

# LOGBOOK

The Sci-Fi Media Journal from Fort Smith

## Table of Contents

- 2 Voyages - the *Star Trek: Voyager* episode guide: **State of Flux, Heroes and Demons, Cathexis**
- 3 Our *Star Trek: The Next Generation* reviews resume with a double dose: **Thine Own Self** through **Journey's End**
- 4 The test flight of a possible new column **Inside Them** kicks off with an examination of Dax and her fellow Trills
- 6 *DS9* review **B5** review **In the Shadow of Z'ha'Dum**
- 7 *Earth 2* and *seaQuest* reviews
- 8 **Die Hard** to the third power, and the infamous Databank

## LOGBOOK

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They keep coming. Apologies to Cindy Hill, whose wonderful StarFest report last month was slightly altered by a typo on my part: yes, we had no *Babylon 5* shirts, but neither did we have *Voyager shorts*. Most StarFest attendees probably did see a fair number of *Voyager shirts*, though!

Last but far from least, my deepest apologies to those who had to wait so long for last month's issue in the mail. A miscalculation on my part regarding color duplication bankrupted the LogBook subscription kitty. There will be no more such cover illustrations. Sorry again. -E.G.

## Series Renewals: Leases On Life Extended

*Star Trek: Voyager* and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* have both been renewed for their respective second and fourth seasons; *Babylon 5* hangs in limbo awaiting a third season commitment from Warner Bros., and the eagerly-anticipated last four second season episodes are not going to be shown in the U.S. until October. (This also means our special B5 episode guide for next month has been postponed until the fall.) *Lois & Clark* and *X-Files* will naturally return. So will *seaQuest*, minus Roy Scheider and moving to Wednesday nights. *Earth 2* has been axed. The fates of *Sliders* and *VR.5* are unknown.

## Redesign of the Daleks

At a convention appearance earlier this year, Philip Segal, exec producer of the planned Universal Studios revival of *Dr. Who*, unveiled some new twists on familiar Who hardware. Segal - formerly one of the producers of *Max Headroom*, among other shows - noted that, despite *Dr. Who's* reputation for putting stories and casting ahead of special effects, today's market requires it to at least attempt to rise to the level of *Star Trek* and *Babylon 5*, especially with its debut on American network TV. He did make it clear that some of the show's long-standing traditions - i.e. the TARDIS exterior as a Police Box, a mushroom-shaped console in the TARDIS control room - are being retained, but slightly updated. He reportedly displays schematics for a redesign of the TARDIS control-room, as well as "spider-like Daleks" which are capable of going airborne in their rounds of extermination. Segal also said that the original Ron Grainer theme song would be kept, but that plans call for a new orchestral recording to be made since "no usable tapes exist of the original." (Ed. Note: someone send that man a copy of the *Dr. Who: Thirty Years at the Radiophonic Workshop* CD before he goes any further!)

Though one could easily lose count of how many times the new *Who* project has been picked up and then cancelled, it's supposedly in script development once more as a Fox movie-of-the-week for the 1995-96 season. There is still no word on who the new Doctor may be, though earlier reports about a cameo appearance by Sylvester McCoy for regeneration purposes now seem highly unlikely. The production is also no longer under the supervision of Amblin Productions; it may become a project of the newly-formed Dreamworks studio, which also counts Steven Spielberg as a founding member.



## ROXCON '95 CANCELLED

Fort Smith's first *Star Trek* convention was cancelled in early May by the fund raising committee for the Roxanne fund.

According to the Southwest Times Record, the committee released the following statement: "The fund raising committee simply does not feel like the plans are far enough along and that there were just too many loose ends at this point to finish up and make the convention successful by June 30, so we cancelled it."

Anyone who had already purchased tickets can receive a refund by sending a copy of their tickets or receipts to Roxanne, P.O. Box 1238, Alma, AR, 72921 anytime before June 10th. Unclaimed tickets will be considered donations to Roxanne's fund after that date.

## LogBook On The World Wide Web!

Thanks to Chris Bray, a LogBook home page opened on the World Wide Web on May 8. This site has the complete LogBook episode guides and Master Index files as of the April '95 release, as well as such oddities as the liner notes from the original vinyl release of *The Empire Strikes Back* soundtrack and a growing selection of original artwork. The URL to access LogBook's WWW site is:

<http://comp.uark.edu/~cbray/logbook/logbook.html>

Additionally, the newly-released LogBook and Master Index files should now be available at a bulletin board system near you - especially those linked to the Planet Connect satellite service - including distribution sites in the United Kingdom and Australia! Filenames are STLBO495.ZIP and LBMIO495.ZIP. The next revision of the files will be released in August.

As if that's not enough (!), there is a piece of Windows freeware in the works called *The Star Trek Explorer* featuring episode guide entries from the LogBook files. Contact [bob.yewchuk@canrem.com](mailto:bob.yewchuk@canrem.com) for more details on this program. As soon as he sends us the latest revision, hopefully it will also be available on the LogBook home page.

by Earl Green

## STATE OF FLUX ★★★

"You were working for her. She was working for them. Was anybody on that ship working for me?"

- *Chakotay to Tuvok*

A wonderfully unusual story in the *Trek* mythos, this time a traitor in the crew's midst. My own long-range sensors, upon detecting this story, indicated that this was not something Gene Roddenberry would've done...thank goodness! Anymore, it seems that the installments which can be described that way are the best ones. It may sound heretical to worshippers of the Great Bird of the Galaxy, but it is at the very least possible that his universe of nice folks has been exhausted of stories.

At last, Robert Beltran's Chakotay gets into the thick of things with betrayals all around him. Someone has handed classified Federation technology over to the Kazons - is it Carey, out of jealousy that B'elanna was promoted to chief engineer ahead of him? Or is it Seska, perhaps overzealous to get back home? As it turns out, Seska's a Cardassian - how incredibly convincing 24th century plastic surgery can be! Remember how Kira got turned into a Cardassian in *Second Skin*? Seska, as it so happens, is the reverse, a Cardassian operative who infiltrated Chakotay's band of Maquis and became his lover in the process. Martha Hackett has drawn mixed reactions from fans since her brief debut in *Parallax*, and it's interesting to note that her departure hand-in-hand with the enemy all but promises "I'll be back!" And indeed she will: an episode called *Seska* is expected later this season...

It's also good to see Josh Clark back as Carey. Honestly, they had me fooled - my money was on Carey to be the turncoat, for the very reason Janeway stated. It's nice to see that in casting this show, the producers are taking into consideration the very limited number of Federation personnel in the Delta Quadrant, as opposed to the *Enterprise* and *DS9*'s ever-changing gene pool of uniformed extras.

My only question here: what does the title have to do with anything?

## HEROES AND DEMONS ★★½

"The only reason you're still alive is because I have taken an oath to do no harm." - *Dr. Schweitzer*

Memo to Staffleet Research & Development: before you launch one more ship with a holodeck, make bloody sure the thing is foolproof! If the holodecks in *Next Generation* and *Voyager* were a reality in 1995, the designers, programmers and/or manufacturers of the blasted device would've been sued out of existence by now for negligence in designing safety measures.

The overcooked premise of the holo-malfunction aside, this episode was a delightful showcase for *Voyager*'s yet-unnamed holographic Doctor and the outstanding Robert Picardo, veritable master of the role of a man who is much-put-upon by people and events he couldn't possibly care less about. He gets to transfer from sick bay to the holodeck in search of Harry, Chakotay and Tuvok, all of whom have been abducted from Harry's *Beowulf* program by "photonic energy creatures" originating from a nearby protostar. The thought occurs, with the number of times the *Enterprises* and *Voyager* have interfered with unexplored energy fields and later discovered consistent patterns of possible intelligence emanating from within, that someone would think to scan for such patterns *before* venturing into a new phenomenon. (I'm beginning to sound like Neelix in *The Cloud*, aren't I?)

