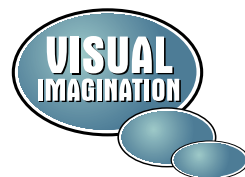


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Special

A group of six Stargate Atlantis cast members (Rodney McKay, Teyla Emmagan, Valerius Maldoon, Jack O'Neill, Cameron Mitchell, and Elizabeth Weir) standing in front of a Stargate. They are all wearing black tactical gear. The background is a blue sky with clouds.

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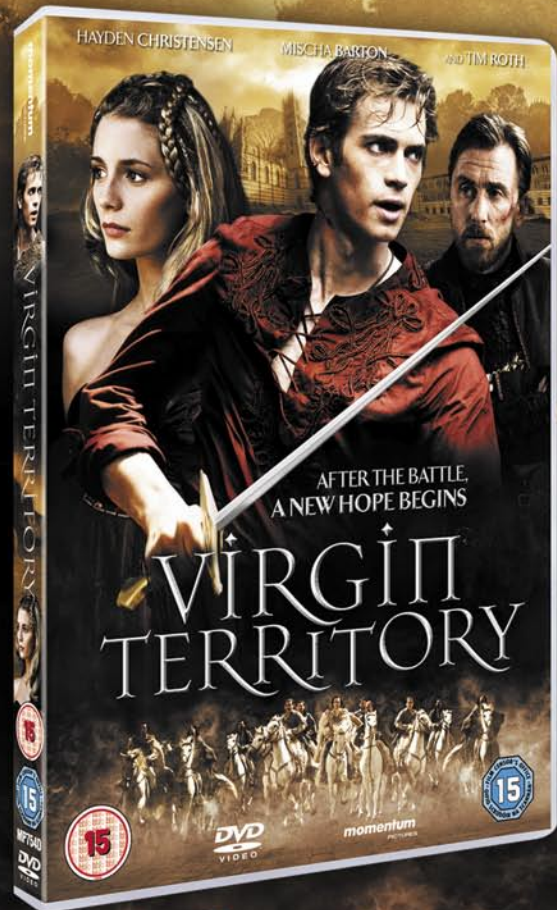
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momentum
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6 Welcome to our exclusive 70-page guide to the new season of Stargate Atlantis!

Editorial

THE YEAR turns to summer, and it's once again time for a new season of Stargate – not Stargate SG-1, but Stargate Atlantis, now firmly out of its progenitor's shadow as it reaches its own fifth season, a landmark many series would be overjoyed to match.

There is, however, a shadow over the celebrations, with the passing of the much-loved actor Don S Davis, whose last performance as General George Hammond can be seen in the direct-to-DVD movie *Continuum*. It's a sad loss, but at least we have 10 years of his quiet, reassuring performance to look back on. Keep an eye open for the supporting players – they often bring so much more than you realize to the party...

Anthony Brown



↑ 1980s children's TV hit **Into the Labyrinth** recalled

⇒ Stargate's much missed Don S Davis





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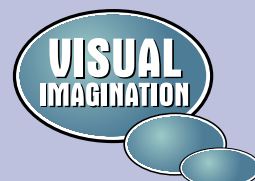
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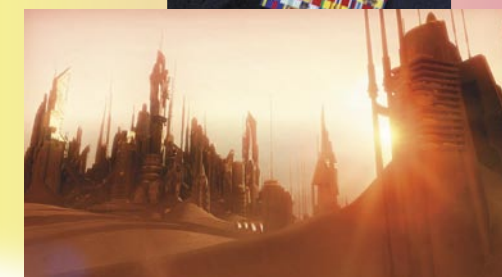
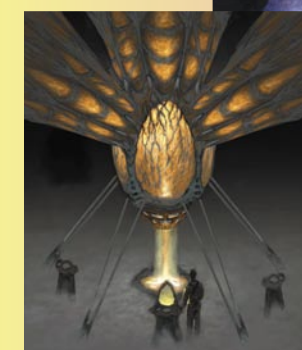
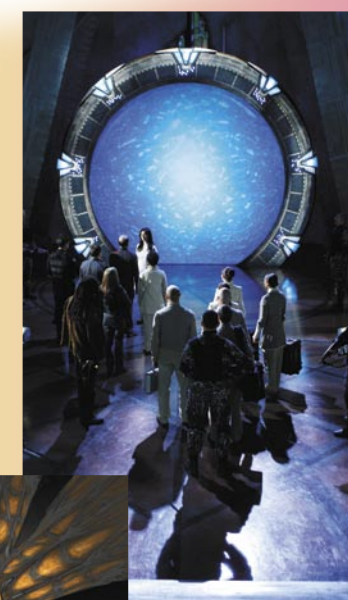
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General Hammond was arguably one of the most
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*The adventures
continue in
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*So **TV Zone** takes
an exciting trip
to the furthest
reaches of the
imagination to
talk to cast and
crew about what's
in store for the
first half of the
season...*

***Steven Eramo**
reports*

MATTERS OF LIFE & DEATH



At the end of the fourth year, Colonel John Sheppard and some of his off-world team were lured by one of their enemies into a booby-trapped building that was blown up and collapsed on top of them.

Luckily for them, they were meant to live and fight another day...



SEARCH AND RESCUE

In the fifth season opener *Search and Rescue*, Sheppard and company are found alive beneath the rubble of what was to be their final resting place, and, after being liberated, carry on with their mission to find their missing and still very-pregnant team mate Teyla. Our heroes' success, or failure, lay in the hands of *Atlantis* co-executive producer Martin Gero, who wrote this episode.

"*Search and Rescue* picks up right where *The Last Man* left off, with a good chunk of our team buried under what's left of Michael's [Connor Trinneer] collapsed facility and Teyla [Rachel Luttrell] still a prisoner on his ship. It's an enormously fun story with plenty of action and, more importantly, a lot of great character stuff. We have a terrific bad guy in Michael, and the Daedalus is also back, along with Mitch Pileggi [Colonel Steven Caldwell]. The episode is notable, too, because it's Colonel Sam Carter's [Amanda





Tapping] last one as a series regular, and I'm pleased with the way we deal with her leaving

"So all our characters are there and everyone gets his or her moments. I've written four of the five **Atlantis** season openers and I think this is one of our best. It's certainly one of my favourites. The neat thing about Season Four is that we had all these fantastic story arcs and *Search and Rescue* is, to some extent, the end of a four- or five-episode run. So this episode is all pay-off, kind of like [Year Four's] *Be All My Sins Remember'd*, you know? There's a ton of stuff that comes to a conclusion as well as a boil, and those types of stories are always a pleasure to write.

"I've said this before, but one of the things I think **Stargate** does so well, aside from big explosions and massive sets, are the little character moments inbetween all the action and our team mates putting their lives on the line for each other. So I'm very happy with how this episode turned out."

Search and Rescue
↔↔↔ Teyla
(Rachel Luttrell)

↔↔ Dr McKay
(David Hewlett),
Teyla, Ronon Dex
(Jason Momoa), Lt
Col Sheppard (Joe
Flanigan)

↔↔ Lt Col Carter
(Amanda Tapping),
Dr Jennifer Keller
(Jewel Staite)

↑ Teyla

↔ Another victim

The Seed
↔↔ Dr Beckett
(Paul McGillion)

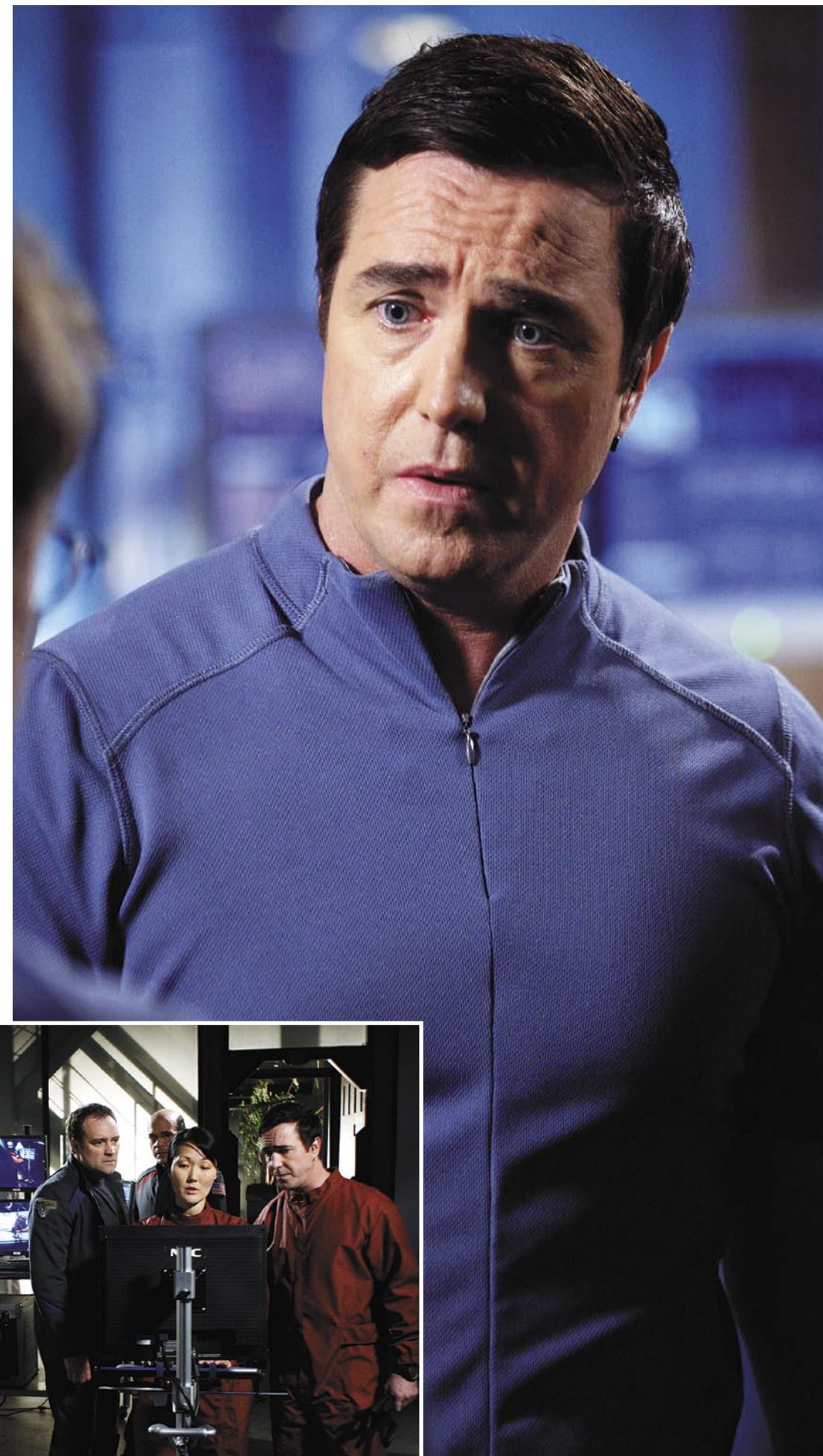
↔↔ Ronon,
Teyla, Sheppard,
McKay, nurse (Linda
Ko), Dr Beckett



THE SEED

HAVING FREED Teyla from Michael's clutches, but only after the expectant mother has given birth to a baby boy, Colonel Sheppard (Joe Flanigan) and his team head back to Atlantis. It is not long after their return, though, that the next crisis starts to unfold. In *The Seed*, written by **Atlantis** executive producers Joe Mallozzi and Paul Mullie, the clone of Dr Carson Beckett (Paul McGillion), who was dying and placed in stasis to prolong his life at the end of Season Four's *The Kindred*, must help stop the city from being overrun by a mysterious entity. This episode also has International Oversight Advisory (IOA) representative Richard Woolsey (Robert Picardo) taking over as the new leader of the Atlantis base.

"When our people rescued Teyla, they also retrieved a ton of data from Michael's facility, which Dr Keller [Jewel Staite] has been reviewing, and it looks like she's found a way to cure Beckett," explains Mallozzi. "So we basically bring him out of stasis, cure him, and then prepare to send him back to Earth for some much deserved R&R and to be further checked out [physically and psychologically]. After all, he's been in stasis for a year. Before that he was a prisoner of Michael's for over a year, and he's a clone, so he definitely needs a little time off. However, before Dr Beckett can leave, a situation comes up that threatens the base and everyone on it. With Sheppard and his team indisposed, the only person who Woolsey can depend on is Carson, who has conveniently been thawed out. It's a fun kind of team episode, but it spotlights Beckett and Woolsey as well.





Broken Ties

↑ Ronon Dex, more or less...

↗ Tyre (Mark Dacascos)

↓ Even more trouble...

BROKEN TIES

"Paul and I followed up this story with one called *Broken Ties*, which is a sequel to last year's *Reunion*," continues the executive producer. "If you recall in *Reunion*, Ronon is reunited with his old Satedan buddies, who turn out to be Wraith worshippers. They want to turn Ronon into one, too, but he refuses

and ends up fighting with and killing two of them, but the third, Tyre (Mark Dacascos), gets away. In *Broken Ties*, he turns up again, kidnaps Ronon and is holding him in a deserted village. As a Wraith worshipper, Tyre needs a Wraith enzyme that he's become addicted to, but because of events in *Reunion*, he's been cut off, so he hasn't been receiving this treatment and is essentially going through detox. In his mind, one way to

get back into the Wraith's good graces is to offer them Ronon. They could turn him into a worshipper, and then he and Tyre would be buddies again. Obviously he's not thinking straight, and then the Wraith show up.

"So the A-story is basically about Ronon's and Tyre's friendship and the team's efforts to find their missing friend. The B-story has to do with Teyla. She's a member of Sheppard's team and always goes off-world. However, she's also a mother now and has to think about the fact that, with every off-world mission she's risking her life, and that if one day the worst happens, her baby won't have a mother to raise him. So she's faced with that dilemma. And then there's kind of a C-story of Woolsey trying to fit in. One of the things I love about Robert Picardo is that he does humour very well. His character has a tendency for a lot of humour, too, and there are some really amusing moments involving Woolsey in this episode.

"As much as I enjoyed *Reunion*, I think that *Broken Ties* is a much better episode in that it really demonstrates the camaraderie and loyalty between team members and their sense of family."



