten Beyer



Continuing the post-Voyager Full Circle story, Admiral Janeway is back for more frontier fun
As the crew of the Full Circle fleet works to determine the fate of their lost ship, the Galen, a struggle for survival begins at the far edge of the galaxy. New revelations about Species 001, the race that built the biodomes that first drew the fleet to investigate planet DK-1116, force Admiral Kathryn Janeway to risk everything to learn the truth.

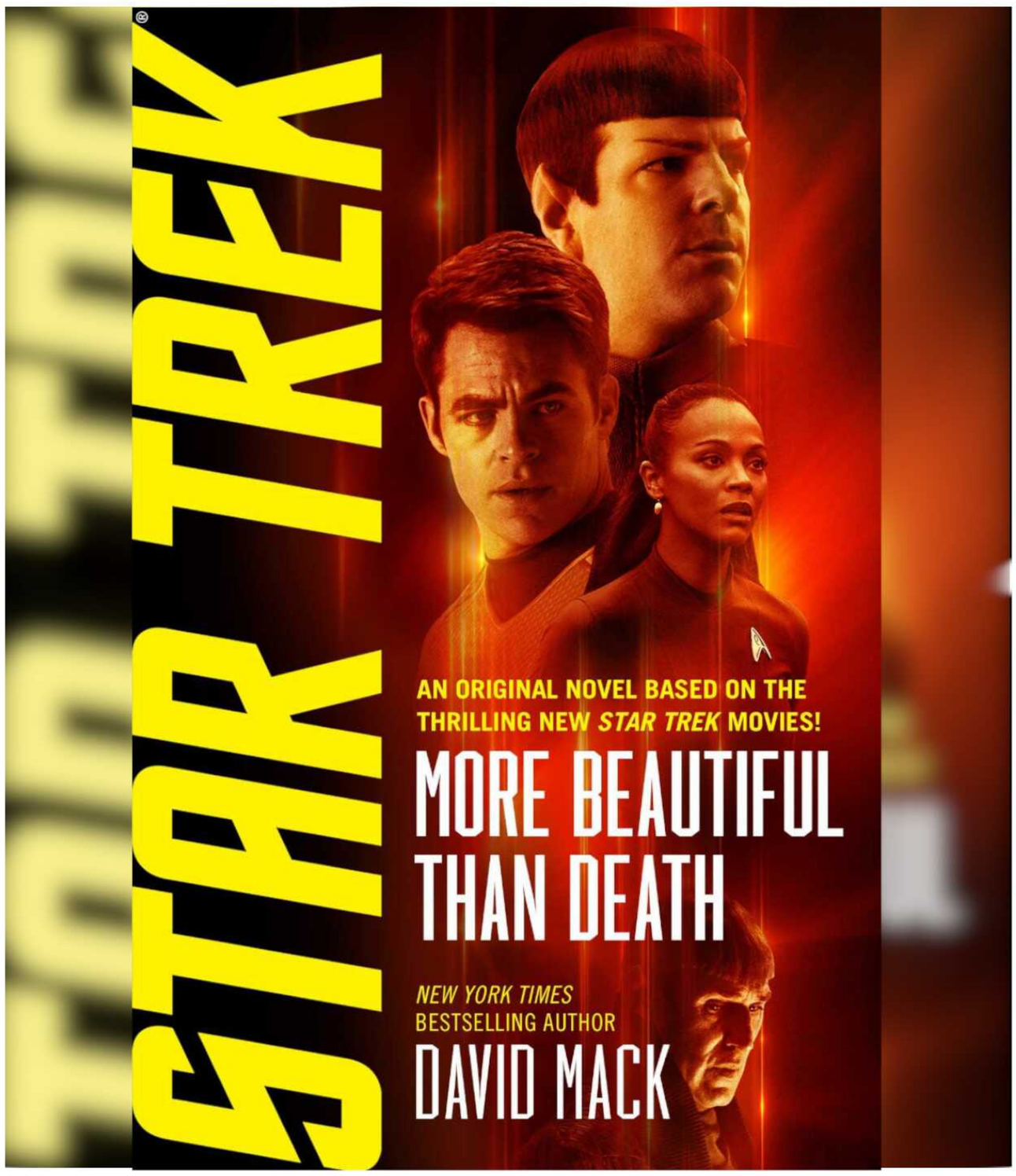
On sale from October 29th

TOO LONG A SACRIFICE
Scott Tipton & David Tipton



Constable Odo searches for truth amid a web of treachery and lies but everyone on the Promanade has a motive for this murder, be it vengeance, justice... or old-fashioned greed. With the murderer on the loose, the inhabitants of Deep Space 9 start to divide into factions, made even worse when the Ferengi government gets involved.

The DS9 comic is set for full release December 8th.



Escorting Ambassador Sarek to the planet Akiron should have been a simple mission. It was not. Once they arrive the discover the planet under the control of, what the planets people believe are demons.

Much like The Unsettling Stars, More Beutiful Than Death was one of the Kelvin Timeline books written, then left ona shelf due to licensing issues.

Reading it now, it seems insane anyone would have let that happen. The stories not going to blow minds, but it does deliver a fun, entertaining and tense tale that plays on all the Kelvin Timeline's strengths.

Sarek has been sent to negotiate mining rights on the dilithium rich planet. And when things go awry as they arrive, he wants to pull back. But in the same arrogant fashion both Kelvin and Prime Kirks displayed in their youth, the Captain refuses to leave people in need when they're ready to help.