That aside, the episode is also notable for the first *Trek* appearance of versatile - but often cast as a heavy - British actor Christopher Neame, who now holds a true record: appearances in *Doctor Who*, *Blake's 7*, *Babylon 5* and now a corner of the *Trek* universe. Here he showed up as Unferth and didn't turn in the kind of performance that has distinguished him in at least this viewer's mind; though not as well-known as David Warner or Malcolm McDowell, Neame is an equally recognizable and talented actor worthy of a more prominent role than he was given here. To see him face off against Picardo would've made this exercise a four-star episode!

That aside, the story allows Picardo's Doctor, temporarily named Schweitzer after the real-life missionary who brought medicine to Africa, to explore such unusual things as battle, romance and reverence from a hall full of holographic warriors. At last it is proven that the Doctor is worthy of more than just humorous vignettes between more relevant slices of A-plot.

## CATHEXIS ½

Oh **NEOSPHIC**. It's the patented neo-*Trek* alien possession storyline. This premise has been tried, tried again, and tried more times than should be allowed by law. Someone - perhaps writers Brannon Braga and Joe Menosky, whose names have shown up on most of these "possession" stories - must think that this idea is really going to work someday. After such wasted hours as *Power Play*, *DS9*'s *Dramatis Personae*, *Man of the People*, and *Force of Nature* (oh wait - that only fits into this category because aliens possessed the *writer*), you'd think they might spare *Voyager* this horrific staple of the neo-*Trek* diet. No such luck.

This installment's sheer depth of relentless stupidity was all the more highlighted by the fact that even the talents and appealing character moments provided by the cast could not save this episode. *Power Play* survived unsurprising action scenes alone, where *Dramatis Personae* was buoyed by the markedly nasty performances of Avery Brooks, Nana Visitor and the rest of the *DS9* cast, but Mulgrew and friends could do nothing to salvage this hour. Before anyone blames the cast, I have this to say in their defense: it'd be hard for *me* to get worked up about such a lame story as this one, either. This one rolled over and kicked its conceptual legs in the air before the opening credits rolled.

### 10 STATE OF FLUX

teleplay by Chris Abbott  
directed by Robert Scheerer

story by Paul Robert Coyte  
music by Dennis McCarthy

Stardate not given: A visit to the surface of a habitable planet becomes less than routine when a Kazon ship is detected nearby. All away teams are recalled to *Voyager*, but Seska can't be found. Chakotay finds her in a cave nearby, where the two of them barely escape a Kazon attack. The Kazon ship is sending a distress signal, and despite her own misgivings and Neelix's warnings, Janeway sends an away team to the ship. It is discovered that the Kazons somehow acquired some Federation technology and suffered a fatal accident while trying to install it on their ship. Other Kazon ships are on the way, and Janeway faces the possibility that someone aboard *Voyager* has decided to ally themselves with the enemy.  
Guest Cast: Martha Hackett (Seska), Josh Clark (Carey), Anthony DeLongis (First Maje Kuloff)



### 11 HEROES AND DEMONS

written by Naren Shankar

directed by Les Landau

music by Dennis McCarthy

Stardate 48693.2: As *Voyager* passes near a protostar, Janeway and Torres try to beam some samples of its photonic material aboard. When they try to enlist Harry's help in studying it, they find that he has disappeared from the ship. Chakotay and Tuvok go to where Harry was last found - the holodeck - and try to learn what happened to their comrade by interacting with Harry's *Beowulf* holodeck program. Even Chakotay and Tuvok vanish when Grendel comes to ravage the Hall Heorot. Someone needs to venture into the holodeck to find where the missing crewmen are going, or if they're still alive. Into Hrothgar's keep steps a new warrior, the only member of *Voyager*'s crew immune to the threat of being snatched out of the holodeck. The affair of Grendel was made known to him on his native soil; space travelers said that this hall, best of holo-scenarios, stands empty and useless to all warriors after the evening light becomes hidden beneath the cover of the sky. Therefore his people - or specifically Captain



Janeway - advised that he should investigate because they know what his strength can accomplish, but can the holographic doctor grapple with something other than a medical emergency?

Guest Cast: Marjorie Monaghan (Freya), Christopher Neame (Unferth), Michael Keenan (Hrothgar)

### 12 CATHEXIS

teleplay by Brannon Braga

story by Brannon Braga & Joe Menosky

directed by Kim Friedman

music by Jay Chattaway

Stardate 48734.2: Tuvok and Chakotay barely survive an alien attack within a dark matter nebula they were exploring. Chakotay is returned to *Voyager* in a brain-dead state, but Tuvok recovers. After numerous acts of sabotage prevent Janeway from taking *Voyager* into the nebula to investigate, it becomes evident that an alien consciousness is aboard the ship to keep *Voyager* out of the nebula. Another presence makes itself known, hell-bent on taking the ship into danger.  
Guest Cast: Brian Markinson (Durst), Michael Cumpsty (Lord Burleigh), Carolyn Seymour (Mrs. Templeton), Majel Barrett (Computer Voice)

## 167 THINE OWN SELF

teleplay by Ronald D. Moore  
 story by Christopher Hatton  
 directed by Winrich Kolbe  
 music by Dennis McCarthy  
 Stardate 47611.2: Counselor Troi returns from her Academy class reunion to find Dr. Crusher in charge of the bridge, and begins wondering about the possibility of achieving her own position in the ship's chain of command. Crusher, for her part, is on watch while Data is away in a shuttle retrieving radioactive fragments of a destroyed space probe. Data's shuttle crashes on a world inhabited by relatively primitive humanoids, and his radioactive cargo disrupts his ability to access his memory of who he is or where he is from. Data wanders into the nearest village carrying the case of hazardous materials, with which he unwittingly contaminates everyone.  
*Guest Cast:* Ronnie Claire Edwards (Talur), Michael Rothar (Garvin), Kimberly Cullum (Gia), Michael G. Hagerly (Skoran)

## 168 MASKS

written by Joe Menosky  
 - directed by Robert Wiemer  
 music by Dennis McCarthy  
 Stardate 47615.2: Studying an ancient comet at close range, the crew of the *Enterprise* becomes aware of strange objects appearing on board. An unexplained surge of energy affects the ship's computer systems and Data as well. The comet is revealed to be a spaceborne artifact of a bygone alien civilization. The *Enterprise's* computer is filled with symbols and hieroglyphics whose meanings are known only to Data, though he has never before encountered anything like them. Soon, Data himself is transformed, exhibiting a number of personalities from the alien archive. The ship's computer and even parts of the ship itself transform into objects whose function can only be deduced by studying the alien civilization. But by the time Picard and the others can gain an understanding of what has taken control of their ship, the *Enterprise* and Data will be transformed into an ancient alien temple - and its resident goddess.  
*Guest Cast:* Plickay D'Shon Collins (Eric)