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THE DAEDALUS VARIATIONS

The arrival of the Earth battleship Daedalus in the Pegasus Galaxy is a routine occurrence and usually nothing to worry about. However, its sudden and unexpected appearance in the fifth season story *The Daedalus Variations* does not bode well for Atlantis or our heroes.

"Colonel Sheppard and the rest of the gang take a puddle-jumper and fly up to the Daedalus to investigate, but when they scan the ship they detect no life-signs at all," explains co-producer Alan McCullough, who penned the episode. "So the team goes onboard and scouts around a little bit. Suddenly, they detect a weird energy reading, which is followed by a big overload and a bright flash. When everyone's eyes adjust, Atlantis is gone. The planet is still there, but the city is missing. We soon discover that this version of the Daedalus originated in an alternate reality where the people there built an alternate reality drive. Unfortunately, it malfunctioned

and got stuck, so the ship has been hopping through reality after reality for as long as the drive has been operational. At some point along the way, the original Daedalus crew gave up and abandoned ship, but the ship kept going. So we find ourselves on basically a ship going nowhere with no way out and back to our reality.

"I had wanted to do an alternate reality story, but instead of going to one alternate reality, I wanted to figure out a way to go to as many as possible. My original story pitch had the Atlantis team discovering a room in the city with this type of technology and then maybe that room somehow transported to different realities, but it just didn't work out. I think it was [Atlantis co-creator/executive producer] Rob Cooper who then came up with the idea to use the Daedalus, which allowed us to go into a bunch of different realities without having to build a lot of crazy sets. So everything you see through the ship's window becomes the alternate reality. We have an amazing visual effects department and we spent a ton on VFX for this episode, so it's really spectacular."



GHOST IN THE MACHINE

Co-executive producer Carl Binder's *Ghost in the Machine* revisits last season's end teaser from the episode *Be All My Sins Remember'd* that showed the Replicator Dr Elizabeth Weir (Torri Higginson) onboard a Replicator ship and stating, "Now it's time to begin."

Says Binder, "We needed to explain to the viewers what that statement meant and where it was leading to, and that became the basis for *Ghost in the Machine*. This episode involved one or two production challenges, not the least of which being Torri unavailable to be in it. So we had to come up with a crafty way to revisit the Weir storyline and move it along without that character. It took a few drafts of the script, but I think we found a really terrific way of doing just that.

"This is a mystery-type episode, where in the first half things are going haywire all over Atlantis – there are power surges, people are being injured by electrical discharges, puddle-jumpers are acting strangely – but we don't know what's causing it. Eventually, our heroes find that there's something inside the city's computer mainframe. It's an energy source and that's what will ultimately lead us to Elizabeth and where she is now as well as what's going to be happening in the future with her.

"Ken Girotti had directed some *Stargate SG-1* episodes for us and we really liked him so we brought him back to direct *Ghost in the Machine*, which worked out just great. This episode also sees the return of FRAN [Friendly Replicator ANDroid, played by actress Michelle Morgan] who





I'd been looking forward to seeing again. Ever since I watched the first cut of *Be All My Sins Remember'd* I've been saying, 'We've got to get her back.' So we found a way to do that and Michelle gave another amazing performance. She did her homework and just knocked it out of the ballpark," enthuses the co-executive producer.

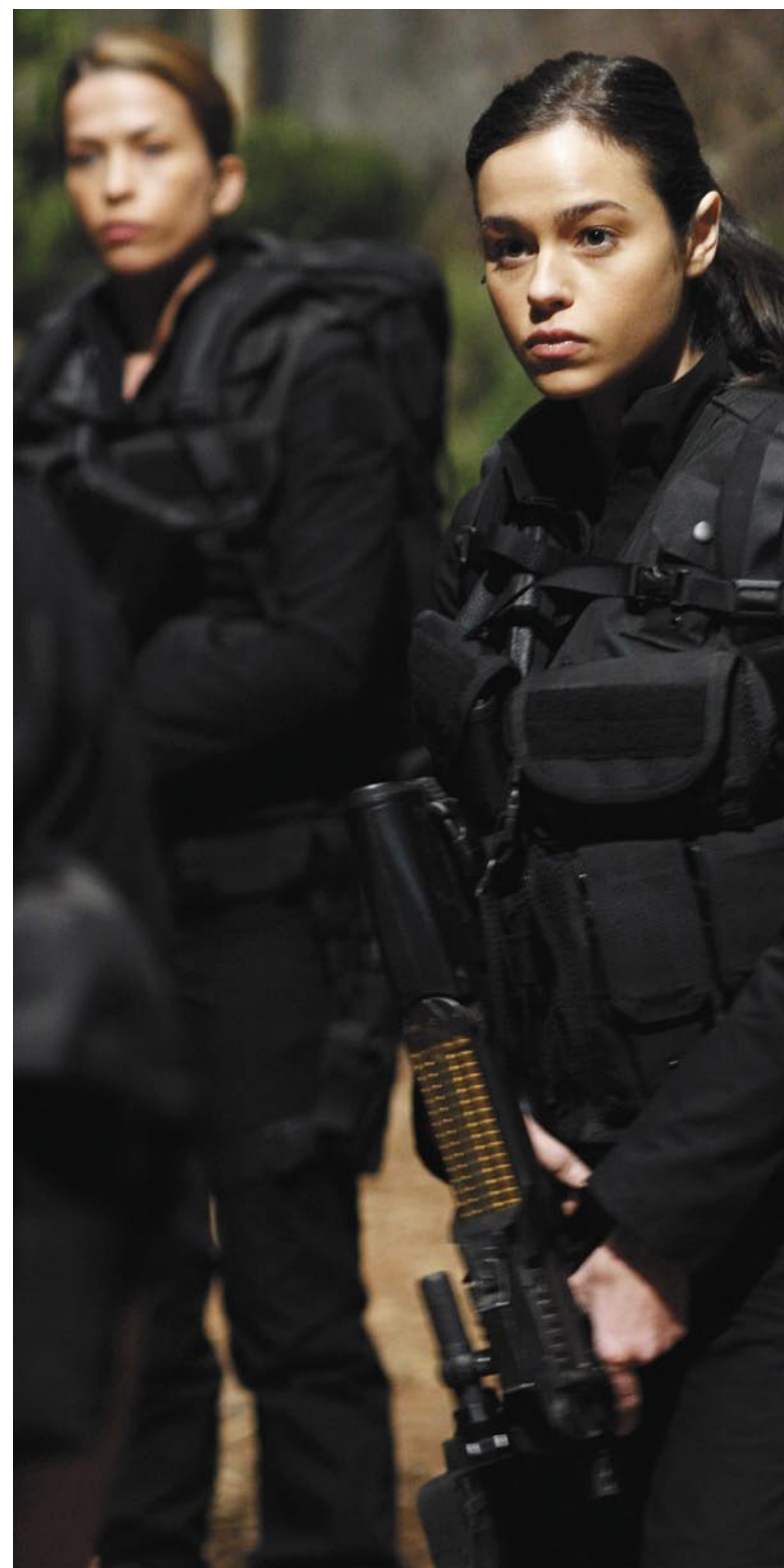
THE SHRINE

Brad Wright already had plenty on his professional plate as one of the executive producers on the two **SG-1** made-for-DVD movies, **Stargate: The Ark of Truth** and **Stargate: Continuum** (which he also wrote), but the **Atlantis** co-creator/executive producer also managed to find time to write as well as produce the fifth season episode *The Shrine*, formally 'The Shrine of Talos' and 'The Shrine of McKay'.

"I don't want to give too much away," says Joe Mallozzi, "but in this story, McKay [David Hewlett] is stricken with an illness and begins to lose his intellect. As that happens, he also loses a lot of who he is and becomes almost childlike. It's similar in some aspects to the Daniel Keyes novel *Flowers for Algernon*, but rather than the diary entries in the book, Brad Wright cleverly uses a video reference to sort of chart McKay's, I guess, digression, and as he degrades, you see the response of those around him, including his sister Jeanie [Kate Hewlett] who comes to the Pegasus Galaxy to say goodbye. There's also a beautiful scene where Sheppard and McKay sit on the Atlantis pier and have this nice buddy moment as McKay struggles with what's happening to him. David Hewlett gives a great performance and it's very much a bittersweet episode that I think the fans are really going to love."

WHISPERS

Joe Mallozzi and Paul Mullie's *Whispers* is **Stargate's** first Horror-themed episode as well as an effort to inject a little more feminine energy into the story. "I felt there was an imbalance with **Atlantis**, especially after Amanda Tapping left," explains Mallozzi. "It's very male-heavy, you know, and even our supporting players, Zelenka [David Nykl] and Lorne [Kavan Smith], are male. We love them and they're not going anyway, but we thought it would be nice to introduce



a few new supporting female characters.

"So we decided to create an all-female team, and one of the reasons I thought *Whispers* would be the perfect episode to do this in is that all too often your team goes off-world and at the end of the episode you're pretty sure they're coming back. In this case, I wanted to bring in this all-female team, and while you may like these characters and

invest in them, at the end of the day you're not sure if any of them are going to make it to the end of the episode. So we have Captain Alicia Vega [Leela Savasta], who we introduced in this season's opener *Search and Rescue*, Major Anne Teldy [Christina Cox], Sergeant Dusty Mehra [Janina Govankar] and Dr Alison Porter [Nicole de Boer]. They're joined off-world by Sheppard and Dr Beckett.

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"I thought all the actresses were amazing, but, unfortunately, the entire team doesn't survive. I'm not going to say who makes it out alive, but I will say that it was an incredibly tiring and lengthy episode. There was a complicated use of prosthetics along with smoke, and also the direction was so important because you wanted to do these types of quick reveals. I'm extremely pleased with how it turned out and I'm looking forward to seeing what the fans think."

TRACKER

The budding 'love triangle' between Dr Keller (Jewel Staite), Ronon and McKay that was hinted at in last year's *Quarantine* and *Trio*, respectively, is built upon a bit more in Season Five's *Tracker*, the script for which was written by Carl Binder from an original idea by a freelance writer.

"Dr Keller has been going off-world to help the people of this village who are suffering from a flu-like sickness," explains Binder. "In this episode, she goes back there to check up on them, and it's both Ronon's and McKay's day off, so they volunteer to go with her and help out. However, Keller goes missing, and it subsequently becomes a story about Ronon and McKay tracking her and finding out what happened to her. We eventually discover that she was taken by another runner who is being hunted by the Wraith. So we have several story elements working here – why did this guy kidnap Keller, what does he want with her, and where is he taking her? Then there's McKay and Ronon, who are tracking her and in the process trying to outdo each other, while also trying to avoid a lot of traps and stuff that this guy has laid in the woods."

"So it's another adventure and one not unlike [Season Four's] *Missing* in that you have people off-world and kind of stripped of their 'essentials' if you will. Because this isn't a mission, McKay and Ronon don't have their machine guns or most of their other weapons or gear, and the rest of the team isn't around to help them, either. It's very much them against nature, but more so what I wanted to do is show the Keller character a year later and the change in her since being with Teyla [in *Missing*] and a total fish out of water. We see how she's grown and how much more self-sufficient she is and capable of taking care of herself in these types of situations. We also see that she's learnt to fight a little bit, so that'll be fun."



The Daedalus Variations (page 14)
 Ronon Dex and Sheppard

Sheppard

Ghost in the Machine (pages 15, 16)

Koracen (Robert Moloney)

Koracen, Fran (Michelle Morgan)

Whispers (pages 17, 18)
 Major Anne Teldy (Christina Cox), Vega (Leela Savasta)

THE QUEEN

In Alan McCullough's mid-season penultimate episode *The Queen*, Teyla disguises herself as a Queen Wraith in order to infiltrate a faction of the Wraith alliance and win the confidence of its Queen. "Keller has continued to mine the information from Michael's database that we brought back with us in *Search and Rescue*, and has come upon what she believes is a solution to the Wraith having to feed on Humans," explains McCullough. "So our heroes go to their good friend Todd the Wraith [Christopher Heyerdahl] with a proposal based on Keller's findings. He likes the idea, but there's a problem. Todd has joined a larger Wraith alliance, but to do that you need to have a Queen on board your hive ship, which he doesn't. He's managed to fudge his way in so far, but if he wants to present a proposal like this to the Alliance as a whole, he needs to find himself a Queen."

"We turn to the one person who might be able to help him out, and that's Teyla. As we know, she has Wraith DNA, so Todd proposes that we allow him to come to Atlantis to do a little cosmetic operation on Teyla and alter her appearance to that of a Queen Wraith. He'll then present her to the Alliance as a real Queen. Of course, nothing is as it seems, and something goes wrong. I think audiences will sort of pick up fairly early on that that's

where we're going insofar as turning Teyla into a Wraith Queen, but there's a nice big twist that people will never see coming and it sends the episode off in a brand new direction."

FIRST CONTACT

Having first appeared on *Atlantis* way back in the show's pilot episode *Rising*, SG-1's Dr Daniel Jackson (Michael Shanks) returns in the mid-season cliffhanger *First Contact*, eventually followed by *The Lost Tribe*, both written by Martin Gero.

"This story basically has three plots that all kind of dovetail at the end," says Gero. "One involves Daniel and McKay, another one involves Ronon, Dr Keller and one of our ships, along with Todd, and the third involves Sheppard and some of the Travelers characters. So there's really a lot going on, and it's one of the most jam-packed two-parters, I think, we've ever done on this show. We could have easily made this a three- or-four-parter, but this way it allows the action to move fairly quickly. Plus we're introducing some new bad guys. There's a spectacular sequence where they show up and they're trouble, *big trouble*."

"With any of these big episodes, like the season premiere or the mid-season two-parters, they're really team efforts by all the writers just because so many plots intersect. I think as a team we've come up with a great story and I'm thrilled to be able to tell it."



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A new season, and another change in the command of Atlantis, but for Colonel John Sheppard it's business as usual...



WHEN ACTOR Joe Flanigan filmed the Season Four **Stargate Atlantis** finale

The Last Man, his character Colonel John Sheppard was just that, the last man alive left on the Atlantis base. A malfunction involving the Stargate sent the colonel 48,000 years into the Future, where all his friends and colleagues were gone and the city lay at the bottom of a dried-up ocean. In the episode, Sheppard must, among other things, fight his way through a sandstorm as well as listen to a hologram of Dr McKay recount events after the colonel disappeared back in his own time. It was an unforgettable experience for Sheppard and Flanigan.