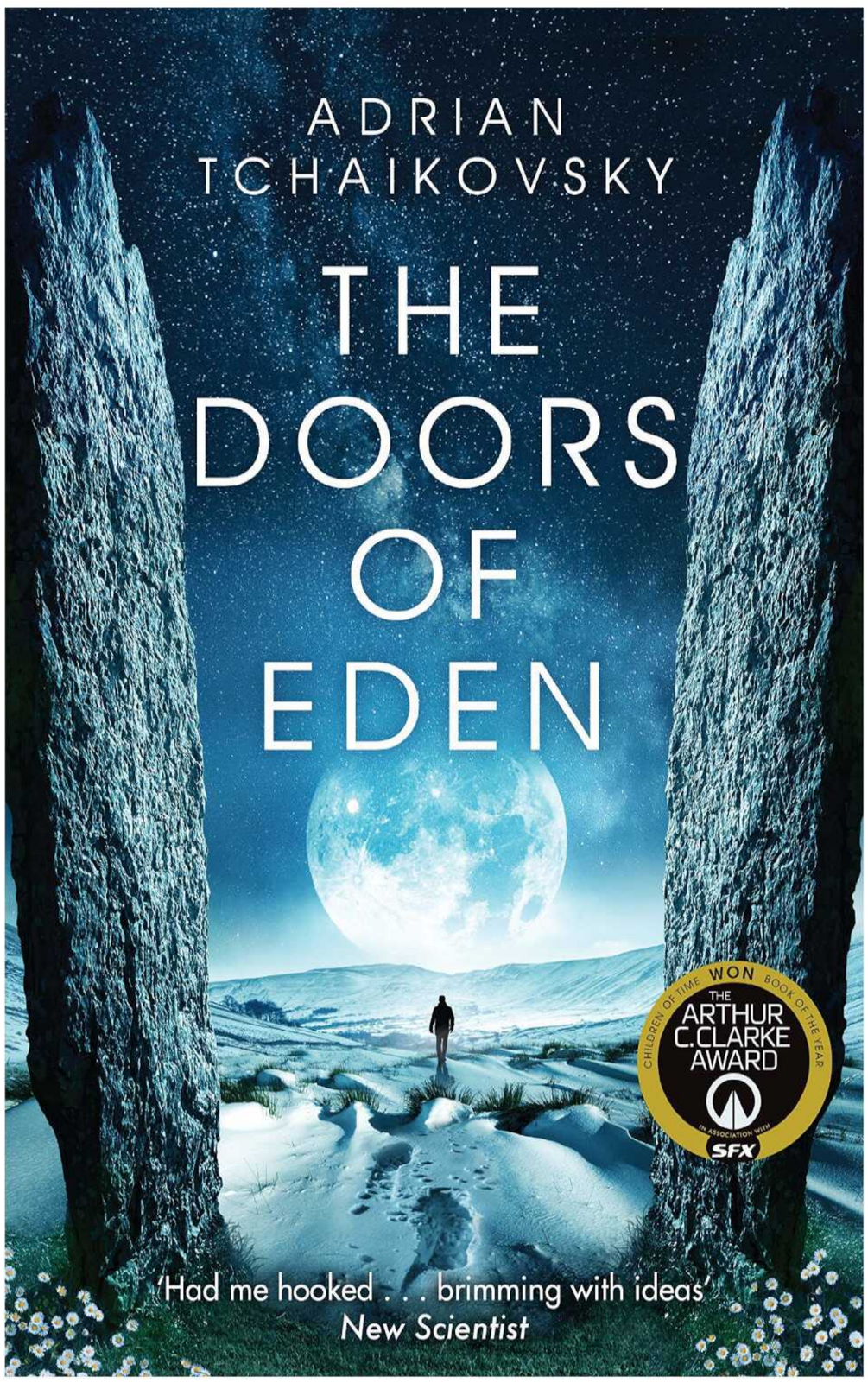
These demons are actually beings from another dimension, emerging from a rift beneath the surface. While it seems they'll cause havoc on the planet, it turns out they're risking the entire universe by existing in our turf. Despite Sareks objections, Kirk see's no alternative but to help. And a mystic on the planet is going all Emmisary on him, claiming he was destined to be the one.

David Mack isn't exactly new to writing for Star Trek, but what he achieves here is capturing the tone of the younger, slightly tweaked characters from the JJ Abrahms film. It's not hard to visualise this fitting in between Kirk being gifted command and having it revoked again in Into Darkness. Mack's able to swiftly, and excellently, grasp these new, yet familiar, voices.

While Kirk deals with saving the planet, Spock's got his own issues with Sarek; again mirroring the original series rift between the two, while ensuring it's all part of the Kelvin way. Sarek wants Spock to drop tools and come do his Vulcan duty. Of course, Spock doesn't want to and tension rises.

Neither plot in the story outshines the other. They work perfectly in sync with some action and a fast pace to keep it all moving. It's a really fun read that you'll easily race through. It's just a real shame it took so long to get a release. ■

SCI FI BOOK REVIEW



Once upon a time, two young girls went off to explore Bodmin Moor, on the hunt for monsters. Only one, Lee, returned. Four years later Lee's lost friend Mal finally came home. Lee's got a los tof questions. As it turns out, so do MI5.

REVIEW BY MS BEHAVE

Mal's reapearance is only part of the mystery. After an attack on physisist Kay Amal Khan, investigator Julian Sabreur begins to unravel more than he'd bargained for. Clashing with a mysterious agency and learning Khan's major discoveries included portals forming between a multiverse of Earths it doesn't take long to realise all those worlds may soon collide..

Compared to his previous works, Adrian Tchaikovsky has brought a more down to Earth and modern setting for his latest offering. As an author who always seems to have a deep love for harder sci fi, The Doors of Eden is a much more familiar world even if it does come with a solid science fiction, and in many ways science fact, backing.

Reading through the opening doesn't quite give you the mood of whats to come. Before throwing the readers into his tale of mystery and multiverse, the book starts with a bit of a science lesson. It may seem dispassionate, and as the story begins you may even see it as a little irrelevant. But the primer to open was a clever choice which does lead back to the story and does help set up whats to come. If in a bit of a by the book way.