## 169 EYE OF THE BEHOLDER

teleplay by Rene Echevarria  
 story by Brannon Braga  
 directed by Cliff Bole  
 music by Jay Chattaway  
 Stardate 47622.1: A young officer recently posted to the *Enterprise* commits suicide by leaping into an energy stream in one of the ship's warp nacelles. Trying to find out why, Troi begins investigating the last days of the deceased by speaking to his friends and co-workers, and eventually winds up surveying the warp nacelle post, where she experiences an inexplicable emotional upheaval which may be an echo left by the partially empathic officer's final burst of feelings and thoughts. She tries to probe this psionic artifact for its true meaning, and uncovers a betrayal which is older than anyone realizes.  
*Guest Cast:* Mark Rolston (Lt. Walter Pierce), Nanoy Harewood (Lt. Nara), Tim Lounibos (Lt. Kwan), Johanna McCloy (Ensign Calloway)

## ARTICLE DELAY

Apologies to readers who were disappointed not to find Robert's *Next Generation* column and/or the promised *Earth 2* article in the May issue; some scheduling problems were experienced.

by Robert Heyman

Reporting live from those infinite planes of existence in Fort Collins, Colorado, Robert Heyman picks up where he left off with his ever popular examination of *Star Trek: The Next Generation's* seventh and final season! The rating system for the *Next Generation* reviews as well as our other review features is as follows:

Bad ★ Okay ★★ Good ★★★ Excellent ★★★★

## THINE OWN SELF ★★★

Stricken with amnesia while trying to recover radioactive fragments on an alien planet, Data wanders into one of the planet's villages where he exposes its people to radiation sickness caused by the fragments. In the meantime, back on the *Enterprise*, Troi is trying to pass her bridge officers' tests in order to be promoted to commander.

There's nothing original about this amnesia story or its take on the familiar tale of *Frankenstein*, but it's a good vehicle for Data, well-written and superbly directed by the ever-reliable Winrich Kolbe. True, the Data and Troi subplots have nothing to do with each other, but the two complement each other just fine. Ronnie Claire Edwards gives a deliciously crusty performance as the big-headed Talur, however this is another case where the aliens appear a bit too human for comfort, and although the production values are first-rate, the costumes and setting are too reminiscent of pre-20th century European cultures.

Troi earning her promotion is wisely relegated to a B-plot by scripter Ronald Moore, as there would not be enough of a story to merit it an entire episode anyway. Still, the ship-bound subplot has some endearing moments between Riker and Troi that nicely offset the tension between Data and the aliens on the planet's surface. Moore admitted in an interview that he had difficulties writing *Thine Own Self* in that he could not figure out what he was about. Hey! An episode doesn't always have to "say something" to be good...

## MASKS ★★

What's wrong with Joe Menosky? From the writer who gave us the extremely popular and intelligent *Darmok* comes this wasted study of cultural myths that fails both as a one-hour story and as an obvious excuse to give Brent Spiner a tour-de-force. The *Enterprise* happens upon a comet carrying an alien transmitter which begins changing the ship into an alien city. In the meantime, Data develops multiple personalities from the alien civilization, ultimately becoming the culture's goddess-ruler.

Spiner gives a fairly solid performance as the various alien entities that make up their culture. However, there's very little else to redeem this episode and the strange, ship-wide transformations are nothing more than glorified padding. The mysteries behind the alien symbology are captivating, and it's interesting to watch Picard and crew explain away their significance, but the ending in which the masked Picard confronts Data as Masaka is a bit anticlimactic.

## EYE OF THE BEHOLDER ★★½

A member of the crew commits suicide and the ensuing investigation by Troi and Worf reveals a murder aboard the *Enterprise* eight years earlier while the ship was being built. Troi is forced to relive the victim's experiences by way of a strange psychic imprint left by the victim upon his death.

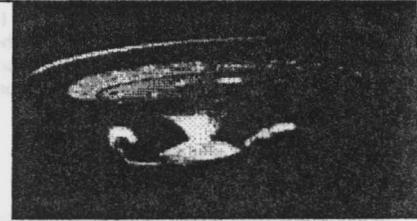
This is a confusing storyline but has several redeeming qualities, including an interesting follow-up to the Worf/Troi relationship introduced in *Parallels*. The tired murder mystery storyline is a trademark of many television series in their waning stages; however, this gives it an interesting science fiction twist that's not entirely successful or believable, even in the context of *Star Trek*. The heavy-duty psychobabble was made somewhat more understandable in *Dark Page*. Here, the only real emotional anchor is the developing romance between Troi and Worf, which exists only in Troi's false reality. The end, where Troi murders Worf, repeating the original victim's experiences, is hokey but Cliff Bole impresses with his directing and composer Jay Chattaway throws in a few interesting musical cues. The final scene, in which Troi and Data tie up the loose plot threads, is a stressful and reminder of how ponderous it was to follow this episode.

## GENESIS ★★★

Dr. Crusher accidentally activates Lt. Barclay's latent introns, non-functioning genetic codes that serve little biological purpose, causing the entire crew (save Data and Picard) to de-evolve. Data saves the ship just in time before Picard is swallowed by a rabid creature that was once Worf.

The writers always risk disaster when attempting a conceptually challenging monster movie such as this. But Gates McFadden's freshman turn at directing is quite effective, capturing the creepy atmosphere needed for the story, and Michael Westmore and his team of makeup talent again score all "A's," turning Riker into a Neanderthal, Barclay into a spider, and Troi into an amphibious creature. The opening teaser in sickbay is a real charm, with a constantly moving camera shifting from one character moment to another. It's interesting how the writers continue to subtly mature the Troi/Worf coupling even when the intention to do so isn't that strong. (Four stars for Worf's stellar belch, by the way.) What comes across as a conscious effort at conserving budget with a quickie premise turns out to be a special-effects-rich installment with a genuinely creepy feel and delightfully funny character moments. There's no fiction to the existence of introns, incidentally - it turns out they're fragments of genetic material that are actually excised and discarded during DNA replication. Cool how these college biology courses come in handy, eh?

continued on page 5



4 Welcome to a new feature in LogBook, provisionally given a column title of "Inside Them." In each column, "Inside Them" will take an alien race from almost any science fiction series, movie or book available, shake them around like an unopened Christmas present to see what rattles, and basically put them under a microscope. So often in popular media sci-fi, new races are generated out of the clear blue and simply given a distinctive appearance, voice or behavioral habit to distinguish them from us, and so often very little thought is put into why these people are the way they are. This column will not concentrate on the dry, established facts (i.e. Vulcans have green blood; Time Lords have two hearts; *B5's* Centauri males have very...well, I don't think we can print that one!), but the implications of those facts that have been given. So Time Lords have two hearts; what does this engender for cardiovascular medicine on Gallifrey? And what about those Centauri males - are birth control devices outlandishly expensive on Centauri Prime? These are the questions we'll look at in a fun and creative way. And everyone's invited to request profiles of their favorite aliens - or to write those profiles for us! All you need here is a little imagination. And now, without further adieu...