"*The Last Man* was an interesting story to work on and kind of cool, too," recalls the actor, who is enjoying the Vancouver sun while in between takes on Season Five of **Atlantis**. "I was a little worried when I first read the script, mainly because there was a ton of exposition where David Hewlett's [McKay] character explains everything that has happened over the past 40,000 years or whatever it was, but I think the episode turned out well. Believe it or not, I actually haven't seen a final cut of it yet but, as season cliffhangers go, it was a good one."

"As for the sandstorm, I enjoy that kind of stuff," says Flanigan, smiling. "There were these little tiny wood chips that didn't all get chopped up and some of them hit me, which kind of hurt a bit, but that also lent a greater



realism to the situation. I like when our characters go through intense physical adversity because those types of things just read well on screen. It's also what makes me watch a TV show because I'm always fascinated how someone could physically survive an ordeal like that. And I always think that that's a smart way to go with our series in general because Sci-Fi plots can sometimes be a bit esoteric, so to show what the physical price is for something is more fun acting-wise than it is to explain something like, for example, the implosion of a planet

"This job is funny because it's unlike a lot of others in TV. By that I mean in **Atlantis** we get to do a variety of things. Because there are no real [creative] boundaries, we can do an episode that's funny, another that's dramatic, one that's scary, etc. In many ways we're the freest form of TV out there, which you sometimes have to remind yourself of and remember not to take for granted."

IN THE final moments of *The Last Man*, Colonel Sheppard and three of his team mates are caught off-guard and, courtesy of their longtime adversary, the Human/Wraith hybrid Michael (Connor Trinneer), are buried under the exploded remains of one of Michael's many off-world research facilities. Their predicament is dire, but not fatal. **Atlantis**'s fifth season opener *Search and Rescue* finds Sheppard and Ronon (Jason Momoa) still alive but trapped together, as are Dr McKay and Major Lorne (Kavan Smith). Per the episode's title, our heroes are rescued and carry on with their mission to find the kidnapped Teyla (Rachel Luttrell).

"I'll sometimes read certain parts of our scripts and wonder, 'How are we going to pull this off?'" notes Flanigan. "However, these guys always manage to somehow do that. Between the art department guys, visual effect people and all the other people who work on this programme, we figure out together how to do what has to be done. From there, it's just a matter of committing to what's on the written page and going forth, which was the case at the start of this season with *Search and Rescue*.

"It's funny, the first episode you come back to work on after the hiatus is always a bit of a shock because you're back to the airplane rides as well as the hotel, your trailer and that whole transient existence," continues the actor. "That said, I always look forward to returning to work. I enjoy playing this role quite a bit, so it's nice to get back to it. And some of my favourite

↑ Colonel Sheppard and Ronon (Jason Momoa) in *Search and Rescue*

⇌ Sheppard dealing with an idea rather than a physical enemy in *The Daedalus Variations*

"I'll sometimes read certain parts of our scripts and wonder, 'How are we going to pull this off?'"



Equal Opportunity

A COUPLE OF days prior to this interview, Flanigan and the rest of the *Atlantis* cast and crew finished shooting the fifth season episode *Whispers*. In it, Colonel Sheppard and Dr. Carson Beckett (Paul McGillion) join an all-female SG team who are investigating some strange happenings off-world.

"We had an amazing cast for this one," says Flanigan. "There was Leela Savasta [Captain Alicia Vega], a talented young actress who will probably go on to do a lot of cool things, Christina Cox [Major Anne Teldy], who's really good at what she does and makes a very convincing soldier, Janina Govankar [Sergeant Dusty Mehra], who

is a lot of fun to work with, and Nicole de Boer [Dr. Alison Porter], who I'm sure most Sci-Fi fans know [from *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and *The Dead Zone* (below)], and is an absolute delight to work with as well.

"This episode was a wonderful change of pace, and who am I to argue about acting opposite a bunch of beautiful women in the fog," chuckles the actor. "Much to my chagrin, though, Joe Mallozzi informed me that, because of my character's military status, there would be no romantic insinuations between Sheppard and any member of this particular SG team. What a spoilsport," he jokes.



scenes so far this year are in *Search and Rescue* where Ronon and Sheppard are trapped together. As I said earlier, I enjoy the visceral elements of storytelling. I love physical adversity and, again, it just plays to our strengths on *Atlantis*.

"Jason and I are always pretty much trying to get the writers to do more action episodes, because anytime we're physically overwhelmed by something, it's usually where our characters also want to be. So those scenes were just a really easy place for us to be and do. The chemistry is always different with Sheppard and Ronon from that of Sheppard and McKay or with my character and anyone else's, but when you put Ronon and Sheppard together it's definitely a full-on, action/adventure-type thing. And no, Sheppard is not dating Ronon. Even though they were trapped in that confined space for a long time, my character did not develop any particular feelings towards Ronon," jokes Flanigan.

JUST AS in *Search and Rescue*, there were aspects of another fifth season story, *The Daedalus Variations*, that initially piqued Flanigan's curiosity

insofar as how they would be executed. "*The Daedalus Variations* is one of those classic Science Fiction scripts where you read it and ask yourself, 'How the heck are we going to do this?' because the story involves all these alternate realities and stuff like that," he says. "However, we were just told that they were going to pump a lot of money into the post-production of the episode, especially visual effects, and that it was going to be really interesting.

"As an actor, this episode and one called *Ghost in the Machine* were particularly challenging because you're dealing once again with an idea rather than a physical enemy. Yes, things are physically realized and you're in mortal danger, but it's concept-based. You have to wrap your head around a concept, and anytime I see us explaining a lot, I just naturally get worried. I get worried for the show, I get worried for everything.

"Ideally, we'd like to be in a situation where we have to explain as little as possible, but the truth is we can't. We're a 44-minute Science Fiction show, not a two-hour Science Fiction movie, so a certain amount of

← *Ghost in the Machine*

↓ Sheppard and Captain Alicia Vega (Leela Savasta) in *Whispers*

Breaking Tradition

JUST WHEN Colonel Sheppard got used to the idea of the base's former commander Dr Elizabeth Weir (Torri Higginson) being gone and Colonel Sam Carter (Amanda Tapping) taking her place, he and his colleagues must adjust to another changing of the guard this fifth season. International Oversight Advisory (IOA) representative Richard Woolsey comes to the Pegasus Galaxy to replace Carter, and that requires Sheppard to rethink his strategy when dealing with the person in charge.

"Traditionally, I think I've always viewed that [leadership] role as being an adversarial one because it's a hierarchal type of dynamic, but it has never quite

worked out that way," says Flanigan. "Dr Weir wasn't necessarily adversarial, and Colonel Carter certainly wasn't, so now with Woolsey I'm trying something a little bit different. Robert and I were talking about it and decided that his character is a bit of a peacock who fluffs up his feathers and likes a certain amount of protocol; it makes him feel good.

"Woolsey, however, comes to Sheppard for advice on a few issues, which isn't easy for him to do. As a result, it's created kind of an interesting relationship where there's nothing at all really threatening about him. His vanity just needs to get stroked and then he'll do the right thing."

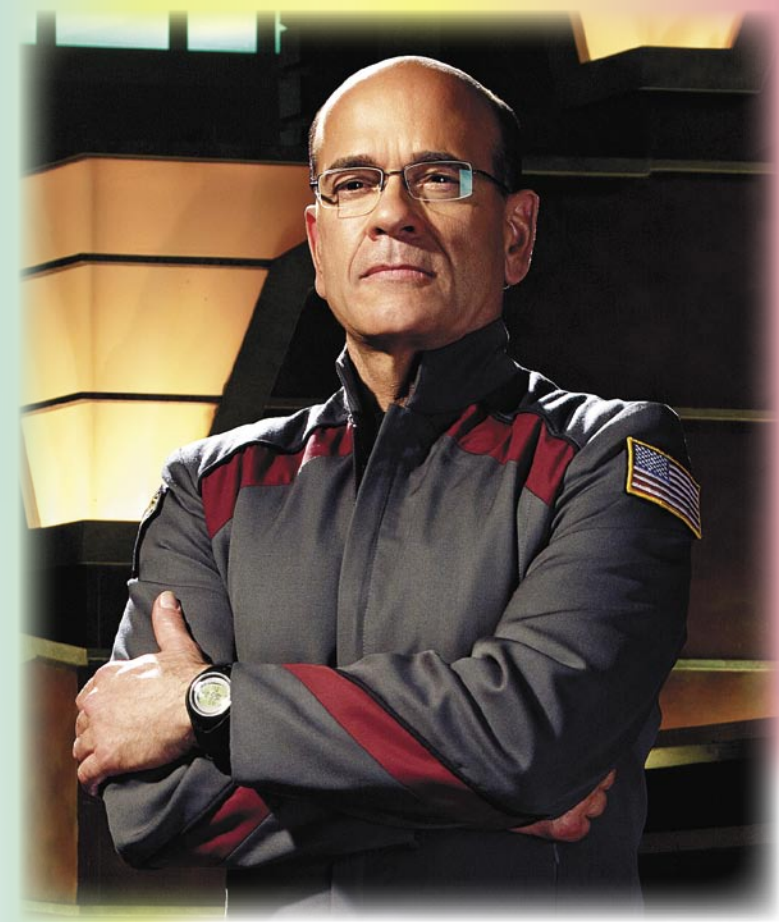
explaining is one of the crosses you have to bear, for sure. But that goes for anything. With any show where you end up explaining too much, I think you risk losing an audience. When our characters are out there shooting bad guys and people are dying and sparks are flying and that stuff, it's much harder for me as a mainstream viewer to turn the channel than it is when I hear some egghead tell me about the complexities of parallel universes, do you know what I mean?"

FLANIGAN WAS especially pleased to have *Atlantis* co-creator/executive producer Brad Wright on set during the filming of his episode *The Shrine*, which has Dr McKay suffering from a debilitating, and apparently fatal, illness. "Brad has been so busy with other [Stargate-related] stuff that he hasn't been around much for the past year-and-a-half, so it was a pleasure to have him on set for a whole week and a bit," enthuses the actor.

"Not long after that, Joe Mallozzi [executive producer] was on set for the entire episode of *Whispers*, which he wrote, and that just feels so good because if you have any questions, they're right there. It's just nice to be able to go to the source, and it's also nice to know that you're giving them what they want. I think people want to be connected to the creative process, and a lot of that connectivity has to do with the kind of access and proximity that you have to the creators of a particular episode."

Earlier on, the actor spoke about how much he enjoys playing the Colonel Sheppard character, and that seems more apparent than ever going into Season Five of *Atlantis*.

"There are two worlds that we live in on a daily basis," explains Flanigan. "There's the world where we come to set, meet people, talk with them as well as with everyone we work with, etc, and then there's the product that we make and is seen on screen. I always separate those two worlds, and I think in previous seasons I was so obsessed about what we sent out there, I didn't really stop and enjoy the day-to-day process of just being involved with a great group of talented people and not worrying as much about the end result. This year, though, and David Hewlett would probably agree, there seems to be more of a relaxed vibe on set and one where people are thinking that we may, fingers crossed, be in this for a bit of a long haul. So we're enjoying ourselves, and that's a good thing."



This year... there seems to be more of a relaxed vibe on set and one where people are thinking that we may, fingers crossed, be in this for a bit of a long haul

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DEX IN THE CITY

The fifth season is providing new challenges for Jason Momoa as Ronan Dex – he could be pulling his hair out...



JASON MOMOA is a man on the move this afternoon – literally! The actor, who plays Ronon Dex, just whizzed by on a Bridge Studios bike and is headed to one of the soundstages and back to work. It's a full day for Momoa; not only are he and the rest of the show's cast and crew busy filming the fifth season episode *The Queen*, but the actor is also expecting a visit from some of his relatives, including his mother and grandmother. Later, back at his trailer for a break, Momoa smiles when asked about Ronon's involvement in *The Queen*.

"The rest of the team has this idea that my character doesn't agree

with, but they go ahead with it just the same," says the actor. "We end up having to dig ourselves out of a ditch and Ronon gets to say, 'I told you so,'" jokes Momoa. "In the episode, he and the others are backing up a plan that involves Teyla [Rachel Luttrell] being transformed into a Wraith Queen, which is really interesting and really heavy going, too, personally just for Rachel as a mom and having her baby son with her at work. She's a real trouper, let me tell you.

"I've not had the pleasure of doing prosthetics... yet. I actually went to them [the producers] at the start of this season and I asked to have an episode off to play a Wraith without anyone knowing it's me. I just thought the





chance to play a different character, for example, some crazy off-kilter Wraith, for the sheer satisfaction of acting would be neat. Then, however, I saw Rachel go through that whole [make-up] process and was like, 'I'm hoping they didn't hear me or that they weren't listening.' It only further proves that you have to be careful what you wish for in this life," he chuckles.

AT THE END of the fourth season, Ronon along with Colonel Sheppard (Joe Flanigan), Dr McKay (David Hewlett) and Major Lorne (Kavan Smith) went to an off-world location where they believed Teyla and her as yet unborn child were being held prisoner by the Human/Wraith hybrid Michael (Connor Trinneer). Unfortunately, it was a trap and they were caught inside a building that imploded around them. Our heroes are made of stern stuff, however, and in the Season Five opener *Search and Rescue*, they are rescued from what was supposed to be their final resting place. Filming the scenes where his character is trapped proved quite an experience for Momoa.

"Coming back to work at the start of this season and filming *Search and Rescue* was pretty amazing," notes the actor. "It was a very difficult episode for me because there were one or two personal things going on in my life at the time. In some of my scenes as Ronon, it was me and Joe Flanigan together in a really confined space and very much a 9/11-type of scenario where the two of us are covered from head to toe in dirt and blood and sweat and tears.

"I got to watch it [the episode] in looping yesterday and I was pretty proud of it. When pursuing our art, things sometimes happen where you can go on, you can't go on, your personal life seeps in, reality seeps in, etc., and in the end I was just happy to see me and my friend Joe do what I think is some terrific work. It's a good episode, and I'm hoping the fans will really enjoy it."

← A peek from the past in Season Four's *Reunion*

When pursuing our art, things sometimes happen where you can go on, you can't go on, your personal life seeps in, reality seeps in



← Mark Dacascos returns as Tyre (left) in *Broken Ties*

↓ 'Just' a doctor-patient relationship in Season Four's *Quarantine*?