If you've read any of his works before, it'll come as no surprise that there's some focus on other worldly creatures presented as otherworldly. Here is no exception, but having access to parallel Earths he avoids going down the usual route of walking through a portal and finding a version of yourself with a beard. Instead he plays around with the idea of the rare luck that we, humans, evolved to rule the world. Earth has many, many species living here. So what if that luck was on someone elses side?

With that thoughtful dive into science, the story doesn't become too cumbersome. It merely opens the door for the tale to become more exciting, more entrancing and become a much larger piece than it starts off with.

Throwing us into the idea of fractured worlds with much bigger differences than we've seen before, it's not short on some diverse and interesting characters or moments to make you cringe, make you think and of course to make you laugh.

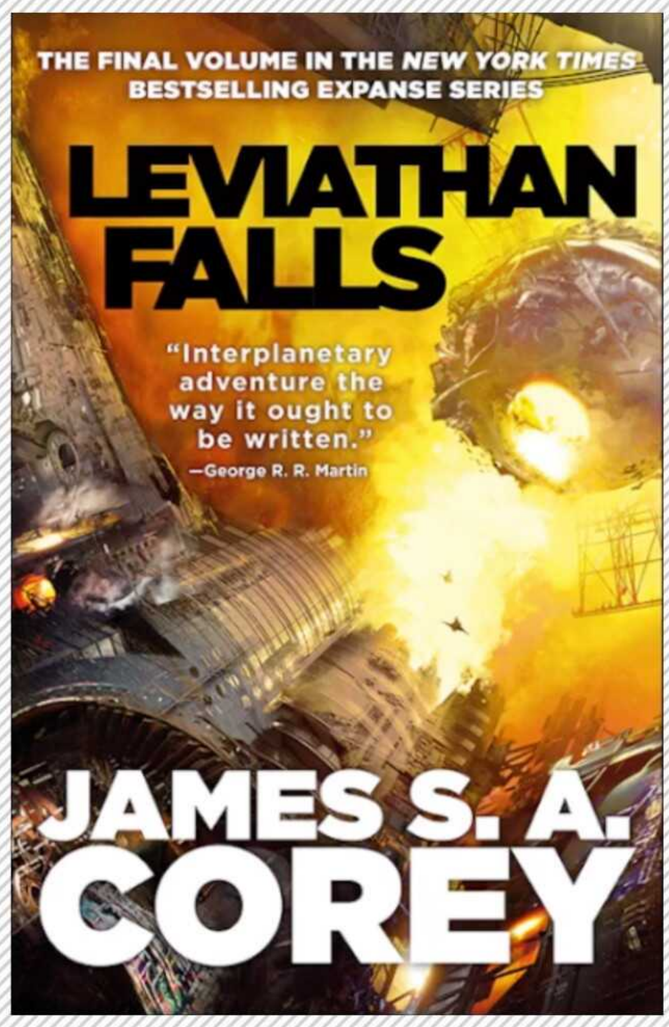
Another hit thats a joy to read. ■

Published by Orbit, The Doors of Eden was released on August 18th and is available to buy now from all book stores including Amazon in kindle and paper versions.

COMING SOON

LEVIATION FALLS

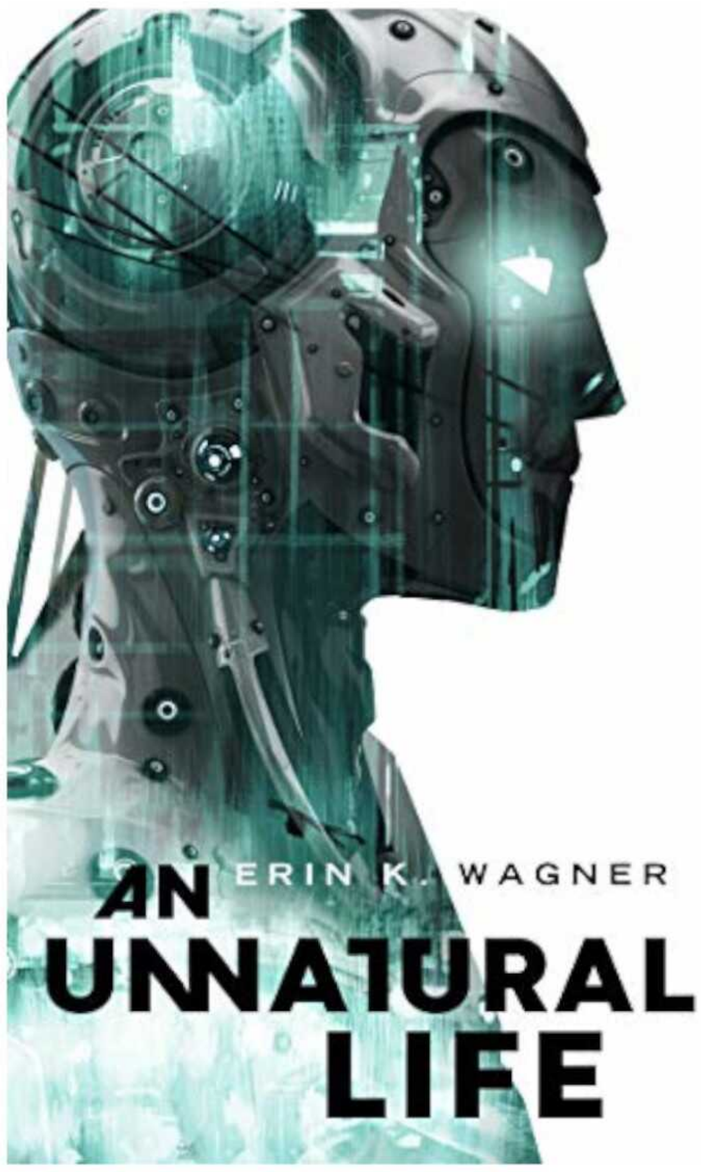
Following the factions of the Solar System as they discover worlds beyond their own and fight amongst each other for control, the Expanse books are finally coming to a close with the ninth in the series.