## Worming Your Way Into The Trill Species

Trills, chills and spills! What's it like to be joined? How might Trills live, die, marry, give birth and all the other things in between? If you want to be spotted, maybe you'd better read this before signing up, for there may be more than meets the eye on the Trill homeworld. We haven't been "slugged" by the Symbiosis Commission, but we have given considerable thought into the various implications of a life of constant Trills.

by Earl Green

The Trill species has been growing in prominence in the *Star Trek* universe since the appearance of the first Trill in the 1991 *Next Generation* episode **The Host**. In that episode, a Trill ambassador named Odan - whose true nature is not yet known to the *Enterprise* crew - is being ferried to mediations between two warring factions of another alien race; over the course of Odan's trip, he falls in love with Beverly Crusher. Upon arrival in the midst of the hostilities, Odan turns down every attempt to beam him down to negotiate, opting instead for a shuttle trip. His shuttle is attacked by one of the fighting parties and he is severely injured - or at least his host body is. Demanding to be shuttled, not beamed, back to the *Enterprise*, Odan reveals that he is a joined species consisting of a humanoid host and a mollusc-like symbiont nestled within the host's abdominal cavity. According to Odan, the symbiont contained the entirety of a Trill's personality and could retain that personality if transferred into another body. (This concept was later refined, and it is now generally accepted that the personality emerging from a joined Trill is a melding of the host and symbiont.) Odan - the symbiont - was transplanted into Riker to serve as an emergency host until the Trill homeworld could send another suitable host to the *Enterprise*, and Riker's personality was completely subdued by Odan for the duration of his mediation duties; this resulted in the primary emotional arc of **The Host**, a relationship between Beverly and Odan, and her subsequent difficulties in continuing that relationship when the personality of Odan spoke from the body of Riker. The Trill idea wasn't lost on *Trek's* producers, who quickly created a Trill character to fill a void left when one of their planned regular characters for *Deep Space Nine* didn't quite work out; originally, *DS9's* science officer was to be a female from a low-gravity planet who would need a wheelchair or other protective support in the Earth-normal gravity of the station, thus enabling frequent statement on the handicapped, not unlike Geordi on *Next Generation*. Though this concept was later explored in the episode **Melora**, the impracticality of having to frequently create the illusion of zero gravity for a regular character left a gap in the lineup, one which the creators of *DS9* filled with a Trill we now know as Lt. Jadzia Dax.

With a Trill on our screens every week, we have an opportunity to study this enigmatic alien race in the kind of detail which has only been lavished upon Vulcans and Klingons in previous *Treks*. Such a study opens a lot of questions to debate, and theorizing along those lines produces some troubling results.

Some of the basic concepts of the Trill have changed; the hosts seen in **The Host** had small ridges on their foreheads, while those subsequently seen in *DS9* have displayed spots along their temples and necks, derived from a similar makeup design seen in the *Next Generation* episode **The Perfect Mate**. The parasitic nature of the symbionts - along with the self-treatment Odan had to perform upon himself in **The Host** - were apparently set aside to simplify matters. From the initial transplant operation, the joining takes roughly 93 hours to solidify, a period during which the symbiont can be removed, but after those 93 hours, the two halves of the newly-joined Trill are dependent upon each other for life; the host will die within hours of the symbiont's removal.

Though the symbiont/host interspecies dependency has supposedly existed for a number of centuries on Trill, it is intriguing to speculate whether or not the Trill - or the writers and producers of *Star Trek*

- have begun to explore the moral, societal or legislative aspects of this unique biological arrangement.

Marriage and relationships among the Trill have the potential to seem truly bizarre from the human perspective. In **The Host**, for example, an implication is clearly made that a Trill can handle relationships with either sex when Odan's new host - a woman - makes an overture to Beverly Crusher that it is time for their relationship to continue. As we all know from having seen the episode, Beverly turned down this offer, stating that humans aren't quite so unaffected by such seemingly casual changes in appearance, gender and lifestyle. While subsequent Trill episodes on *DS9* have made it clear that the changeover of host bodies is no easy thing for the symbiont and can in fact be traumatic, the rest of the doctor's declaration is seeming more and more like an understatement.

In the *DS9* episode **The Nagus**, Sisko ruminates his son's unexplained absence from home, and Dax offers him advice based on her previous experience as parents of both sexes; in **The House of Quark**, Dax makes a similarly unique claim of having been both a husband and a wife. On the surface, these seem like innocuous enough remarks, meant to play humorously on Dax's varied past hosts. But if you try to sort through these statements, it gets really complicated!

Let's start with marriage. It's a simple enough concept for we humans, but a somewhat more baffling one where a joined species like the Trill is concerned. With a situation involving one joined Trill and an unjoined spouse, what happens with a child whose joined parent becomes the opposite sex through a change of host bodies? Does this child now have two mothers or two fathers? In a worst case scenario, what if the parents divorce - who gets custody of the child, his mother or...his mother? You see, it gets very strange! Naturally there would be records of any changes in a parent's host body. But beyond the purely legal ramifications, how would a child adjust to a parent's host changeover? Another weird twist is the vague implication, in **The Host**, that the Odan symbiont had inhabited a male host body and that male's own son. Like many things in **The Host** - such as Odan's alleged inability to use the transporter and his ridged forehead - this element of Trilldom may have been abandoned, but if not, it may represent some potential problems. Father-and-son rivalries of varying degrees are an inevitable part of everyday life, and in the event that a son joins with his father's symbiont, the conflicting emotions could begin anew and could cause a constant source of confusion and emotional upset for the new host. It would seem reasonable that some Trill legislation would be necessary to prohibit a host inheriting a symbiont from one of his parents. And more fundamentally, given the Trill symbiont's roost within the abdomen, it seems unlikely that a joined female such as Dax could even have a child, unless the physiology of the Trill host is sufficiently different from that of humans.

Children aside, marriage itself could also be a fairly complex aspect of the Trill lifestyle. Dax says she has been a mother and a father, a wife and a husband. Trying to make sense of how all of these could fit into any number of lifetimes is baffling. In human terms, marriage - at least in theory - is an arrangement 'til death us do part. A joined Trill could die a number of deaths - so do his vows travel with him into the next life? There's really no way to tell without further explanation from the show itself. But for the sake

of speculation, let's assume that marriage has the same meaning for Trills that it does for we humans, that of an everlasting bond. If a married host dies and the symbiont is placed in another host, does the marriage continue? Is it nullified? Is a decision made depending on the specifics of each couple? It gets even wilder if both parties in a marriage have symbionts. Again, there would obviously be records kept of any changes in host bodies, but there would be many more considerations involved in a wedded Trill couple than mere facts and figures.

On the other hand, all of this speculation could just as easily be moot, for Dax herself once mentioned to Bashir in **A Man Alone** (ironic, eh?) that Trills don't succumb to the human urge to find romance. Whether or not this extends to marriage is unknown; if such seeming frivolity includes all aspects of Trill life, then all is probably well with the Trill and it's just we who will never quite understand it.

Another and perhaps more troubling matter that doesn't seem to have been considered by the Trill until the 23rd century or so is the rigorous testing and qualification of prospective hosts. As seen in **Playing God**, a potential host is observed extensively at work and in social situations to determine his fitness for joining. His observer is always a joined Trill. After the wanna-be host leaves, his field docent reports back to the Symbiosis Commission on the Trill homeworld with a full evaluation. However, it seems that this is a fairly new practice, perhaps not even a century old at the time of the *DS9* episode **Equilibrium**, in which Joran Belar's joining with the Dax symbiont sparked more thorough testing of potential hosts which limited the percentage of Trill's humanoid population that could be considered eligible for joining. If hosts and symbionts have been joining for centuries - an implication derived from the number of hosts Dax has had, assuming all of them lived at least into their 60s or 70s - it's shocking that the Symbiosis Commission has been so lax in their testing parameters for so long. And one can glean from **Invasive Procedures** that the mental and emotional instability suffered by Joran Belar was not an isolated case. In **Invasive Procedures**, Trill Verad has been turned down for joining by the Commission and decides to take a symbiont for himself, even when such an action means that the death of another Trill is certain. We've seen only a handful of Trills, and of that small number there have been two certifiable nut cases, one a murderer and the other a criminal who wouldn't think twice about killing. And it is this which brings us to my darkest speculative observation on the Trill race(s).