PRIOR TO being befriended by Sheppard and Teyla and beginning a new life on Atlantis early on in the show's second season, Ronon spent seven years as a 'runner' and being hunted for sport by the Wraith, who wiped out his home world of Sateda. Convinced that he was the last of his people, Ronon was surprised to meet up with three of his old Satedan friends in the fourth season story *Reunion*. He had no idea that they

were, in fact, Wraith worshippers, and had traded their services for the gift of extended life. When he rejects their offer to join them, Ronon kills two of his former friends in battle, but the third, Tyre (Mark Dacascos) escapes. In the fifth season's *Broken Ties*, Tyre returns and, having captured Ronon, plans to turn him over to the Wraith.

"Basically someone who was Ronon's best friend sacrifices his soul to the Wraith," explains Momoa.

"However, Tyre then gets double-crossed by the Wraith, but the Atlantis team saves him, and, once he finally gets his head back on straight, Tyre goes with them to save Ronon. By that time, though, my character has gone over to the 'dark side.' He resists the Wraith for as long as possible, but eventually Ronon turns to the dark side and is working for them. When his team mates eventually find him, they have to shoot him I don't

Romantic Rivals

LAST YEAR in *Quarantine* there appeared to be a mutual romantic interest between Ronon and Dr Jennifer Keller (Jewel Staite) and they almost shared a kiss when trapped together in the infirmary. A similar attraction seemed to develop with Keller and Dr McKay in the episode *Trio*, and that relationship was further explored in an alternate time-line during the fourth season finale *The Last Man*. The two men try to 'outdo' each other when searching for a missing Keller in this year's *Tracker*, but Momoa is not convinced that his character is ready for a serious relationship.

"It's amusing to watch Ronon and McKay bickering

over or battling for Keller, and it's nice to reveal yet another side of my character," says the actor. "However, I don't think it's really necessary right now because I feel it weakens Ronon. It's no secret that he holds on to a lot of things, and the thing is his wife might still be alive somewhere out there and Ronon still has feelings for her.

"As far as McKay, I think Ronon gets a kick out of seeing him 'suffer,'" jokes Momoa. "Flex a little muscle here, flex a muscle there, just to get McKay worked up and feeling jealous. That's the part I enjoy the most because David and I have such fun acting together."





↑↔ The
challenging
Broken Ties

know how many times, and then get him back to Atlantis where he has to recover cold turkey. For Ronon, things go from bad to worse before getting better.

"*Broken Ties* was a huge challenge for me, and the biggest learning process I've had yet as an actor. Every year it gets better and better for me and further solidifies why I've fallen in love with Sci-Fi as a genre, because there are no boundaries. In this episode I got to go to a place that you really can't get to without sheer imagination and creativity. I had to play someone who has the most power and energy that he's ever had in his life,

and then that's taken away from him. It's like trying to kick heroin only times 10, so it's like Sci-Fi heroin, do you know what I mean? [As an actor] you've got to go to a place where you've never been in that much pain, where every muscle burns, and you want your friends to kill you because you can't take the pain any more. I was strapped down when we shot those scenes, and I wound up breaking two gurneys as a result of having to play the total rage of being a caged animal. I also screwed up my body to the point that my muscles were all knotted up because I was struggling against the restraints, and

then on top of that having to break down emotionally."

KEN GIROTTI, who previously directed three episodes of *Stargate SG-1*, worked on *Broken Ties* and helped guide Momoa through his character's mental and physical highs and lows. "Ken is one of the greatest directors I've ever worked with," enthuses the actor. "We had so many dinners together to discuss my character, and he's just amazing. And so is Joe Mallozzi [*Atlantis* executive producer]. I went up to his office and the two of us talked about so many ways to make my character even richer.



Dreaded Locks

AT FIRST glance, you probably don't notice a difference in Jason Momoa's appearance this season on Atlantis, but, in fact, the actor has happily traded in his real-life dreadlocks for some that look just as authentic. "It was after the final day of shooting last year that I decided to get my hair cut, and I did," recalls the actor. "It had been seven years and I wanted to surf, wear a helmet, do all sorts of things I couldn't do with the long hair."

"I kept the dreads, though, and when I returned to work this season I said we could reattach them. So I came back about two weeks early, sat in a chair for nine hours and they sewed them

back into my hair. However, after three days of filming, I was in so much pain that I couldn't sleep. I was having neck problems and it's really hard to do stunts with all that heavy hair."

"So we shaved it all off except for six hairs in the front, and used a stunt wig. I had like these six little jail bars [of hair] hanging over my forehead, so I had to wear a hat for a while," laughs Momoa. "That was for Episode Two, and for episode three they made me a very expensive stunt wig. Now it takes me about 40 minutes in the morning, 30 on a good day, to get into the wig, and at the end of the day I get to take it off, which is nice. So no more dreads for me."



This episode was something that I could sink my teeth into and everyone was so cool about it



⚡ Lock trouble?

⬇ The interesting teaming of Ronon, McKay and Sheppard in *The Shrine*

I usually don't spend too much time up in the [producer's] offices doing that sort of thing, but this episode was something that I could sink my teeth into and everyone was so cool about it. It's interesting, too, because I got to see how it was all edited together and learnt a lot about that process. I've yet to see a final cut of the episode, but I came away from shooting it feeling 100% content about what I did, and I'm excited to see what the viewers think of it."

AT THAT moment, one of the Atlantis ADs (assistant director) comes by Momoa's trailer to tell him that his relatives have arrived at the Bridge Studios gate and are walking down to meet him. While he waits for them to turn up, the actor reveals one or two tidbits about the next episode he'll be shooting called *Tracker*, in which Ronon and Dr McKay search for Dr Keller, who is kidnapped while the three are off-world.

"It's always great to have Ronon bouncing off McKay because they're so different," says Momoa. "In this case, both characters are to a certain extent out of their element and, hopefully, that will lead to them learning off each other, too. We introduce a new 'runner' [Kiryk] in *Tracker* as well. I haven't worked yet with the gentleman [Mike Dopud] who has been cast in the role, but he seems like a cool guy, and it'll be fun for Ronon to have another character to interact with."



DOCTOR WHO

THE BRAIN OF MORBIUS

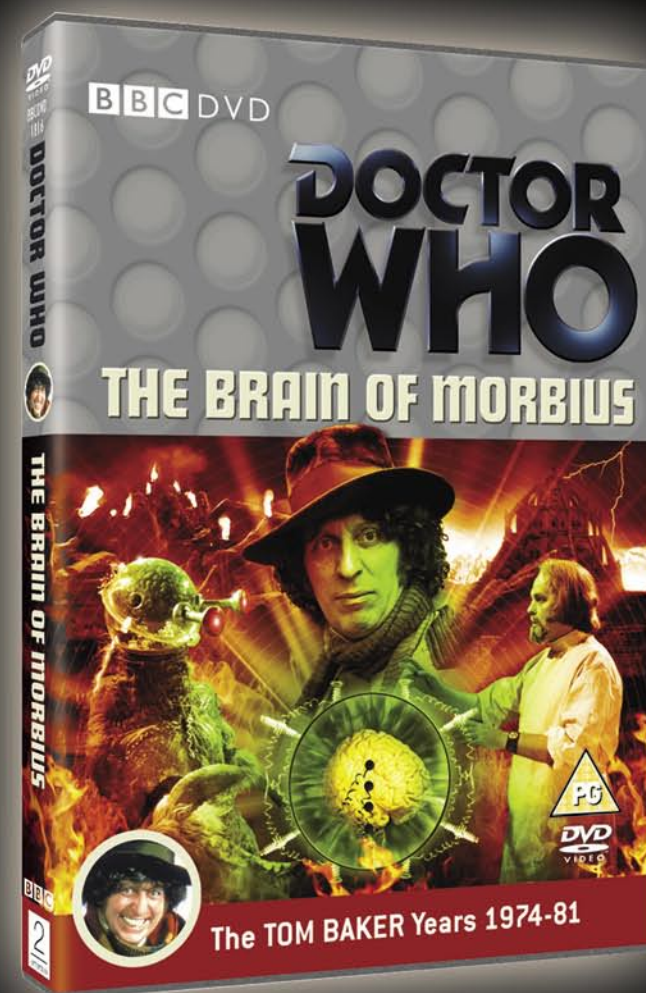


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TECH SUPPORT

He's a stand-in around, but if you're lucky you'll see him operating the Stargate...



← Gerry Durand, Krista Howard, LeBrone Wade and Chuck Campbell

Photo © S. Farnio

L LOYAL VIEWERS of *Stargate Atlantis* will no doubt recognize Chuck the Technician when he appears on screen. He's that tall, good-looking guy who sits in the Atlantis control room and is usually the person who dials the Stargate. He is played by Canadian-born Chuck Campbell. When he is not in front of the camera playing our favourite recurring 'gate techie', Campbell can be found behind the scenes and on the job as one of show's lead stand-ins.

"I work with a real tight group of stand-ins and there are usually four of us on set per day," explains Campbell. "My friend Gerry Durand is a stand-in for Joe Flanigan [Durand also occasionally plays puddle-jumper pilot Captain Frank Levine], I do David Hewlett, and LeBrone Wade will stand in for pretty much any Wraith, and he'll also sometimes even double for Jason Momoa if a shot requires them to show, for example, just a hand. Gerry does that, too, with Joe [Flanigan] for, say, a back shot or maybe shooting a gun.

"We also had a wonderful woman working with us, Sheri Noel, but she's gone over to *Sanctuary* [Amanda Tapping's new series], because she's

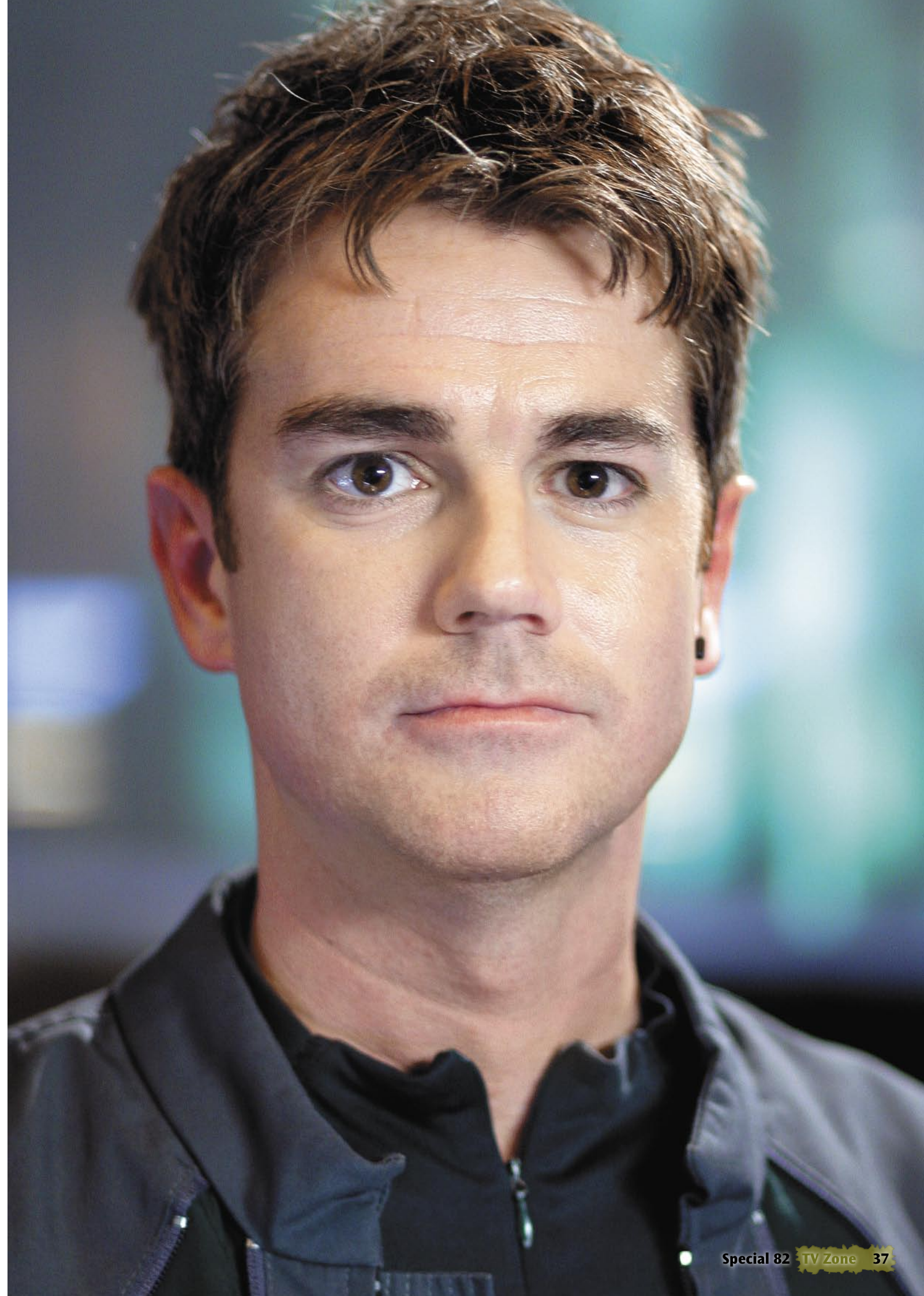




Photo © S. Errano

very close with Amanda and used to stand in for her on **Stargate**. Now we've got another great gal, Krista Howard, and hopefully she'll continue to be available to work with us. So we basically hover around set and just kind of slip in there after the actors do the blocking and help out the lighting team as they light the scene. Then after the camera guys do a couple of practice runs with us, the actors step back in and do the magic. That's pretty much it, and they do that for every scene. We shoot an average of eight pages a day, which is a lot, but that's TV. Fortunately, it runs pretty smooth here on **Atlantis**. They know what works and what doesn't, so no time is wasted."

IT IS not long before Campbell is needed back inside the **Atlantis** effects stage to help set up a shot for the fifth season story *The Queen*. "My [technician] character isn't in this episode and, boy, let me tell you, I'm so glad I'm not one of these guys wearing prosthetics," says the actor, coming back outside after finishing his work for that particular scene. "I think it takes three-and-a-half hours to get into everything and then an hour-and-a-half to take it all off, plus it's a 12-hour shooting day. I'm just happy that my

↑ Dr Zelenka (David Nykl), Chuck The Technician (Chuck Campbell) and Banks (Sharon Taylor)

🏠 Chuck Campbell on the Bridge Studios backlot

character only has to wear a little grey jacket," chuckles Campbell.