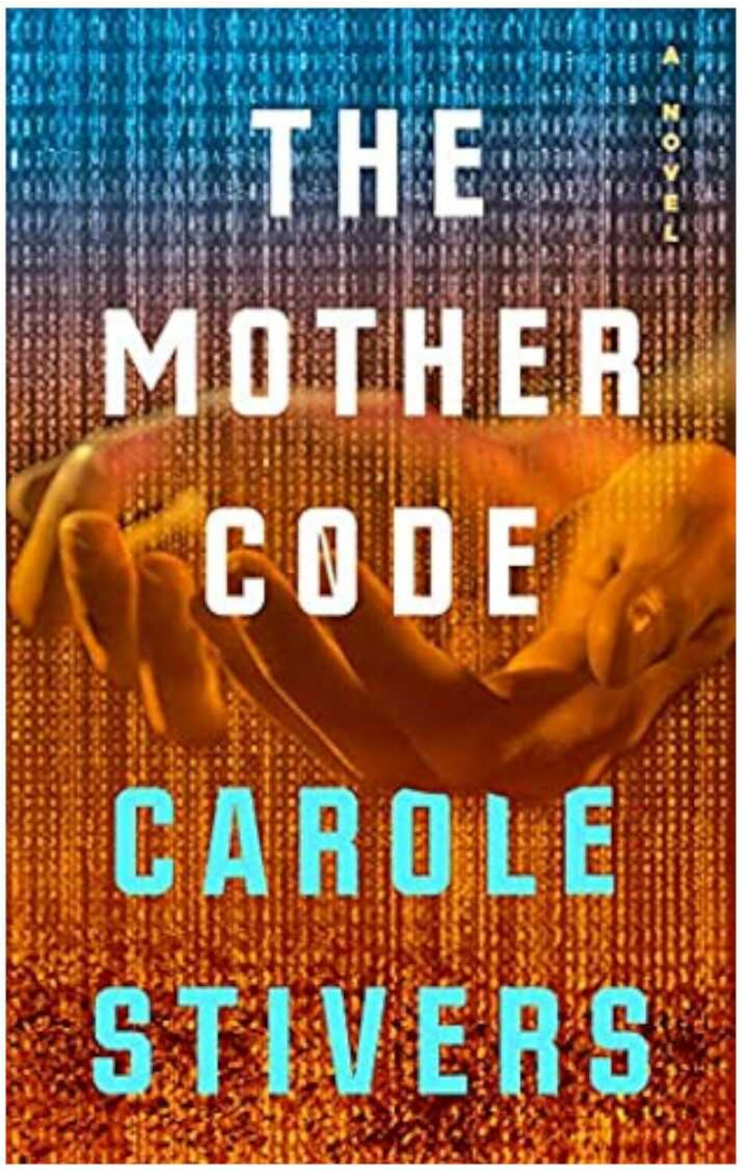


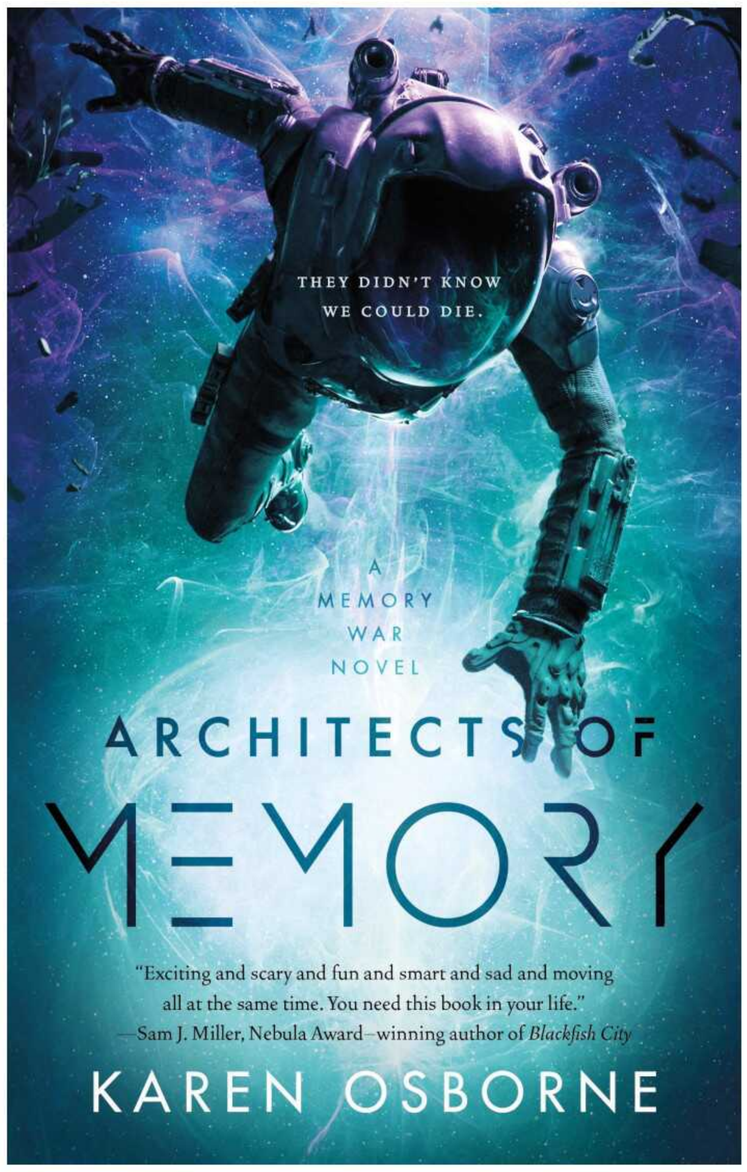
Working under the joint pseudonym of James SA Corey, Daniel Abraham and Ty Franck have managed to create an expansive and complex worls filled with political battles, space warfare and emotional struggles as it follows the misfit crew of the Rocinante and the worlds that help shape their fate.