The Symbiosis Commission is comprised of joined Trills, presumably some of the elders of the race who have much knowledge and experience of what combinations of certain hosts, symbionts and personalities will generate productive members of Trill society. But nowhere in the process of deciding who is or isn't suitable for joining have we heard mention of unjoined members of the Commission. There is only one specific related job in which we've seen unjoined Trills, and they happened to be the Guardians who observe and care for the symbionts in their native habitat on the Trill planet. Dax described the Guardians in **Equilibrium** as being unaccustomed to visitors, and after one Guardian revealed that there was something wrong with Dax, someone had obviously gone to the trouble of intimidating him so he would keep quiet, so there is a possibility that the Symbiosis Commission isn't fond of an independent body, particularly one composed of unjoined Trills, keeping track of their activities.

With those who are already joined acting as the final arbiters in who else will be joined, it's possible - by no means certain, but at least possible - that a division exists in Trill society between the more prestigious joined hosts and the much greater numbers of unjoined Trills, basically forming bourgeois and proletariat castes among the Trill. Near the end of **Equilibrium**, the Symbiosis Commission is about to remove the Dax symbiont from Jadzia, resulting in her death, to protect the secret that many more Trill humanoids are eligible and suitable for joining than the public realizes, and Sisko threatens to unleash this forbidden knowledge upon the Trill populace if Jadzia is sacrificed for the Commission's political respectability. Dr. Rinhol, a member of the Commission, is staggered by the implications of this blackmail, noting that if the public were made

aware that most of them are eligible the symbionts would become a coveted commodity, stolen and fought over by the great unjoined masses. The joined segment of the Trill populace - or at least an elite portion of the joined - seem to keep their privileged lifestyle to themselves, and to do this they carefully and discretely choose those who will become their peers. As noted before, a fairly large percentage of the Trills we have seen other than Dax have exhibited violent tendencies and dangerous mental instabilities. Many times, from **The Host** through **Equilibrium**, emphasis has been placed upon the safety of the symbiont over that of the host, and no treatment, therapy or any other help seems to be offered to those who are ineligible for joining. Trill medicine has concentrated on the welfare of the symbionts and easing the process of joining, and seems to pay no attention to the humanoid hosts beyond their basic fitness and suitability to carry a symbiont. While there's no indication that the unjoined masses on the Trill homeworld are living in poverty or in other undesirable conditions, a deception is being foisted upon the general populace by the highest echelons of society, and perhaps even more disturbingly, that elite caste is not elected by the people, but carefully and deliberately chooses its own lot.

Perhaps, with this final question mark hanging over life on the Trill homeworld, one wonders what reason Jadzia Dax has to be so serene all the time. It also lends itself to all kinds of interesting future stories! *Trek* writers, both fannish and Hollywoodish, take note (and mention the LogBook if you happen to use any of this as background material!).

## NEXT GENERATION

continued from page 3

### JOURNEY'S END ★★½

The "much anticipated" return of Wesley Crusher following his fall from grace in the character-building fifth season episode **The First Duty**. The first four acts of this sequel of sorts, also written by Ronald D. Moore, are exceptional *Trek* with wonderful character moments for Wesley, who has chosen to abandon his career in Starfleet, an intriguing social and political exposition centered on the Native Americans and the Cardassians, who wish to reclaim their planet. Both storylines, each concerning the search for identity and purpose, nicely complement each other, but the Indian mysticism and its force on Wesley in his search for self-identity gets a bit hokey and obvious.

What totally derails this otherwise thought-provoking episode and sends it plummeting into the pits of stupidity is the revelation that Wesley's Indian mentor is in fact the Traveler - back from hiatus after **Remember Me** - who is ready to guide Wesley on his journey though "those infinite planes of existence." Yeah, okay...whatever! I thought we left **Where No One Has Gone Before** back in the first season. This strong attempt to further humanize Wesley is greatly cheapened by this silly sci-fi coda, which does nothing more than re-deify the character despite the self-recognition of his human failings. Even the Cardassian jeopardy plot lacks weight in some forced moments of tension in the show's closing moments. Superb action on everybody's part - wasted, unfortunately, on a flawed storyline.

#### 170 GENESIS

written by Brannon Braga      directed by Gates McFadden      music by Dennis McCarthy  
Stardate 47653.2: A routine test of Worf's new photon torpedo guidance system sends a potentially hazardous torpedo astray into deep space, which Picard and Data set off to recover via shuttlecraft. When they return from their mission, they find that every inhabitant of the ship has somehow mutated into more primitive forms of life, some dangerous, others not. The cause of this condition is a virus which has now infected Picard, leaving him and Data very little time to reverse the plight of the crew.  
Guest Cast: Dwight Schultz (Lt. Barclay), Patti Yasutake (Nurse Ogawa), Carlos Ferro (Ensign Dem), and Spot

#### 171 JOURNEY'S END

written by Ronald D. Moore / based upon material by Shawn Piller and Antonia Napoli  
directed by Corey Allen      music by Jay Chattaway  
Stardate 47751.2: Wesley Crusher, on a sabbatical from Starfleet Academy, has returned to the *Enterprise* in an attempt to recoup his energies in time to graduate. He is troubled by something which he has yet to reveal to anyone, but more pressing matters are on the mind of Picard and the crew as Starfleet orders the *Enterprise* to evacuate or otherwise remove a colony of Native American Indians who have settled on an isolated planet to preserve their culture. This planet is to be handed over to the Cardassians and the Indian colonists will no longer be welcome. Tired of being displaced by territorial bureaucracy, the Indians protect what they hold sacred - and they find a sympathizer in Wesley, who jeopardizes his Starfleet career to help them.  
Guest Cast: Wil Wheaton (Wesley Crusher), Tom Jackson (Lakanta), Natalija Nogulich (Admiral Nechayev), Ned Romero (Anithwara), George Aguilar (Wakasa), Richard Poe (Gul Evrek), Eric Menyuk (The Traveler)



# TO THE NINES



by Cindy Hill

## EXPLORERS ★★★½

At last there is hope for Sisko family fans everywhere! We finally got a chance to see Benjamin and Jake in action. Fortunately this episode was directed by Cliff Bole; any other *Trek* director might have mishandled the script and dropped the ball. This one was treated with respect and tender care. The scenes with the Sisko men "bonding" were neither sappy nor overwrought. I felt that the emotions portrayed by both Avery Brooks and Cirroc Lofton were very genuine. Sisko manages to run the gamut of paternal feelings: excitement, disappointment, detachment, relief. The "man-to-man" exchange between he and Jadzia was perfectly played. One couldn't help but sit and stare at that sailing ship! It's about time *Trek* took advantage of CGI effects. Initially, I couldn't help but concur with O'Brien's opinion that the ship wouldn't sail. I was pleasantly surprised. It was good to see Gul Dukat once again, doing what he does best - making a pain of himself. His concern for Sisko was almost touching. The dynamics of the Sisko/Dukat relationship are always intriguing to observe. Sisko seems to display a great deal less respect for Dukat than Dukat does for Sisko, and yet it never seems to strain the relationship. The news of Jake's fellowship to a writing school was welcome, although very much out of left field. One can only hope that they expand a bit upon this development in the future. The "bonding" that occurs between the Sisko men is quite enjoyable all the way through this episode, particularly the scene in which Jake offers to set his dad up with that freighter captain. The subplot of the episode was entertaining, although so much fluff. Elizabeth Lense's confusion as to Julian's identity lent the final outcome a bit of amusement, as well as Quark's having won his bet. One does have to wonder, though, just how much time Julian and Miles spend together! "This isn't a synthale kind of night" indeed! O'Brien's declaration of friendship was the highlight of the scene. The fireworks show in space at the end was slightly hokey, and yet just lent a kind of respectful air to the end of Ben and Jake's journey. One day the Cardassians may actually loosen up a bit...perhaps!