"Chris Heyerdahl, who plays Todd the Wraith, is so used to being in it [prosthetics] that it's nothing to him now, and I'm so used to seeing him in all that stuff as well. For people who are new to that [make-up] process, though, you can tell by their body language that it's going to be a long day. They all look amazing, though, as far as the prosthetics are concerned. Our make-up team is extremely talented, and it obviously shows in their work.

"I think we might take advantage of the good weather and do two days of second unit shooting out at Lynn Canyon in order to get a head-start on the next episode, *Tracker*. The one we're still working on today, *The Queen*, is going to be very cool. I'm pretty sure this is the first really Wraith-heavy story we've done so far this year, and that's good because it means all the stunt guys who play Wraith will get a couple of days' work as well, which is always good. After the [recent] writers' strike, I think people would dress up as a chicken if you asked them and if it paid enough. It's like, 'Prosthetics, no problem, man. That's fine. Carry a sign that says Joe's Pizza, no worries.' I guess that's just part of working in this industry."

FANS OF Campbell's **Atlantis** namesake can look forward to seeing Chuck during the first half of Season Five, including the episode *Ghost in the Machine*. "I'd wanted to do a scene with Robert Picardo [Richard Woolsey] because he's such a great guy, so this was my chance," says the actor. "It's a quick scene, but I still had a lot of fun. I believe there's also a shot in *First Contact* where Chuck is dialling the Atlantis Stargate, so they still trust me enough to push the buttons. If that trust ever goes, though, I could end up sweeping the floor over on Stage Three," he jokes.

A few days later, the actor was across town at Norco Studios, a onetime filming locale for **Stargate SG-1** and **Atlantis**, making his debut as one half of a character called Two-Face Guy in the aforementioned **Sanctuary**.

"This role is a blast to play," says Campbell. "I'm slowly learning how all the visual effects work and the other magic that's involved to make this seem real. One of the show's prosthetic artists, Brad, plays the other face on the back of my head. It takes about two hours for him to be made up as the 'mean guy.' They film me saying my lines as the 'nice guy,' and then do the same with Brad as the 'mean guy.' There are camera tricks involved and green screen technical stuff done in post-production to make it look like I have another face on the back of my head. The final product is quite amazing and looks really wild.

"This character gets introduced in the pilot episode and will be appearing again in Episode Four. A number of creatures are introduced in the pilot, so I was quite happy when Martin Wood [director/executive producer] and Damian Kindler [series creator/executive producer] told me that Two-Face Guy would return. This is a very ground-breaking series to be a part of with all the green screen effects, and I always enjoy working with Martin and the rest of the gang. He makes his sets a joy to work on, probably because he loves his craft so much."

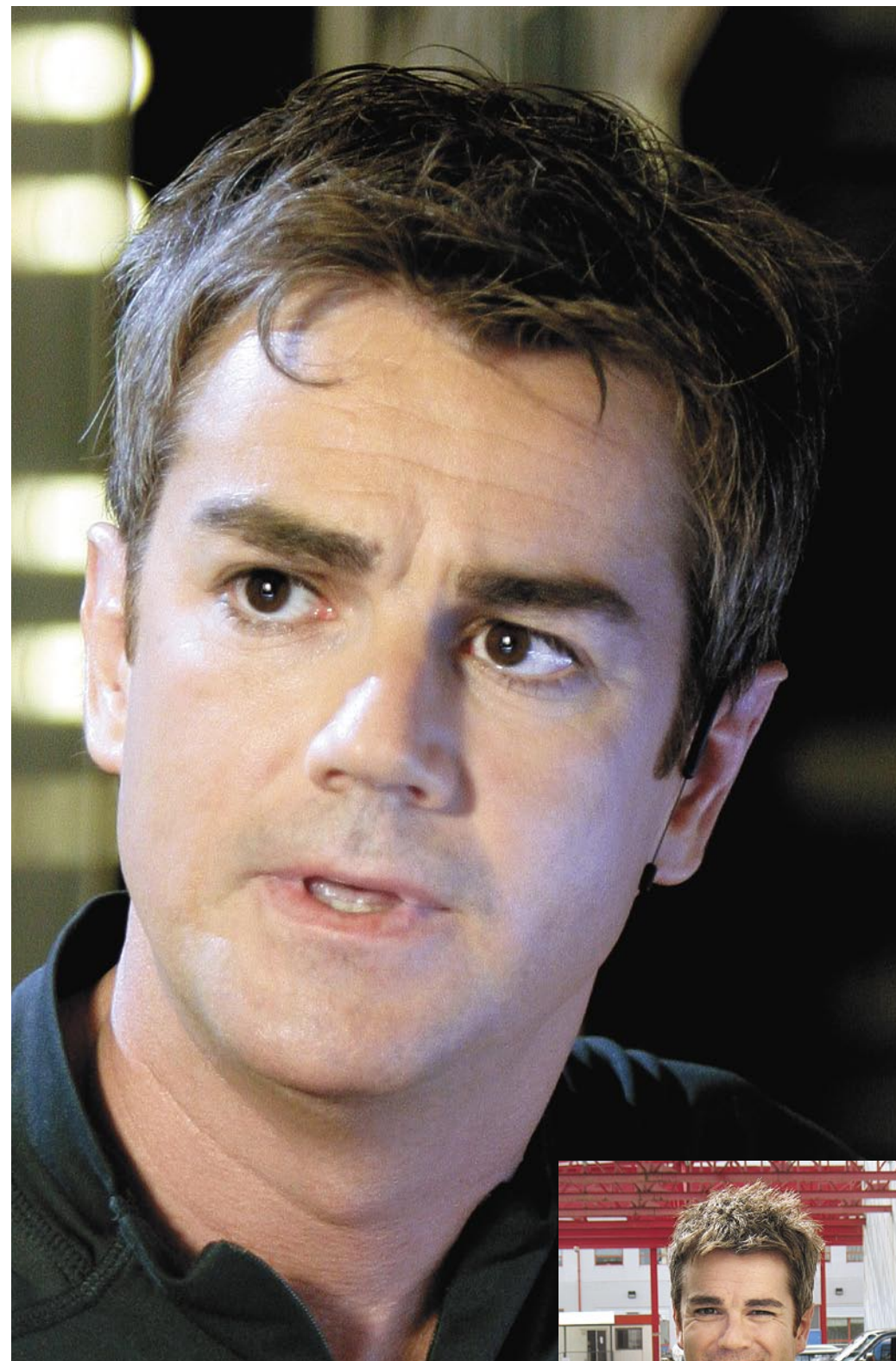


Photo © S. Errano

After the [recent] writers' strike, I think people would dress up as a chicken if you asked them

DESIGN INTERVENTION

*We pay another visit to the **Atlantis** art department to discover what visual delights await in the fifth season...*

AT SOME point everyone has to take time out to eat, even if you work in show business. The multi-talented and decidedly modest James Robbins is just finishing up lunch as he welcomes me into the **Stargate Atlantis** art department. Despite his hectic schedule, the production designer has set aside some time to chat about his work so far this year on the show.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

It began with the fifth season opener *Search and Rescue*, which called for Robbins to re-create the remains of a building that our heroes were trapped in at the end of the Season Four finale *The Last Man*. Easy, right? Actually, it wasn't quite so easy, as the production designer recalls.

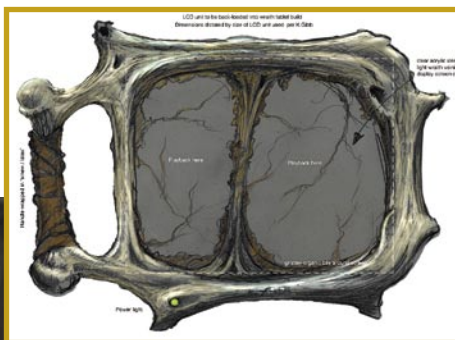
"It wasn't until I saw the VFX rendering that I realized to what extent this building had imploded. There

Search and Rescue
➡ Wraith hyperdrive concept

➡ Wraith tablet

➡ Final concept for Sheppard's 'debris hole'

was pretty much nothing left of it. I immediately got a copy of the [*Search and Rescue*] script and discovered that our contingent had been divided into two parties. Ronon and Sheppard were trapped in one pocket of debris, and apparently at a deeper level than McKay and Lorne, who were fairly



close to the surface, to the point that a little bit of daylight was coming down through some cracks in their environment.

“The questions then became, where do we do this, and how do we achieve this? One of the first things that came to everyone’s mind was 9/11 and The World Trade Center. Luckily for us, some other film companies had already waded down this path, and there were references not only on looks, but also on how they achieved those environments.

“So we pulled some frames as reference, and the director of the episode [Andy Mikita] was all over that kind of look. We then just had to build the environment. The script called for an area of debris field that the rescuers would walk into as well as little pockets within the rubble that our heroes were trapped in. We re-dressed the latter and used the same pocket for both our [hero] set-ups, which also meant changing the lighting, so one area was darker than the other and had an open flame.

“We built our environments with a combination of real and faux products, including foam that was carved as concrete rubble. There were elements from the existing [*The Last Man*] set that were at our Norco stage; I had those pieces brought here [to Bridge Studios], and we used some of them in the new build, especially on the aboveground areas. Eight feet above that we built a deck that you could stand on and look down and talk with the people trapped in the debris pockets. And the beauty of our debris pockets was that our actors could just walk into one and lay down in it. Set dec [Robert and Mark Davidson] manufactured these mobile pieces of twisted metal and wire elements, and we filmed through those to give added depth. With that and some key little SFX fires as well as ambient smoke and lots of dust, the whole look was, I think, beautifully achieved.

“This episode also required some Wraith elements, including a hyperdrive unit for one of the hive ships. I did a concept sketch of that, and then we realized that we actually needed to have a physical piece for one of the scenes. When we did *The Ark* a couple of seasons ago, there were these five-foot plexi-domes that served as the top of Sheppard’s shuttle. So we just took one of those domes, inverted it, did a Wraith treatment on the bottom and suspended it above the ceiling. That became the lowest portion of what was supposed to be this massive hyperdrive, and everything above it was a VFX.”



THE SEED

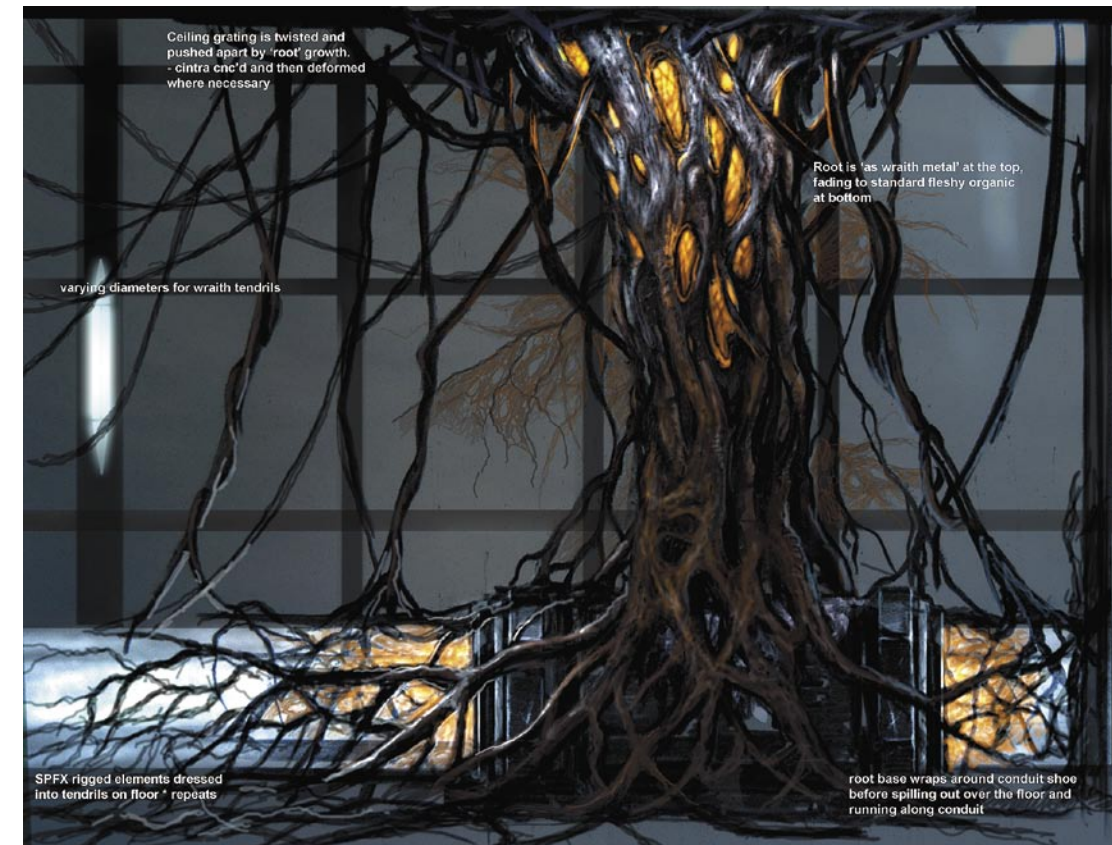
There’s no place like home, except in *The Seed*, when an unwanted Wraith houseguest decides to ‘nest’ on Atlantis and begins to feed on the city. “It’s not long before these [Wraith] tendrils begin growing outward in search of a power source,” explains Robbins. “Eventually they break through the floors and into an area where this massive power conduit runs through Atlantis. We wound up building the

set for this in the effects stage. We lowered the ceilings to make it seem a little more claustrophobic and painted everything sort of an off-grey, pewter and silver. So there’s not the prettiness of Atlantis, but more of a backroom kind of feel. The set didn’t have a huge page count in the script, but it was integral to the story.

“In this episode, Ronon has to do some swordplay where he’s hacking through a growing number of these vines and whatnot. Some of the vines were broken ahead of time and re-attached with magnets in order to make

it easier to ‘slice’ through them. These things were foam wrapped in latex, so there was no way you’d be able to cut through something like that otherwise.