Being adapted into a series, now an Amazon Prime exclusive, it's been one of sci fi's recent successes form the book world and while the show is aiming to go on just a little bit longer, the source material is finally coming to a close.

Mirroring the title of the first book adds to the mystery of the tightly kept secret of how they aim to close. But as someone who tends to hate serial writing, these stories have been a joy to go through and I can't wait to see how the duo will close out the amazing stories. ■









ERIN K WAGNER
An Unnatural Life

Cyborg 812-3 is charged with killing a human. But, they're pleading innocent despite overwhelming evidence tot he contrary. 812-3's life is in the hands of a somewhat prejudiced lawyer, Aiya Ritcehrer who's determined to secure the right to a fair trial.

Yes. It's been done before. AI rights is always a good go to topic that can act as an overcoming of technological fear or a mirror to real world prejudice, of which there is plenty.

Being a legal battle, I was impressed with the legal terms and structure as well as the tone. The sci fi nature of being on another planet in the future was there, but almost non existent which is a nice touch as the temptation to dig too far into extra world building is always there and sometimes an unnesential distraction.

It wasd a good story and well times with so much outcry in the world right now. A very compelling and emotional read. My only issue was that it didn't break muc new ground that we havent seen before from Asimov or even King. ■



THE MOTHER CODE
Carole Stivers

Humans are generally stupid. And eventually we create a bio weapon that causes a threat to, well.... all of us! In a not too distant future, when this happens, a team of eggheads comes up with a Matrix-like idea to genetically engineer immune children and have them raised in incubators with a robot companion as their mother.

One of these children is Kai, who's been raised by Rho-Z. She has the mother code, birthed him, raised him. And she evolved beyond her programming in ways her creators never anticipated.

Again, this is a bit cliche and something we've seen before in terms of exploring the humanity of artificial life. But it's personal story and emotional context helps to explore the idea of what really makes us "alive" in a way thats easy to connect with.

The Mother Code has caught the attention of more than just readers and sci fi fans. The debut novel for Stivers has been a true breakout that'll soon be adapted to the big screen... ■

ARCHITECTS OF MEMORY
Karen Osborne

Stuck in a corporate world, and having lost everything she had through wars with alien worlds, Ash Jackson is looking towards the end of her life as she knows it. Terminally ill, she's determined to do anything she can to find a way afford the price it costs to live beyond her terminal illness.

There's a lot going on with the story, from it's huge space opera settings to commentary on how commercialised and war driven humanity is. Though what really makes it a worthwhile read is it's core of characters who are more developed and far more critical to it all than the huge and detailed surroundings.

I generally hate reading the start of a series. As I then feel obliged to read more and I read for fun. Not to commit to the next universe. The way this one ended was incredibly refreshing. Of course there's some mystery left over to explore in the inevitable next book, but with an emotional and satisfying ending, it wrapped up everything it needed to.

A fun and fascinating read with a lot thrown into the mix. ■

2019 BOOK GROUP

One or two members have recently asked if we had or were planning on hosting a book group or reading challenge after the success of a similar group forming on twitter. If anyone would be interested in such an event or challenge, let us know through the usual channels and we'll bring all those interested together to discuss further and make arrangements!

COMIC BOOK SPOTLIGHT



STORY
FRASER CAMPBELL

ARTWORK
RICH DOUEK
ALLAN MACRITCHIE, JOHN J PEARSON, CONOR BOYLE, CARLOS MORAN, COLIN MAXWELL, GAVIN MITCHELL, RUSSELL OLSER, ERIKA PRICE, IAIN LAURIE, ALEXEY iVANOV, ANDY TURNBALL, IAN NEWMAN, MATT SANDBROOK, STEVEN INGRAM, STU LINFIELD, SAMIR HAMID, RICHARD RUDGE, ROB JONES

RELEASED
AUGUST 2020

An utterly bizarre concept that actually surprised me. When Lockdown began, before the madness set in, Fraser Campbell has an idea.

Offering a two page script for a horror story, he opened the floodgates and set up an open offer for anyone who wanted to illistrate it to give it a bash. He didn't think anyone would respond. In spite of his low expectations, it turned out people wanted to join the fun.

This comic is the result of several artists who took on the mantle to tell the story in their own specific style and interpretation..

The whole concept of this fascinates me. Epsecially as it was just an idea that grew on it's own for funsies.

If you've ever read Fraer Campbell's work, you'll know that he's got the talent to bring out a really creepy vibe in almost everything he writes. The recent Sweet Treats is one that really gets under your skin in all the right ways.

This time round his story was condensed right down to just two pages with his twisted imagination still managing to hit all the right notes and give you the willies. Which is a real talent to have, giving the same creepshow as the best horror stories but without hundreds of pages to swipe through.

As a result of it's short length, it's also mesmerising to see how fast it escalates from bankheist to horror so swiftly and effortlessly with other elements thrown into the mix.

Story aside, the artists coming to tell it really help it pop, with each of them picking up on small details and retelling the tale over and over again with their uinique and eclectic art styles.

Some are better than others, and some appeal to you in very different ways. But they all come with their own approach and their own elements adding to the basic story to bring it all to life in multiple variations.

In total there are seventeen different artists telling the story all collected into one free web comic so we can all enjoy the great experiment without paying a penny.