All in all, *Explorers* was the kind of episode *DS9* should be doing more of. Character development is one of *Trek's* strong suits. They should keep up the fine work!

## BOOK REVIEW

**The Making of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*** by Judith & Garfield Reeves-Stevens (Pocket Books, 1994; 319 pages)

This is quite possibly the most informative book on the making of any *Star Trek* series to have emerged yet. I'm almost ashamed I didn't pick it up sooner. The trade-paperback size with a 300+ page count is not, as one might suspect, mostly illustrations, though there are plenty of pictures and sketches along the way; rather, there is a ton of information between the covers! This is not for the casual fan, though those interested in the day-to-day operation of dramatic TV series in the 90s as well as those hungry for behind-the-scenes goodies from the *Trek* universe will love this book. Among the most interesting sections of this volume are a detailed breakdown of the development of the show, from the initial concepts (Ensign Ro instead of Kira; *DS9* as a *land-based* facility - planned as an outdoor set - on Bajor itself) through a draft-by-draft examination of the evolving pilot episode *Emissary* (including an outline showing that Ensign Ro really would have worked quite well within *DS9's* context), and dozens of sketches, computer graphics and drawings for the *DS9* station, a few of which I liked better than the final design we now see every week. Additional sections focus on special effects, set designs, the development of *In the Hands of the Prophets* and other episodes, and, naturally, Morn.

It's not for everyone; a healthy interest in *Trek* and particularly in *DS9* - which increasingly seems to be regarded almost as an illegitimate stepchild of *Next Generation* and oft-ignored in light of *Voyager* - is recommended before cracking the cover of this book.

- E.G.

# UNIVERSITY TODAY

## IN THE SHADOW OF Z'HA'DUM ★★★★★

The latest new batch of *B5* episodes spanned a more impressive vista than usual, and I'll admit it was hard to single out just one for the purposes of this review. The broad humor of *There All The Honor Lies* was a plus, as was the *M\*A\*S\*H*-like novelty of *And Now For A Word's* newscast, and the incredible impact of *Confessions and Lamentations* was also hard to ignore. (*Knives*, with its dead-on-arrival *Trek*-esque alien possession plot, was terribly easy to ignore.) The winner, though, has to be *In the Shadow of Z'ha'Dum*, another of *B5's* trademark turning-point episodes; though its status as such a story doesn't necessarily guarantee it'll show up here, these episodes are consistently the best ones of the series.

The story picks up as Sheridan is examining some records from the *Icarus*, the science ship whose mysterious destruction resulted in the death of his wife (alluded to at season's beginning in *Revelations*); from the crew manifest, Garibaldi spots a face that he's seen walking around the station - that of Morden. Londo's associate who has an unspecified link to the Shadows, who have been doing Londo's bidding against the Nam now and again. Of course, Sheridan and Garibaldi know none of this; all Sheridan knows is that there is a survivor from the *Icarus* who knows what really happened to the ship and perhaps to Sheridan's wife. Morden is taken into custody but doesn't answer any questions to Sheridan's satisfaction, so in custody he remains. Garibaldi feels that the continued imprisonment of Morden - despite the man's admittedly shifty nature - is out of hand, but Sheridan allows the security chief to resign over their disagreement. One by one, others come forward to ask for Morden's immediate release - Vir, Delenn, and Kosh. At long last, Delenn and Kosh reveal to Sheridan the nature of the Shadows and of Morden.

To say this episode was quite possibly Bruce Boxleitner's finest hour would be an understatement. To plunge the lead character into the darkest depths was a move that could only work if the actor in question somehow managed to keep a sympathetic layer of depth in his performance, and Boxleitner perfectly conveyed the painful angst that was driving him to his obsessive behavior. Nothing against the departed Michael O'Hare, but our new captain has proven himself a more than adequate lead for the series. Here, it's not readily evident if Sheridan's a good guy or has gone round the bend in a quest for...what? Justice? Or just plain blood?

Kudos also go to Ed Wasser, though I'm not sure he is entirely responsible for the portrayal of Morden; the weight of his character in the story we've been following is considerable, and Wasser plays Morden more or less as a lightweight Mafia courier, yet his presence in an episode of *B5* generates an instant atmosphere of foreboding. His "associates" are even nastier, glimpsed here for the first time in a flashback courtesy of Kosh, who emits a useful quantity of light from his alien schnozz to clue Sheridan in on the true fate of the *Icarus*: it landed safely on Z'ha'Dum and its crew inadvertently awakened the Shadows. Those who didn't surrender to the Shadows were killed; which category Sheridan's wife falls under is unknown, but I hope we won't see the predictable twist of her arriving as an agent of the Shadows to face off with Sheridan - that would fall far below *B5's* standard of unpredictability.

And lest we forget, it is in this story that the Bravest Man In The Galaxy is revealed at last, showing his true colors - it's none other than Vir Kotto (Stephen Furst), Londo's assistant. Anyone who would go and deliberately tick Morden off must have an formidable reservoir of gumption...or must be simply suicidal. It was nice knowing Vir! Now more than ever, he's my pick to be the first martyr of the Great War. Jeff Conaway also comes to the fore as Garibaldi's right-hand man when the chief resigns his commission in the face of Sheridan's obsessive hunt. Surprisingly, the former *Taxi* star has fit into the *B5* universe with little problem.

Behind the scenes, let's single out the oft-ignored gang in the sound Foley. If that wasn't a real live slap Talia gave Sheridan in the medlab, the sound effects folks must've done something horrible to an otherwise innocent food item to achieve that downright painful sound. Ouch. Guess that head of lettuce had it coming. Also formidable is the entirely-computer-generated Z'ha'Dum sequence, with foreground "fog" elements, a 3-D background and foreground, the *Icarus*, land rovers being deployed, and astronauts walking on the surface, pointing flashlights in various directions...wow! That must have been nearly enough to roast their Toasters.

So...is Kosh a Vorlon after all? Or is he something else entirely, just hangin' with the Vorlons until this Shadow business requires his personal attention? Or is the entirety of the Vorlon race the "last of the first ones," the only remaining ancients Delenn speaks of? Am I making any sense here? Was that really Kosh's nose? Is Sheridan really "The One," or is it Sinclair after all?

*In the Shadow of Z'ha'Dum* is an excellent example of judicious use of *Babylon 5's* abundant background story. It could be argued that more questions were answered in this hour, but more questions are asked by the end as well. I think that's what I love about this show!

- E.G.

## DAGGERS REDUX ★★½

by Bobby Miller

I think it's safe to say that **Daggers Redux** (episode 41) is the best episode of the second *seaQuest* season. Unfortunately, this doesn't say much about the current season, either. The plot was not comparable to any of season one.

It really wasn't a bad episode. We saw, as in more of the recent episodes, less and less of Bridger, which seems to help support the rumor of Roy Scheider leaving *seaQuest*. Ted Raimi (Lt. O'Neill) did a good job of acting, as did Don Franklin as Commander Ford - who never disappoints anyway - and just about everyone else, too. The only complaint I have in the acting department is the sometimes fake acting on Edward Kerr's part as Lt. Brody, head of security. This time he countermanded Commander Ford's command to start bombing the ocean floor, the source of the missiles which had been fired at *seaQuest*. He just didn't sound very convincing. But when he's not overriding superior officers' orders and not getting too excited, his acting is fine.