“Another element we built for *The Seed*, and which I’m now very happy that we did, was a portion of a Wraith wall with a large hole in it that looked out onto the city. I originally suggested we achieve part of that using VFX, but time and budget wouldn’t allow it. So we wound up physically building this section, which was a pretty big build, and it’s now the central arch of our main Wraith set.”



BROKEN TIES

When Ronon's former-best-friend-turned-Wraith-worshipper Tyre (Mark Dacascos) turns up again in *Broken Ties*, he is sporting a pendant as well as a flashy sword, both of which were designed by Robbins. "The sword was supposed to be yet another sword made for yet another character just passing through," says the production designer. "However, Jason Momoa said, 'Hey, I like that a lot,' so his character wound up with the sword at the end of the episode. It's now part of Ronon's standard assault weaponry. They [the producers] quite liked the build. It's a particularly nasty sword that's double-sided and has a snake head on it as well as some other neat stuff.

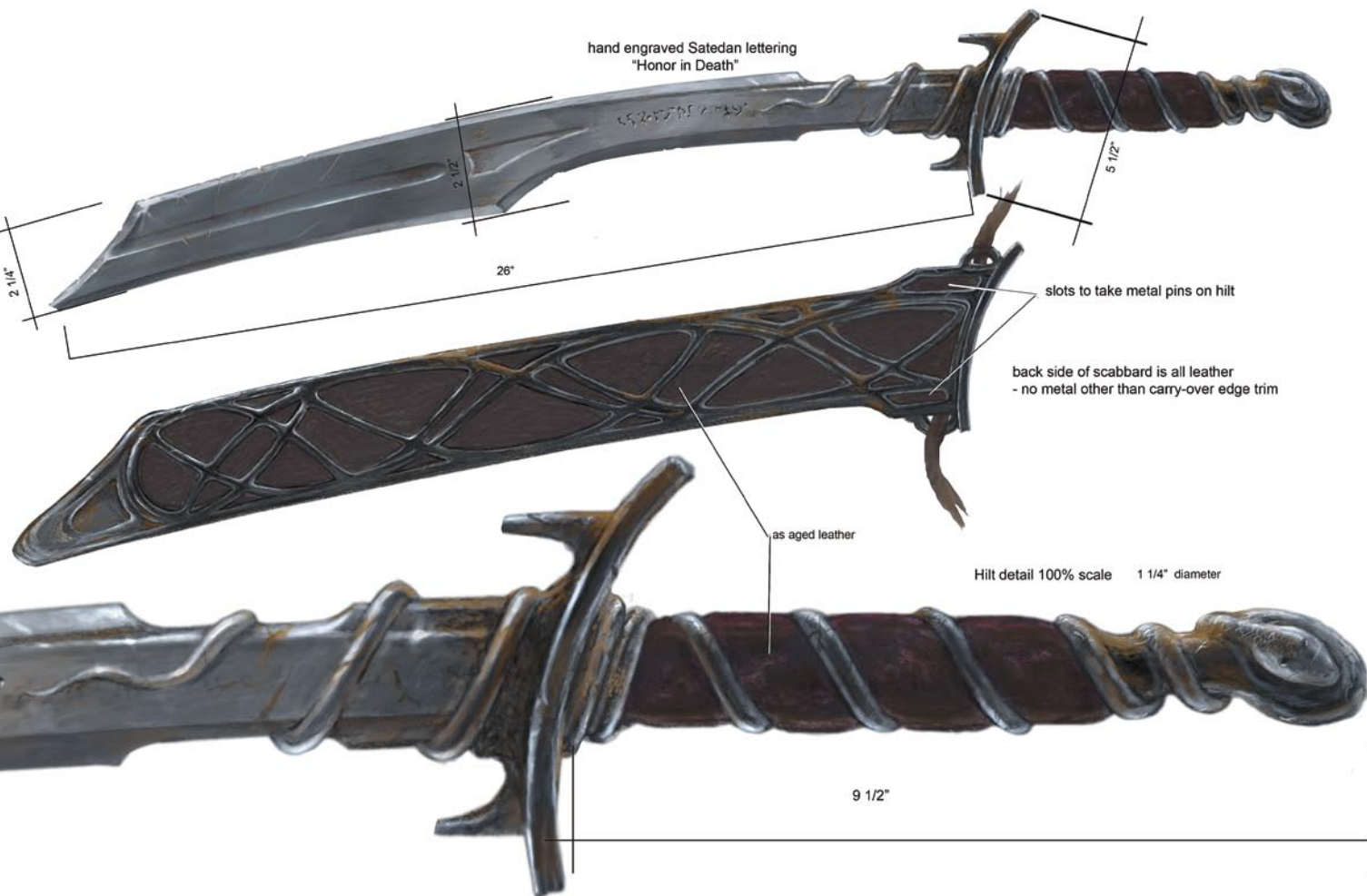
"This episode also called for Wraith power relay cones, which are, in fact, cloning bags we reused from last season's *Reunion*. We built a few of those and it was a key prop inasmuch as in this particular Wraith facility, if you blow up the power relay conduits, the whole place blows sky-high."



Broken Ties

⇒ Power relay column

↓ Tyre's sword



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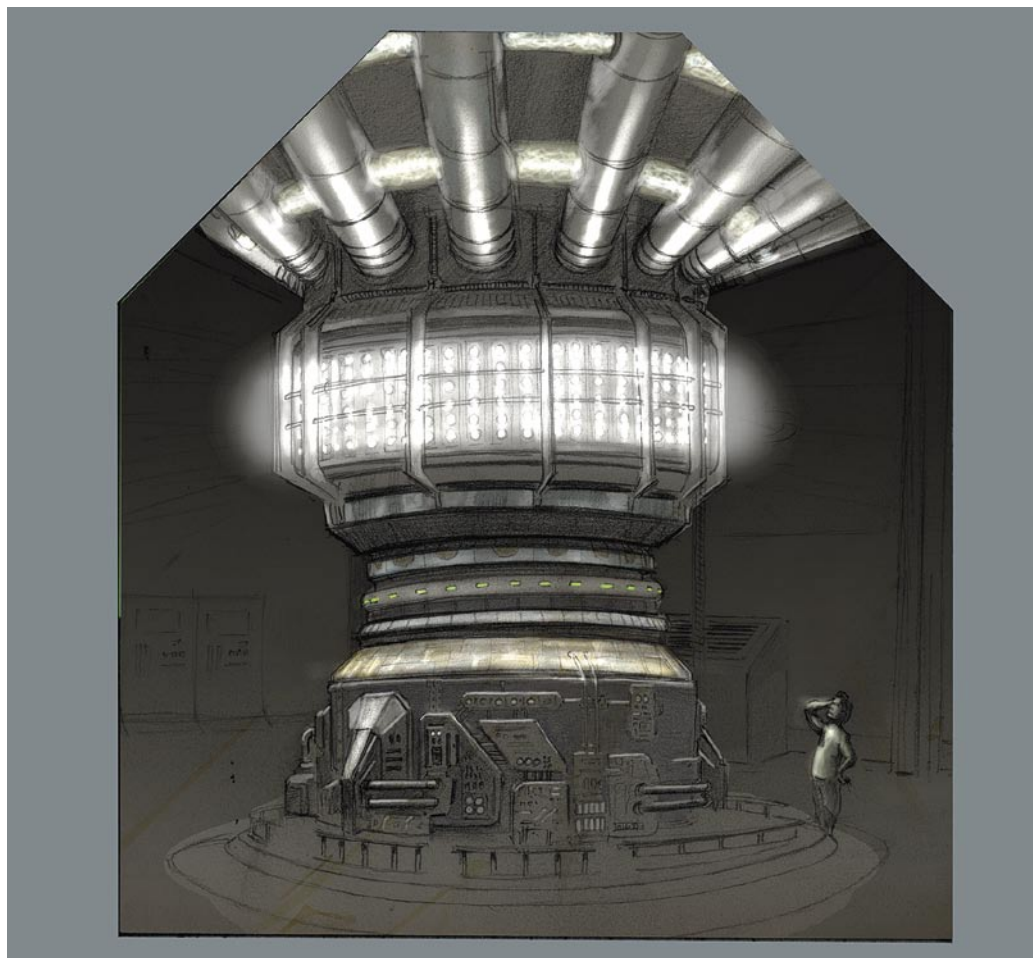
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Above: Interdimensional Drive with blast door open
Left: Blast doors opening

Lighting fx for VFX drive based on machine from McKay & Mrs Miller

Practical interactive required through blast door opening to emulate light from drive unit falling on McKay as doors open.

STARGATE ATLANTIS	Daedalus Variations	Feb 1800	504
REASON FIVE	Interdimensional Drive	REF 012	REF 012
	VFX		

THE DAEDALUS VARIATIONS

The **Atlantis** art department was responsible for bringing a variety of visual as well as practical story elements to life for the fifth season episode *The Daedalus Variations*, in which Colonel Sheppard and his team are trapped on board an alternate reality version of the Daedalus that is equipped with an alternate reality drive.

"I had to come up with the VFX for the drive, which was a fairly simplistic drawing," notes Robbins. "However, as they jump through different realities, our people encounter a bunch of hostile aliens who fly around in spaceships that look like that," says the production designer, pointing to a large drawing on his office wall. "They also have these little fighters, which are a key component in the episode. Then, of course, there are our actual big, freaky aliens. The producers wanted them to be fairly humanoid looking and distinguishable as aliens by their skin tones as opposed to horns or any other types of weird features. MastersFX supplied us with an existing prosthetic they already had and felt was fairly close to the concept. Again, these aliens are *very big* and *very frightening*, not to mention full of surprises."



THE SHRINE

The prognosis does not look promising for Dr McKay after he contracts a strange, and what appears to be fatal, disease while off-world in *The Shrine*. To help prepare him for the inevitable, Ronon and Teyla suggest taking Rodney to a fabled place called The Shrine of Talus. In order to do that, however, Robbins had to first design it.

"This magical shrine exists behind a waterfall, but filming large volumes of running water and dialogue at the same time isn't the best combination," he says. "Water as an element is tough to contain because there are so many parameters. So the first concept I drew up for this was a very, very rough idea of a cave with a waterfall outside. We then went back and forth about whether it should be real water, a projected element or a VFX. Unfortunately, VFX is expensive and limits how many times you can look in that direction, but there were too many obstacles to overcome if we did it practically.

"So the VFX department created a waterfall, but the stock shots were all wrong because they were looking at waterfalls, and we needed to look behind them. When you're behind them, they're always backlit, and quite honestly you actually get dimension because the water is usually cascading towards the camera. So at the end of the day it wound up being a little bit of this and a little bit of that. We had a rear-projection element with three projectors set up overlapping onto

screens that were just outside this cave. That first concept had a single cave opening, but the rear-projection screens weren't large or wide enough, so I added centre columns to hide some of the things we didn't want to reveal.

"We also had practical water effects, which were our SFX guys using pressure hoses, flowing downwards over misters that were spraying up from below. In the end, it was a multi-layered effect that was amazingly convincing. The idea of the shrine was made further believable thanks to set dec, who decorated the set with all sorts of little trinkets and stuff, while the greens department did the same with flowers, which they bought weeks in advance and kept them until they were almost dead in order to show a passage of time. Once again, we went through a lot of different levels to achieve this look, but it was totally worth it."

WHISPERS

From water to fog, Robbins came up with a clever way to create a creepy off-world environment that is difficult to see in and home to terrifying creatures in the episode *Whispers*. "To make a very long story short," chuckles the production designer, "rather than fog up the entire effects stage and have our actors running through that, we decided to localize the fog within 20x30-foot tents which were hung inside the stage. We did fog testing inside these tents to make sure it was going to work, and it was incredibly

disorienting. I went into one of the tents, and even though I knew there was nothing in front of me for 30 feet, I was still extremely hesitant as I moved about. Something like that messes with your head, it really does."

In addition to re-dressing and adding onto the established village set used countless times in *Stargate SG-1* and *Atlantis*, the production designer came up with an eerie catacombs setting as well as a lab for *Whispers*. He also designed a prop flare and a children's doll that is decidedly not cuddly. "One of our heroes finds this disturbing-looking doll with no eyes

The Daedalus Variations

Inter-dimensional drive

Alien fighter

Prosthetic concept

The Shrine

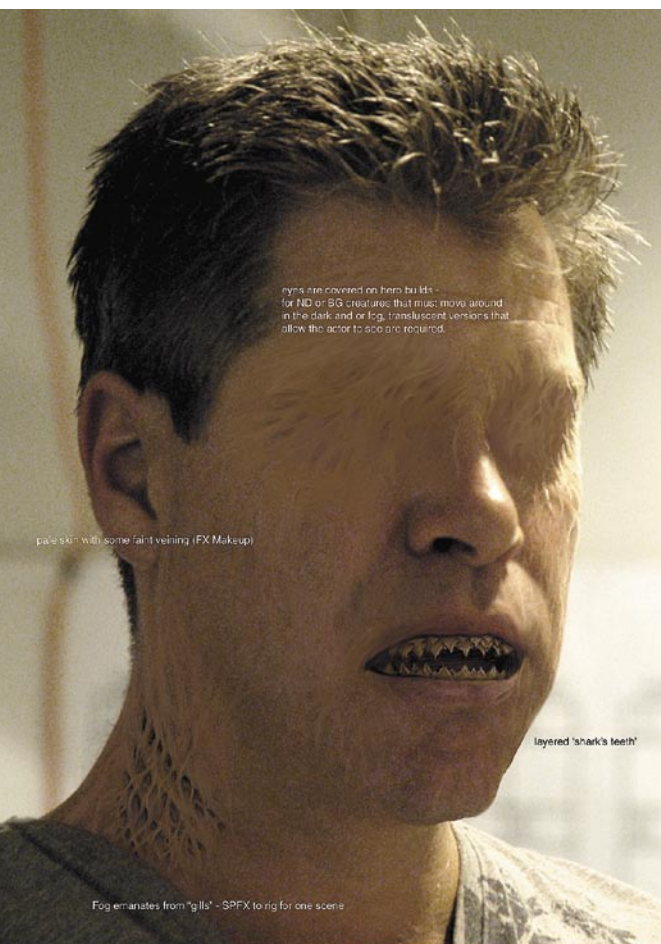
The actual waterfalls on location

The waterfall grotto

Whispers

A well!





lying next to a well, which also is a key element in this episode," says Robbins. "Apparently someone carved this doll as a totem or resemblance to the critters we're looking for. I'd never designed a doll before in my life, and now I've done it for this story and another one [Tracker] so far this season. Who knows, I might have to take it up as a full-time job one day," he jokes.