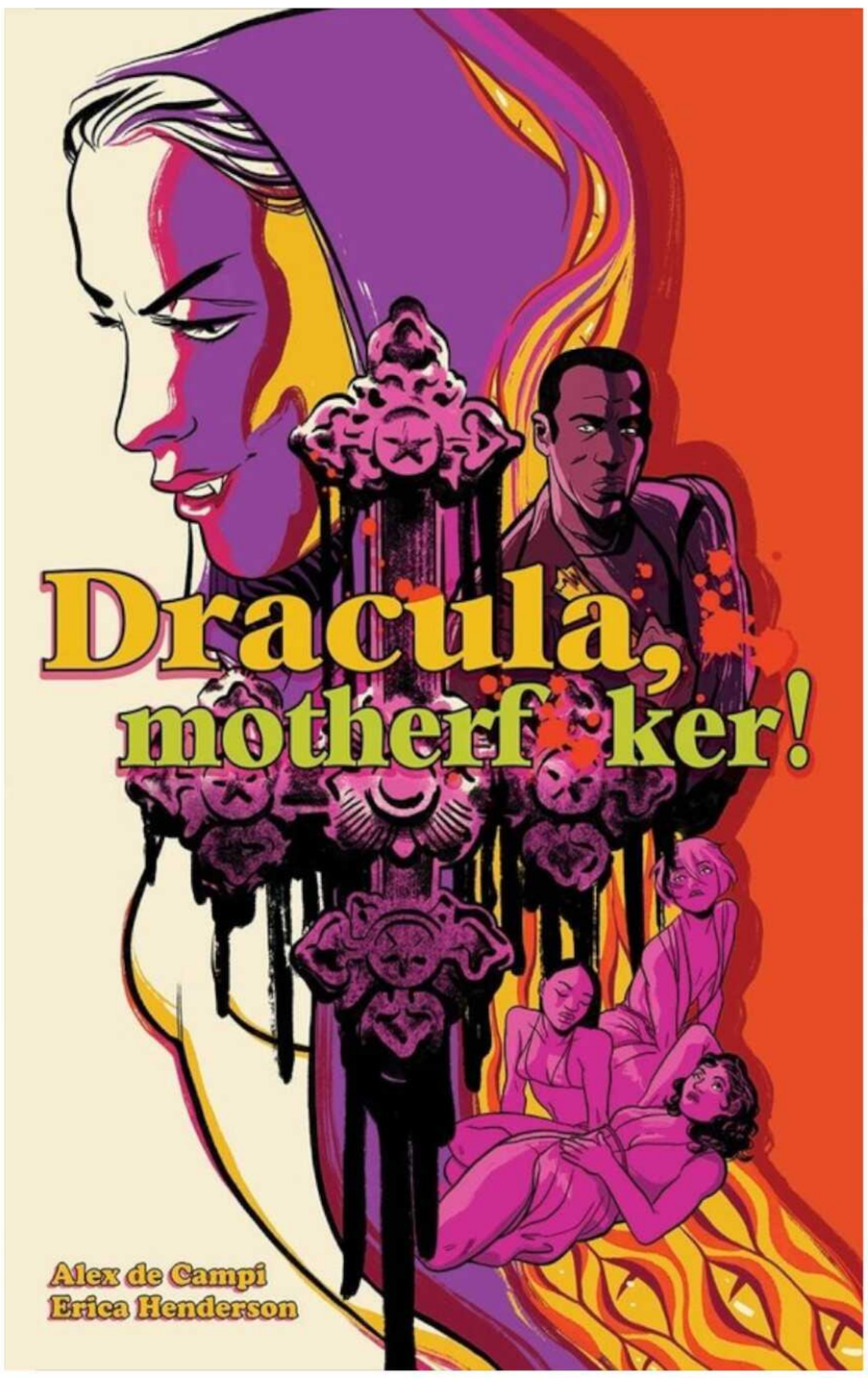
It might not seem much, and too short and repetitive after a while, but seeing the different people come together to tell their version of the same thing - and who all came together for the weird idea - really is worth flicking through whether you like horror tales or just happen to like seeing appreciating the art styles involed. ✪

Free to download, The Wizened Fist was completed and published for free online. You can read and download the comic at ***t.co/xhFPLJVDhv?amp=1***

RECOMMENDED READING

The world of comics is ever expanding and thus, we have a look at some of the new upcoming titles outwith the more popularised superheroes and villians, from the obscure to the spin offs and everything in between.

For the latest recommendations we have a look at the latest liscened and original horror series coming from BOOM Studios and a quick peek at more alien space carnage!