The trillium explanation made *seaQuest* sound a little more scientific than ancient mythological gods possessing people and roaring plants coming to life. And for the first time this season that I can recall, we actually heard a little more about *seaQuest*'s "biogenetic skin," or its living hull. (The first season explanation was that *seaQuest* could go to deep depths with this genetically manufactured organism and could withstand attacks longer and even repair itself to a certain degree. But it could never surface, a fact which had been thrown out during the second season as *seaQuest* surfaced time and time again.) So I guess this episode paid a little more attention to the scientific aspect than previously this season, a fact which is a definite plus.

The best parts about this episode were the script and O'Neill's acting - and Darwin's seldom-seen appearance on the show, even if it was for only a few seconds. The script was played out well around the plot and O'Neill gave a rather good performance with his larger than usual amount of lines. As this season goes on, we do see better writing. This can sometimes make up for some of what *seaQuest* lost this season. Let's hope that in the possible third season, only the good parts of both seasons are brought over.

The worst part about this episode shows the entire problem with *seaQuest*'s second season: the lapse of reality. In the pilot of the show, when reality was probably at its peak, we saw Marilyn Stark, the first captain of *seaQuest* before Nor-Pac gave it to the UEO, lead an old reconditioned Soviet sub to try to destroy *seaQuest*. She was the captain, and she had a crew; it looked like a real submarine operation. If the world's largest anti-UEO business needed to use that Soviet sub to attack *seaQuest*, how could a guy in a wheelchair hope to build a huge sub that only one person (in this case, Mariah) was needed to operate with a few blinking buttons? To top it off, this sub had weapons as good as *seaQuest*'s, with a genetically engineered squid on its side. This is something that was never supposed to happen because *seaQuest* was one-of-a-kind. In this episode, sheer action was used, while the pilot used careful thought and strategy to defeat the enemy. I don't know about most people, but I personally like complex strategy and thought (as in *Op Center*) combined with action (as in *Clear and Present Danger*) better.

I give this episode a higher rating than most season two episodes, but I wouldn't rate any season two episode higher than 2½ stars. There were some season 1 episodes that I'd give 3½ or 4 to, though.

### Star Trek: Generations Video Release

Paramount Home Video will be releasing the seventh *Trek* film on home video on July 18; it will not be priced to sell until around Christmas, but will instead be available through rental outlets initially. What information we do have on the release indicates that the videotape will not feature such deleted scenes as Kirk's orbital skydive, Soran torturing Geordi, or the originally filmed ending that angered the test audiences so much (see *Generations* review, December 1994 LogBook). The laserdisc release will restore these scenes, however. Anyone got a laser player?



## Earth 2 Reviews

### THE BOY WHO WOULD BE TERRIAN KING ★★★½

by Bobby Miller

In these two back-to-back episodes, which took the place of *Earth 2*'s normal time slot and *seaQuest DSV*'s time slot, we found two excellent examples of *Earth 2*.

**The Boy Who Would Be Terrian King** focuses on Uly's ninth birthday (an event which is a red-letter date for he and his mom since he wasn't supposed to live past eight because of the space-station syndrome), Devon, and Uly from the future.

Future Uly, with the aid of a few Terrians, is trying to stop the growth of the colonists on planet G889 sixteen years in the future. He is captured and forced to undergo a treatment to make him just like the syndrome children again - they will remove his Terrian qualities. Future Uly time-dreamscapes back to Devon on Uly's ninth birthday. He tells her to take Uly and have him put Uly's DNA information in a hiding place in a cave. This way, Future Uly can recover his Terrian qualities and not be bound to synthetic drugs for the rest of his life. Uly is able to put the information in the cave, and Future True along with Future Devon restore Uly.

I was anticipating **Survival of the Fittest** more than this episode, but I found that I like this one more than the latter. It had an exciting plot with a great script. Debrah Farentino played Future Devon quite well as a respected mediator. Seeing Future True (Kathy Molter) gave hope for J. Madison Wright's character's trademark of a brat. Although Future Uly (Michael Reilly Burke, also seen in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*'s **Descent** episode as Goval, the little Borg who could) was a bit too anti-human and pro-Terrian for me, seeing his future self gave a unique perspective into what Uly will become.

Like in most *Earth 2* episodes, there was nothing I disliked. The character interaction continues to be excellent, and predictability still stays to a minimum. The only thing that's particularly annoying is the lack of native animal life. We've heard and even seen birds, but outside of that and the Grendlers, Terrians, and Kobas, we see no other animal life.

### SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST ★★★

**Survival of the Fittest** focused on something that *Earth 2* had to address sooner or later: their need for food.

Danziger, Julia, Morgan, and Alonzo go on an expedition to recover a lost cargo pod that they've found. After taking a risk of going after it without the food needed to get back, they find the pod empty. An accident occurs and their land rover is damaged beyond repair. They camp and end up being rescued with a Grendler hot on their trail. After they get back to camp, they experience flashback scenes and show how they killed a Grendler in self-defense and ended up going back and eating it to stay alive.

The flashback scenes were a little disappointing, but were handled well, so the episode didn't really lose anything. Clancy Brown's performance as Danziger was excellent. When the Grendler was holding True hostage, he did some really good, touching, acting to get her back. It really looked like he was her father. Morgan was the delightful whiner he always is, and Julia and Alonzo were just as good as always. This episode is a classic example of how the characters interact well. Also, Devon showed a strong leadership role in this episode. Something that we sometimes forget about Devon is that she is firmly in charge and everyone respects her.

This episode touched on something in humans that can very well happen when people are starving. While most everyone in the civilized world will say that they would never eat another human regardless of how hungry or thirsty they would be, many would probably change their minds when actually faced with the reality of it. The real-life Donner Party is an example that came to mind when I saw the episode. In this case, however, some used the excuse that they can't even be sure that Grendlers are sentient creatures; they could merely be intelligent animals. Of course, they didn't hold this opinion once they were no longer starving. They were very upset about eating the Grendler.

## OPINIONS

## In Search Of An Intelligent Hollywood Action Franchise

by Robert Heyman

My list of favorite directors seems to shift and change each year. I can say with great certainty, however, that the one constant on that ever-changing list has been John McTiernan. For those who aren't privy to the lesser-known and often underrated pool of Hollywood directors - of which McTiernan is a part - allow me to take a moment to explain who this guy is.

McTiernan burst onto the Hollywood scene directing Bruce Willis in the action-packed sleeper hit *Die Hard*. The movie became a smash at the box office and one year later McTiernan was hired to helm the cat-and-mouse naval thriller *The Hunt for Red October*. Since then, McTiernan's director's credit has been seen on such films as *Medicine Man* (which also starred Sean Connery), and the Arnold Schwarzenegger "opus" *The Last Action Hero*. This summer McTiernan returns to the original action franchise that made him famous in the third installment of the *Die Hard* series, *Die Hard: With A Vengeance*.

I await the release of *Die Hard: With A Vengeance* with great anticipation for two simple reasons. One, the original *Die Hard* is one of my all-time favorite films. Two, because it will re-affirm McTiernan's standing as one of Hollywood's premier action directors. I am by no means a fan of action movies as most are so mind-numbingly stupid as to be almost unwatchable. However, unlike most action-cramped flicks, *Die Hard* is both fast and smart, not to mention heavy on character, features repeated in McTiernan's next film, *The Hunt for Red October*. One could almost make a study of McTiernan's direction, which for both films was heavy on style - more so in *Red October*, owing I believe to a healthier budget.