THE QUEEN

Robbins took great pleasure in reconfiguring the interior of the existing Wraith hive ship set as well as adding new sculptural pieces to it, making for an even more impressive set for the Wraith-heavy episode *The Queen*. For this story, he also designed a new sword for the programme's resident Wraith Todd (Christopher Heyerdahl) and a shiny new pendant for one of the Wraith Queens. "I

drew up the design for that pendant incredibly quickly," he says. "It didn't need any revisions done to it; it just went straight to the model shop. About a week later I was at the model shop and one of the ladies there was busily sculpting this piece. Those people blow me away. The work they do is spectacular. I like to sculpt, but to be a great sculptor is one heck of a talent."



Whispers

Prosthetic revision

Final concept of the wooden doll



The Queen

The Queen's necklace

Todd's sword

Prosthetic final

A new Wraith wall

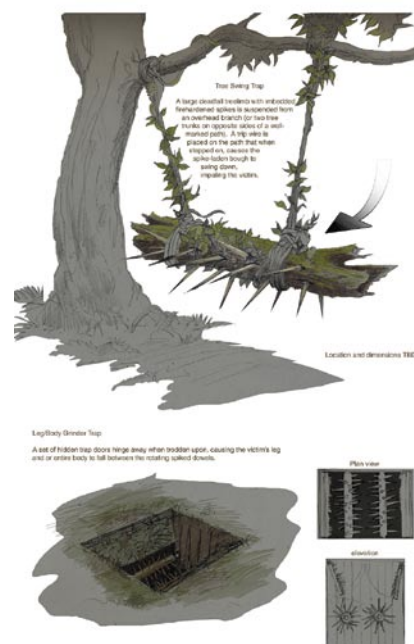


TRACKER

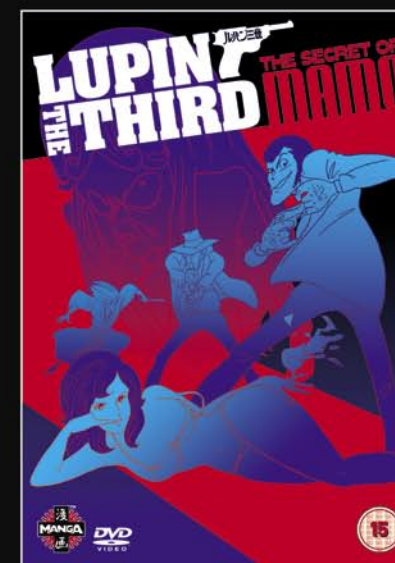
Ronon and McKay must match wits with a 'runner' who has kidnapped Dr Keller and is quite resourceful when it comes to setting booby traps to maim and, perhaps, even kill our heroes in *Tracker*. "The SFX guys actually assembled these traps that I came up with," says the production

designer. "One of them was a leg grinder trap that was reminiscent of the tiger traps built during the Vietnam War, and like those, ours worked. Needless to say, we had people guarding it all the time on location once we put it into the ground, although ours was only about six inches deep, so the worst you could do was cut your lower calf. The real ones of the day, though, were deep enough so that a man could easily pass through the two columns of rotating spikes.

"The other trap, which is my personal 'favourite,' is the old swinging tree trunk. When I was drawing this up, I realized that in order for it to be convincing, it would need some weight behind it and, therefore, would be dangerous. Even with the spikes being rubber, if you got hit by that tree trunk you'd be in serious trouble. We wound up achieving the desired effect by using a composite frame. So did a shot of the tree trunk swinging through, therefore getting a measure of where the spikes were in the ground, and then got a shot of our two actors on the ground after the tree trunk had been removed. Later in post-production, they put the two shots together and those spikes came incredibly close to our characters."

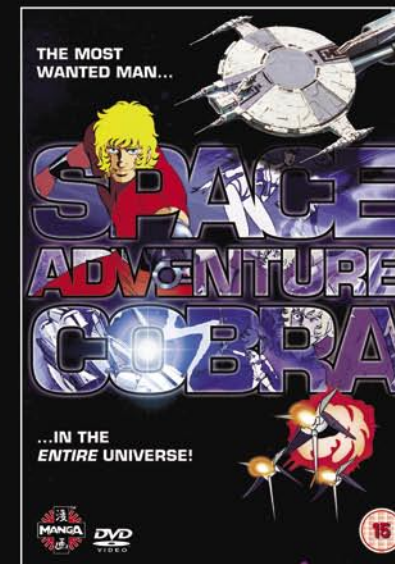


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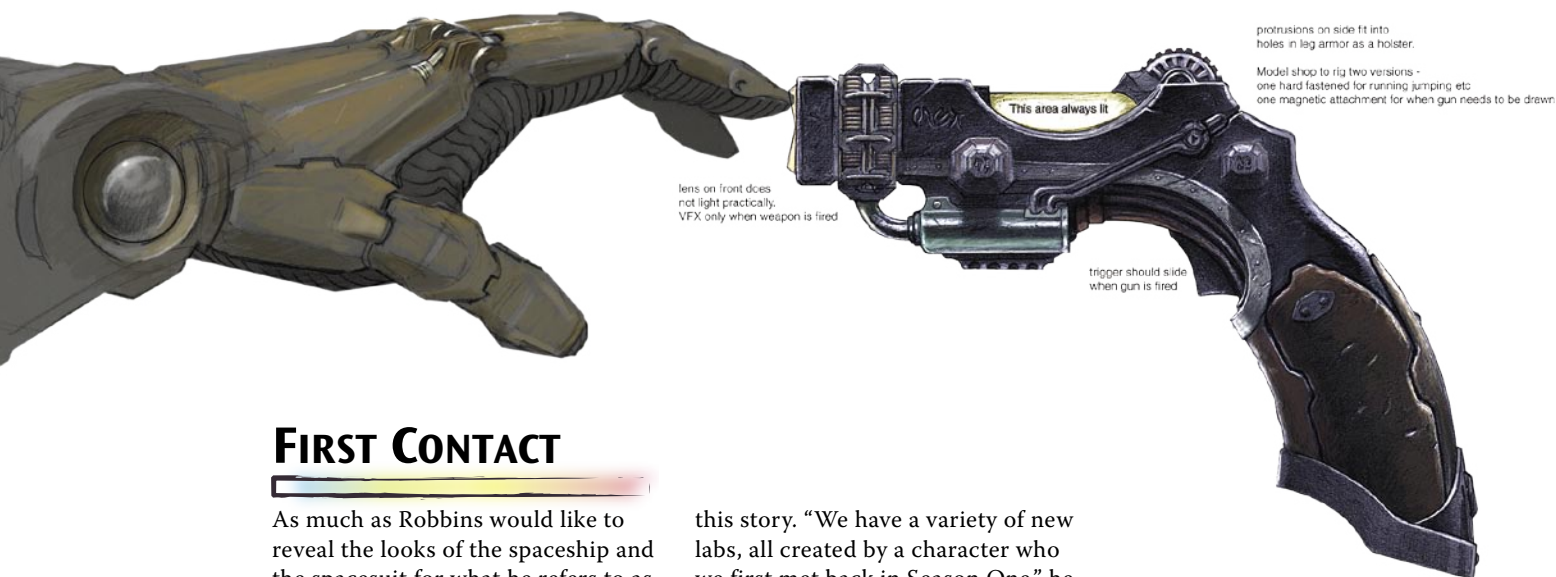
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FIRST CONTACT

As much as Robbins would like to reveal the looks of the spaceship and the spacesuit for what he refers to as *Atlantis's* new "badass dudes", who make their debut in the mid-season cliffhanger *First Contact*, it will have to wait for the second part of this article. The production designer can, however, talk about some of the other elements he designed for

this story. "We have a variety of new labs, all created by a character who we first met back in Season One," he says. "I also drew up a 'badass plasma pistol' as well as a stun rod for Todd, and some new components for the Travelers' ships.

"And there you have it, my friend. That takes you all the way up to the mid-season and everything I know so far."

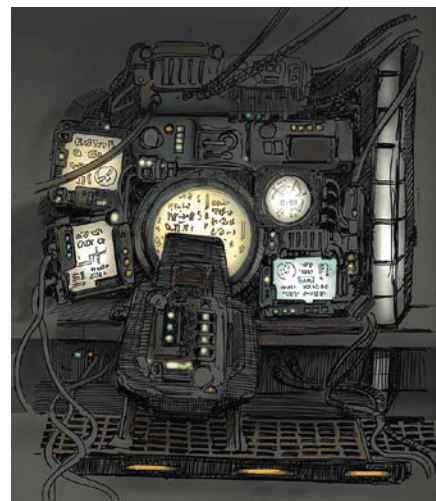
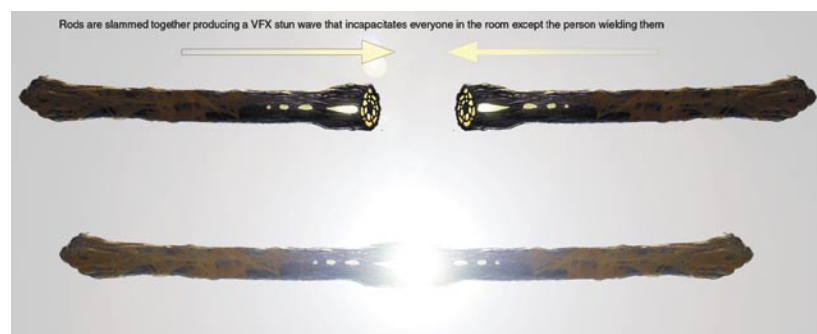
First Contact

 Wrist and glove

 'Badass' gun

 Engineering station

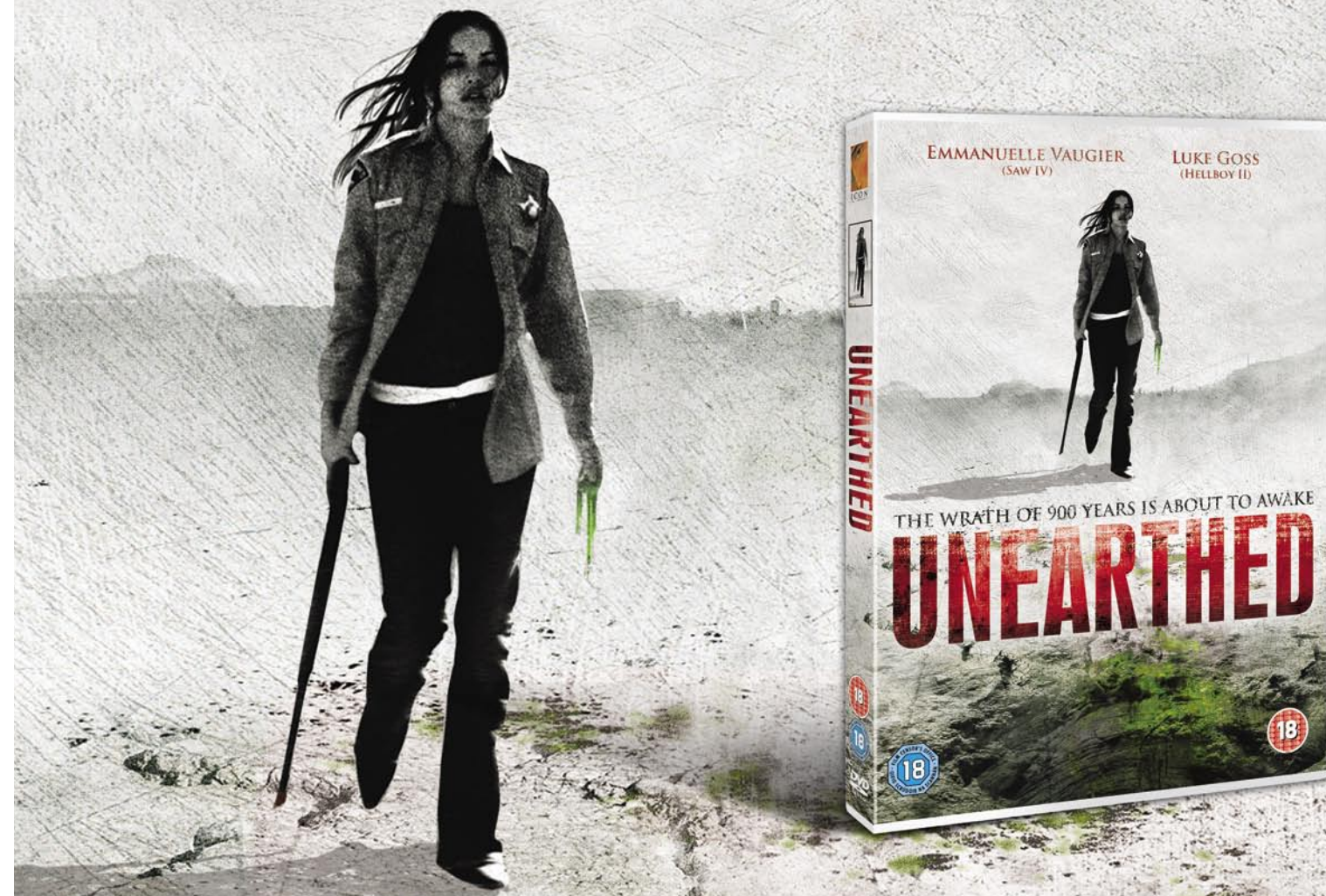
 Stun rods



EMMANUELLE VAUGIER (SAW IV)

LUKE GOSS (HELLBOY II)