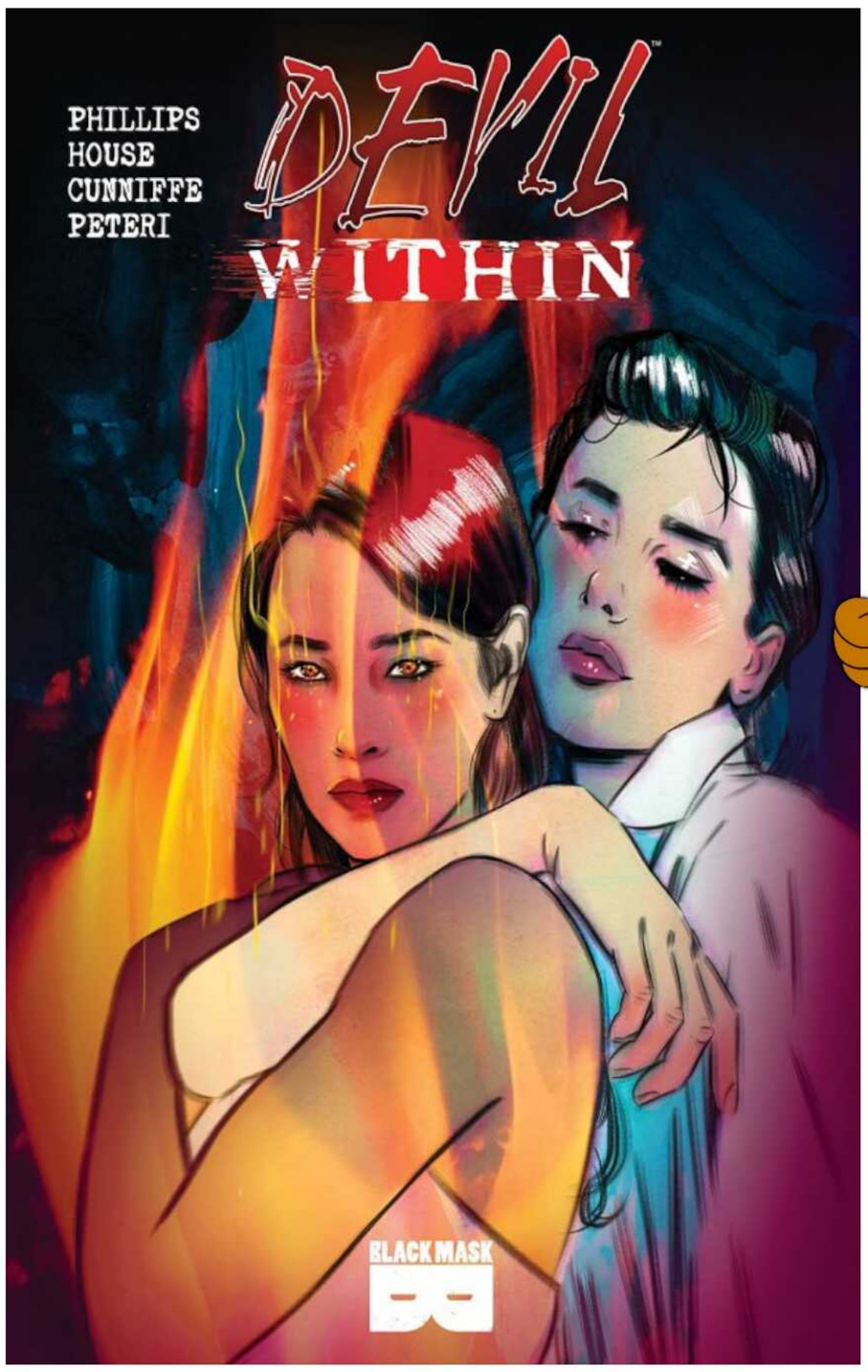
Publisher: Image Comics
Writer: Alex De Campi
Artwork: Erika Henderson
Release Date: 7th October 2020

Quincy Harker makes his money by selling pictures of dead celebrities. But he soon falls on the radar of the demons luring in the shadows preying on the young and beautiful people of Los Angeles.

This is the kind of vampire story I like. Through various things from Buffy's secret romance with Angel through to Mr Sparkles in Twilight, the vampire genre has fallen to the Anne Rice ways of romanticising the undead killers inspired by Dracula.

Here Dracula isn't an empathetic character, or some midnight fantasy, but a faceless and ancient horror. And one that really get explored from the ideas behind how he courts his brides, to the artwork which presents him in a really demonic and inhuman way thats more familiar and new in equal amounts.

Art and writing works perfectly in sync throughout, with the panels flowing incredibly well and a striking neon highlighting thats just stunning to read through. From story to artwork, this is a great new take on a classic monster. ✪



Publisher: Black Mask Studios
Writers: Stephanie Phillips
Artwork: Maan House
Colourist: Dee Cunniffe
Letterer: Troy Peteri
Release Date: 26th August 2020

There's nothing like a happy ever after and thats exactly what Michelle and Samantha are looking for. Engaged and moving to the Phillippines to start a new life together. So of course it all goes wrong, doesn't it?!

As soon as they move into their new, but very old, house, Michelle begins to hear a voice in the background, to see spirits and rogue reflections. Samantha doesn't believe in ghosts, and wonders if her love has fallen to madness.

And so begins the tale of a supernatural chiller with some wonderful twists and turns as well as a deep sense of paranoia.

Devil Within is actually a well executed story with some brilliant tension. Better yet, being only four issues long, there's no side stepping or wandering narrative; the entire tale is condensed and focused to tell everything perfectly.

The down side? It's only four issues long! As much as it helps tell a tight story and has a definitive conclusion, it's hard not to want more! ✪



Have you noticed how many times Badgey appeared in this issue?

If you've been keeping count, send the number of Badgeys youu've seen to media@sfcq2.com

Why? Well, everyone who does will be entered into a random draw with the winner getting something nice.



WHO IS... SAAVIK?

After decades of service with largely the same crew for over twenty years, the bridge of the Enterprise needed some fresh faces on board. Under the guidance of Spock at Starflet Academy, one of those new faces was set to replace Chekov at the helm as the new navigation officer, Spock's most brilliant protoge, and fellow Vulcan,Saavik.

BY JUSTIN KASE

The first time we see Savvik is in the Captains chair, tackling the Kobayashi Maru test at the Academy. Knowing she had to tow the line between Starfleet regulations and the humanitatian nature of the fleet, she chose to cross the neutral zone and save the freighter. Her entire crew were killed, the ship destroyed and as the simulation ended, she complained to the visiting Admiral Kirk that it wasn't a fair judgement of her command abilities.

As a protoge of Spock, Saavik was part of the trainee crew assigned on board the Enterprise under the command of Captain Spock, with Admiral Kirk observing the new cadets. As an officer in training with a prospective future in Command, she was given the responsability of taking the Captains chair to guide the Enterprise out of Spacedock under watch.