I think it's worth pointing out the elements that have made both *Die Hard* and *Red October* box office success stories and will almost certainly guarantee *With A Vengeance's* success this summer. Most Hollywood action flicks feature a hero so perfect, he can overcome any obstacle unscathed. John McClane is your typical action hero, but in many ways he is not. He has human failings: a strained marriage and a tiring job, among other things. He's an anti-hero - an everyday guy thrust into an extraordinary situation to test his ability to survive. Unlike Indiana Jones, he has no Ph.D. - just raw instinct to take him through the next obstacle. The same can be said for Jack Ryan, who in *Red October* must track down Ramius and assist him in his efforts to defect to the United States. Although Ryan does have a Ph.D., he has few social and fighting skills. Most of the time, he's nervous and uncomfortable. These human failings are what make these characters so popular; we can identify with them and imagine ourselves in their roller coaster ride



McClane (Willis, left) and Zeus (Jackson) battle forces of evil!

of action thrills and spills.

Plot details are naturally slim at this point for *With A Vengeance*, but in essence the story concerns McClane battling Simon Gruber, brother of chief villain Hans Gruber from the first movie, who is seeking revenge for his brother's death. Gruber has planted a series of time bombs in New York City, and it's up to McClane and sidekick Zeus Carver (Samuel L. Jackson) to dismantle them before it's too late. The script is based on a story by John Hensleigh called *Simon Says* and adapted for *Die Hard* by Hensleigh and McTiernan. According to McTiernan and Hensleigh, in interviews with both in the April issue of *Cinescape*, the third installment will retain many elements that made the first two movies a success, but will be different, less claustrophobic and will not feature McClane's wife.

### \* DIE HARD HARD COPY \*

To prepare for the upcoming movie, a look back at the previous two *Die Hard's* will help to shed further light on what has made this unique action franchise an important Hollywood commodity.

#### *DIE HARD* (1988)

screenplay by Jeb Stuart & Steven E. de Souza  
directed by John McTiernan

Vacationing in Los Angeles during the Christmas holidays, off-duty New York policeman John McClane finds himself in the thick of a terrorist plot to overtake the Nakatomi corporate building where his wife works. McClane single-handedly eliminates the terrorists, led by creepy Alan Rickman, and rescues the thirty hostages as a helpless team of local and federal agents watches the drama unfold from the ground.

Brilliant casting, wonderful dialogue full of wry humor, and stylish directing by John McTiernan rescues this horribly simplistic and claustrophobic storyline from the predictability and mindless tedium of most big-budget action flicks. Rickman, playing terrorist leader Hans Gruber, practically steals the show, but it's Willis' cute one-liners at every near-death turn that make this movie a real winner. The heavy-duty fireworks, some designed by special FX wizard Richard Edlund, are equally impressive including an incredible C-4 explosion created by McClane when he tosses an office chair carrying a computer monitor and explosives down an elevator shaft to distract the terrorists. The writing crackles with wit and intelligence - atypical for an action film of this type - and composer Michael Kamen gives some wonderfully sweeping musical cues filled with interesting holiday motifs.

What makes *Die Hard* such a crowd-pleaser is its well-realized characterizations and three-dimensional portrayal of its key players. The rapport between McClane and twinkie-loving Powell is both funny and credibly performed. The end, when Powell must reluctantly draw his gun to take down a crazed terrorist prepared to kill McClane and his wife, is a charm. It is a rather needless moment of character development for Powell, who earlier said his accidental killing of a boy with a toy gun months earlier made him retire his sidearm, but the scene really works and reminds us that the movie is as much about character as it is about guns and bullets. Overall, *Die Hard* is one of the best-executed, not to mention intelligent, action films to come down the Hollywood pipe in quite a while.

#### *DIE HARD 2: DIE HARDER* (1991)

screenplay by Steve E. de Souza & Doug Richardson  
directed by Renny Harlin

## D L A O T G A B B O A O N K K

### Birthdays

- On June 1, 1940, Rene Auberjonois.
- On June 8, 1943, the sixth and "shortest-lived" *Doctor Who*, Colin Baker.
- On June 25, 1894, Hermann Oberth, German rocket scientist.
- On June 28, 1951, Talla Ward, alias the second incarnation of Romana from *Doctor Who*, and one-time Mrs. Tom Baker.

### Historical Data

On June 3, 1965, Gemini 4 is launched; it is during this mission that Ed White made the first American spacewalk.

On June 8, 1975, the Soviet Venera 9 probe landed on Venus and returned the first pictures ever taken of the planet's surface; the crushing pressures of Venus' atmosphere completely destroyed Venera 9 within an hour. In 1967 on June 12, the Venera 4 probe managed to return data on the planet's atmosphere but stopped sending information only 15 miles from the surface.

On June 16, 1963, Valentina Tereshkova became the first woman in orbit aboard Vostok 6; she was the last woman in orbit until Sally Ride flew aboard shuttle *Challenger's* second launch on June 18, 1983.

On June 21, 1969, the final black and white episode of *Doctor Who* - and the last one to star Patrick Troughton - was transmitted in England.

### In Memoriam

On June 6, 1971, mankind occupied its first space station; three Soviet cosmonauts boarded Salyut 1, checked its systems and returned to Earth. When landing crews opened the Soyuz return vehicle, it was discovered that Georgi Dobrovolsky, Vladislav Volkov and Viktor Patsayev died when a faulty vent opened and allowed their air to escape during re-entry. Investigations were conducted before another launch was allowed, and the first space station had burned up in the atmosphere before the Soviets returned to space again.

On June 18, 1973, actor Roger Delgado, who originated the role of the villainous Master in *Doctor Who* in 1971, was killed when his chauffeur-driven car crashed while he was shooting a film on location in Turkey. His death caused such sadness among his fellow *Who* artists that third Doctor and close friend Jon Pertwee decided to leave the show a year later, as did friend and producer Barry Letts.

It's Christmas again and this time McClane is meeting his wife at Dulles Airport in Washington, D.C. as she flies in from L.A. As fate should have it, a South American drug lord is scheduled to arrive at the airport and a renegade group of military commandoes led by Colonel Stewart (William Sadler) plan to commandeer the airport, rescue the drug lord and deliver him to safety. McClane once again stages a virtual one-man show to uncover and defeat the terrorists and relinquish control of the airport back into proper hands before the circling planes above, one of which carries his wife, begin crashing to the ground from exhausted fuel.

Director Renny Harlin proves a worthy stand-in for John McTiernan, pulling off some elaborate action sequences including a plane crash and snowmobile chase - not to mention the too-numerous-to-count scenes of gunslinging and exploding hardware. Unlike *Die Hard* the sequel benefits from a healthier budget supporting a larger cast of characters and more eye-popping special effects - and that's part of its problem. Although it loses none of the prerequisite humor and cute one-liners evident in the first movie, the sequel strains to divide its sparse running time among many different and interesting characters. Even Bruce Willis seems a little lost in the shuffle. Bonnie Bedelia's part as Mrs. McClane is even less significant than in *Die Hard*, forced to sit in a plane for two hours and accomplish little more than a lot of hand-wringing as her husband tries to rescue her and the rest of the airport. It is perhaps just as well that Holly McClane will not return in the next sequel, avoiding yet another contrived plot set-up that barely seemed credible in this movie. Overall, this is a worthy successor that, despite its broader scope, retains that tight-knit character focus that made *Die Hard* so much fun to watch.

*Die Hard: With A Vengeance* opens on Memorial Day.