Unfortunately the rest of the training cruise didn't go as smoothly as her first go in the Captains chair as the Enterprise crew soon had to deal with a rogue Starship, comandeered by genetically enhanced warlord Khan Singh.

Like most other Vulcan's Saavik didn't quite grasp the human spirit and was particularly curious by Kirk as he observed and later took command of the Enterprise with Spock's blessing. Having learned to play by the rules,. Saavik took her teachings as gospel and would often quotte the rules and regulations and become baffled by people bending the rules to suit a scenario. Particularly when she learned Kirk's answer to beating his Kobayashi Maru test.

Being through into the Khan mission gave Saavik a trial by fire in her first time on board a starship; with first hand combat experience, both in space and on the ground while trapped within the testing grounds for the Genesis terraforming device and her first experience with the death of a fellow officer as her mentor Spock sacrificed ▷

his life to save his crew.

After the final battle with Khan, which saw Genesis activate to create a new world, the planet became a hot political topic due to it's devestating properties and potential to be used as a weapon. As the Enterprise scurried home to be decomissioned, Saavik was graduated from the Academy and assigned to the USS Grissom; a science vessel who'd be the only ship allowed to be stationed at Genesis for research.



Working alongside David Marcus, one of the creators of Genesis and Kirk's son, Saavik would use her knowledge of fleet regulations to investigate potential life on the planet, only to discover that Genesis revived Spock's body as well as create the complex worlds landscape.

While on Genesis Klingon Commander Kruge attacked Grissom in a bid to steal the secrets of Genesis and use it as a weapon to wage war against the Federation.

With Grissom destroyed, Saavik and David tried to protect a young Spock; who they soon realised was growing at a rapid rate thanks to the planet, but while bhis body was revived, his mind was not. Without any memories or education, the rapidly-aging Spock was suffering from that growth, including reaching adult maturity triggering the need for Pon Farr - which left Saavik no alternative but to help him through the volatile process.

Soon captured by the Klingons, the trio were held hostage as Kirk arrived in a stolen Enterprise to retrieve Spocks body. Though the Klingons wanted to make a point, and kill one of the team. David stopped them from choosing Saavik, giving his own life to save her which triggered Kirk to beam down and fight Kruge himself.

After helping return Spock's body back to his homeworld, where his mind was restored, Saavik would last be seen saying her goodbyes; staying behind on Vulcan while Kirk and his crew would return to Earth to face trial for stealing the Enterprise.

The history of Saavik is a litttle less straight forward than she appears on screen. First appearing as a direct successor to Spock in story notes, a male science officer much like Xon in the abandonned Phase 2 series. Over several drafts and re-writes, the initial character went from science officer Wicks, to Navigator Saavik with then-unknown actor Kirsty Alley taking the role.

Alley made her film debut with the character, winning the role despite extreme personal circumstances due to her understasnding and deep knowledge of Spock, whom she's grown up watching. Though for Saavik's second and third appearance on screen, Robin Curtis would talke the role sdue to disagreements between the production of The Search for Spock and Alleys agent, bringing a slightly more emotional core top the surface.

Reasons for her softer side were never menttioned on screen, though in script notes ad cut lines, she was described as being half-Vulcan, like Spock, but with one of her parents being Vulcan. Another element which went unsaid, but was originally filmed, showed Saavik staying behind as she'd fallen pregnant during the Pon Farr. While both elements were cut, they're mostly acepted by fans regardless.



NEXT ISSUE



After a huge delay through COVID, we'll be racing to our next Comms throughout the Festivus season! In a shorter issue special edition issue we'll be focused on....

FLEET FOCUS

To close out our year, we'll be looking back at one of the most challenging times in both SFC and all of our lives, highlighting the best moments, commendable actions from officers helping each other out in a crisis and more from the fleet!

DISCOVERY

When we return we'll know who gets the Captains Chair in Discovery, we'll know what the burn is and we'll have a better idea of whats in store in the 32nd century. So we'll be taking a deep dive into the first half of Discovery's new season and looking ahead to Season 4.

....and of course a few features, reviews and a lot more! We'll release our final issue of 2020 as a Fleet Alert edition on December 23rd.



Q2 COMMS ARCHIVE



If you've missed an issue or are new to SFC, you can look back through our Comms archive to view and download the previous years issues now!

As one of the basic membership rewards available from cadet/ registered member onwards, SFC Quadrant 2's Communications Update is free to all and we're rebuilding out archive of former issues through the SFC Online portal.

Currently available are all four issues of last years quartetly editions as well as the previous and final issue under former Director of Comms, and current Director of Admin, Commodore Tom Burns.

We'll be adding more to the archive from previous collaborators as they are unearthed and will be including all issues within out our collection to be made available to all members.

For thos enew to SFC you can check back at our previous Fleet Alerts and notices to find out more about the recent history of SFC or skim through various articles submitted, including Lt Langstaff's STO Tops, regular feature The Geek I am putting members - including Churchill's Lt Archibald and our current Starbase Europa XO Commander Shires - in the spotlight plus much more from the world of Starfleet Command, Star Trek and beyond!

The Comms archive is available to all registerd and logged in members at starfleet-command.co.uk under the Comms menu (users not logged in will only see a holding page).

If you're a member who hasn't yet registered with the service, you can do so at starfleet-command.co.uk/register to access Comms, internal social zones and support, Starfleet Academy and much more including Membership Pack downloads, the Quartermasters stores for exclusive items and further downloads including rare Trek items.

If any members of SFC would like to make a submission and join the Comms team, you can also check out the new guidelines and further information on how to enter your submissions in the same Comms section.

For any further information on Comms, our archive, or if you have any feedback or questions on how to take part, get in touch with our director of Communications directly at:
comms@starfleet-command.co.uk

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