UNEARTHED



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REDEEMING FEATURES



↩ Larking about
on set with Jason
Momoa

↓ Still larking
about, evidently

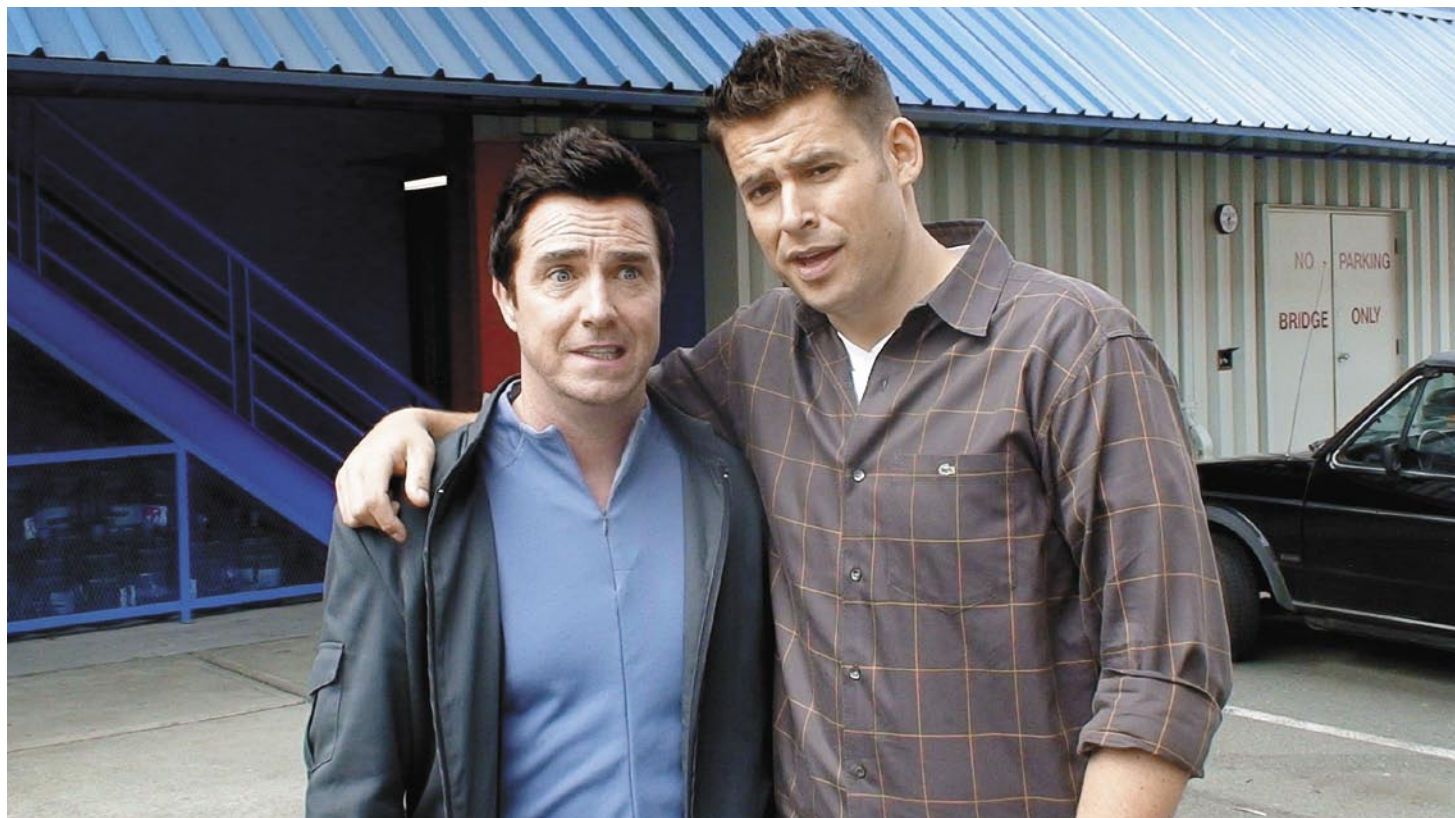
➡ Ivon on the
backlot, looking for
a new interviewee...

⇓ Paul
McGillion joins in
the fun



WHEN YOU sit down watch all the nifty extras on your Season Four **Stargate Atlantis** DVD set, take a long moment and give thanks to Ivon Bartok. As the special features producer for the **Atlantis** as well as **Stargate SG-1** DVDs, he patiently follows the shows' actors, producers, directors, etc around with his camera in order to provide fans with a unique look behind-the-scenes at the making of **Stargate**. Among the DVD extras shot for the Season





Four *Atlantis* release are five Mission Directives, each of which delves into the making of a particular episode from the directors' perspectives, including *Trio*.

"That was a really interesting story," says Bartok. "Originally *Trio* was supposed to be a small 'bottle story', but the more everyone from production talked about what they

wanted to do, it became this huge episode. For example, they reused one of the sets from [the second *SG-1* made-for-DVD movie] *Continuum*, which was already a shifting set, and added a gimble to it for greater visual impact. One of the things [director] Martin Wood spoke about was how difficult it is to see a moving set on-camera, so for *Trio* they came up with a way to lift the set up even more and at gradually steeper angles, which resulted in this unbelievable set.

"As people continued to offer up [creative] ideas for *Trio*, it snowballed into something a lot bigger, which is why I ended up shooting a more intensive making-of piece for the DVD. I went to every production meeting, stunt test, VFX discussion, you name it. It's probably my favourite feature on this DVD set and I'm hoping people enjoy it."

BARTOK AND *Atlantis* producers were pleased to be able to fulfil a longtime fan request as part of the fourth season DVD extras. "We did bloopers this time around," says the special features producer with a smile. "Joe Mallozzi [executive producer] and Martin Gero [co-executive producer] introduce this extra and what we did was try to find the best bloopers we could from Season Four. It's so hard to judge, though. I know fans have been dying for this, but the thing with bloopers

It's probably my favourite feature on this DVD set and I'm hoping people enjoy it



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is that a lot of the best stuff happens when the cameras aren't rolling. There are still some funny ones, though, and Joe was nothing but encouraging insofar as wanting me to pursue this particular feature.

"We also did another deleted scenes piece, but it's a little different from what we did last year. We sat down with the writers and producers of the particular episodes, I think there were three or four, and they would introduce the deleted scene and talk a little bit about why they had to cut it out. However, what I wanted to do was avoid those scenes that just maybe ran on a little too long, do you know what I mean? What I really wanted was to choose scenes that were actually *good scenes* that production maybe regretted cutting out and were worth taking a look at."

FORMER ATLANTIS series regular Paul McGillion, whose character of Dr Carson Beckett was killed off in the Season Three episode *Sunday*, but 'returned from the dead' in Year Four, is spotlighted in another DVD extra. "We did a great feature called *The Doc is In*, which is all about Paul," enthuses Bartok. "He's a friend of mine and it's always fun to work with him. There was a big protest out front here [at Bridge Studios] to bring his character back last season, so I grabbed my camera and went outside with Martin Gero, who talked with some of the fans who were protesting. Then I sat down with Paul and we talked about him returning to the show [as a guest star]. He's always so agreeable about everything and was very happy to come back. I'm extremely pleased with how this piece turned out and I'm looking forward to people watching it."

SHORTLY AFTER shooting began this past February on Season Five of *Atlantis*, Bartok was back at work on the studio lot as well as on location, camera in hand, shooting material for extras to be included in the next DVD set. "I love doing the Mission Directives, and the thing

Ice Man

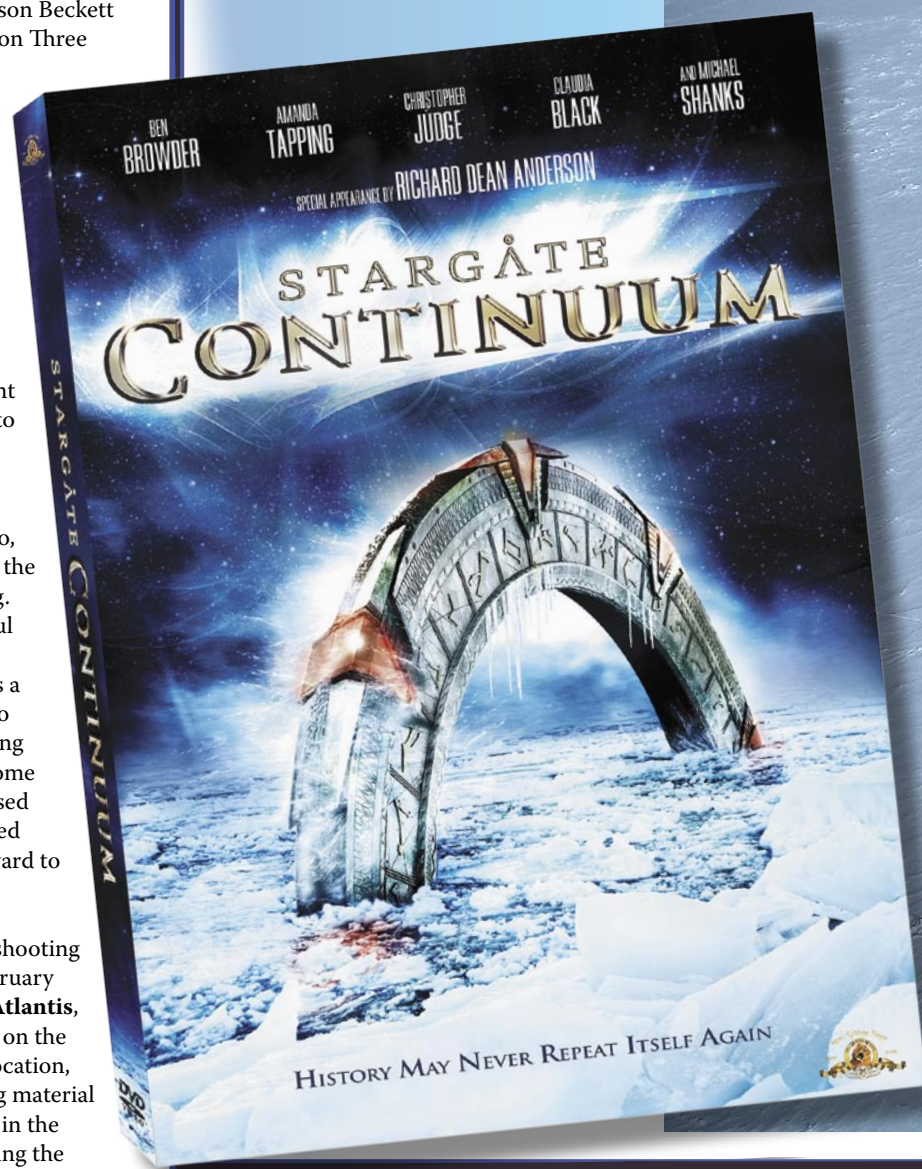
BARTOK SHOT and produced three pieces for the upcoming SG-1 DVD film *Continuum*, including one where he travelled to the Arctic with select cast and crew to document their experiences shooting a handful of scenes for the movie. "Man, that was such a blast," he says. "They picked a certain number of people for that trip, and the thing is there was no hierarchy. No one was like, 'I'm a producer,' or, 'I'm an actor'. It sounds so cliché, but everyone was on the same team and there were no 'superstars', if you know what I mean."

"This particular piece is 25 minutes long, and we talked with everyone involved in the Arctic visit, including Barry Campbell. He's the gentleman who runs the US Navy's APLIS [Applied Phys-

ics Laboratory Ice Station] and was very much instrumental in bringing all this together. Later on I also flew to Los Angeles and interviewed some folks from the Air Force as well as the Navy."

"What's especially interesting about the piece, and which I really love about it, is that you actually get to see how we lived up there. So it's everything from flying from Vancouver to Alaska and landing on the ice, and then flying around in a much smaller plane to all the filming locations. [Director] Martin Wood even shot inside a Navy submarine."

"It was definitely one of the greatest experiences of my life, and a pleasure being around people who just wanted to do the best job possible and enjoy themselves at the same time."





“This year... there seems to be more of a relaxed vibe on-set and one where people are thinking that we may, fingers crossed, be in this for a bit of a long haul”

is every year there are always new and exciting things happening,” he notes. “However, with the fifth season, instead of having just 10 features on the DVD, we’re going to have 15 pieces.

“There will be the five Mission Directives, and then 10 smaller pieces, probably eight minutes in length. With some of those, we’re going to choose a moment from an episode and focus on that. So for instance, in *Broken Ties* there’s an amazing fight between Ronon and Tyre [guest star Mark Dacascos]. We decided to follow James Bamford [stunt co-ordinator] around from the early conception of the fight, which is just him and another stuntman choreographing the moves, to him then working with Mark and Jason, followed by both actors practicing together, and then finally playing out the whole thing on set.

“So we’ll be doing those tricks of the trade-type pieces as well as some cast pieces, and we’ve got some funny stuff lined up, too. Another great thing about Season Five is that I have a bit more time. Last year I was working on the two **SG-1** films [*The Ark of Truth* and aforementioned *Continuum*] and *Atlantis* at the same time, and the prior season it was the two TV shows. I film everything myself, so it feels good to just focus on one thing and not have to pop back and forth between shows and movies. This year I’m also using a bigger camera and shooting in HD [high-definition], so fans will be able to see a little more and the look will be even sharper.”

BARTOK WAS just 25 years old and fresh out of film school when he began his association with *Stargate*. Now, nine years later, he is in no rush to move on. “I love this place,” he says. “Even when I’m not supposed to be working, I end up coming in and just hanging out with these guys. Everyone here is so great to me. I’m waiting for the day to come when they’re sick of me; after all, I’m the guy who’s always pointing a camera at them, so it’s easy to hate me,” he jokes. “It’s gotten to the point, though, where the writers are breaking stories or whatever, and I can just walk into the room with my camera rolling and they don’t even notice me.

“I’m never really sure how the fans are going to react to them [the DVD features], but they’re fun to do and I couldn’t ask for a better way to earn a living.”



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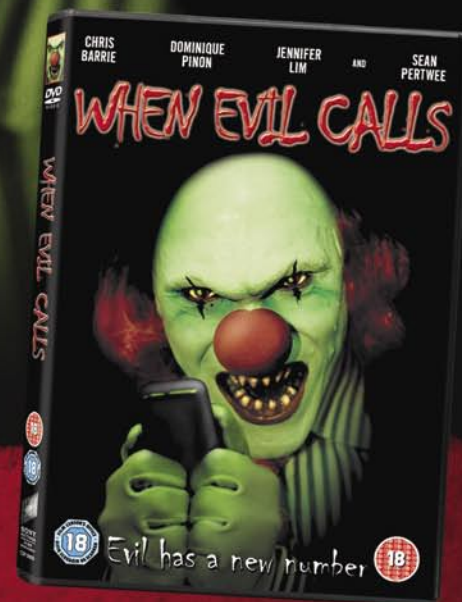
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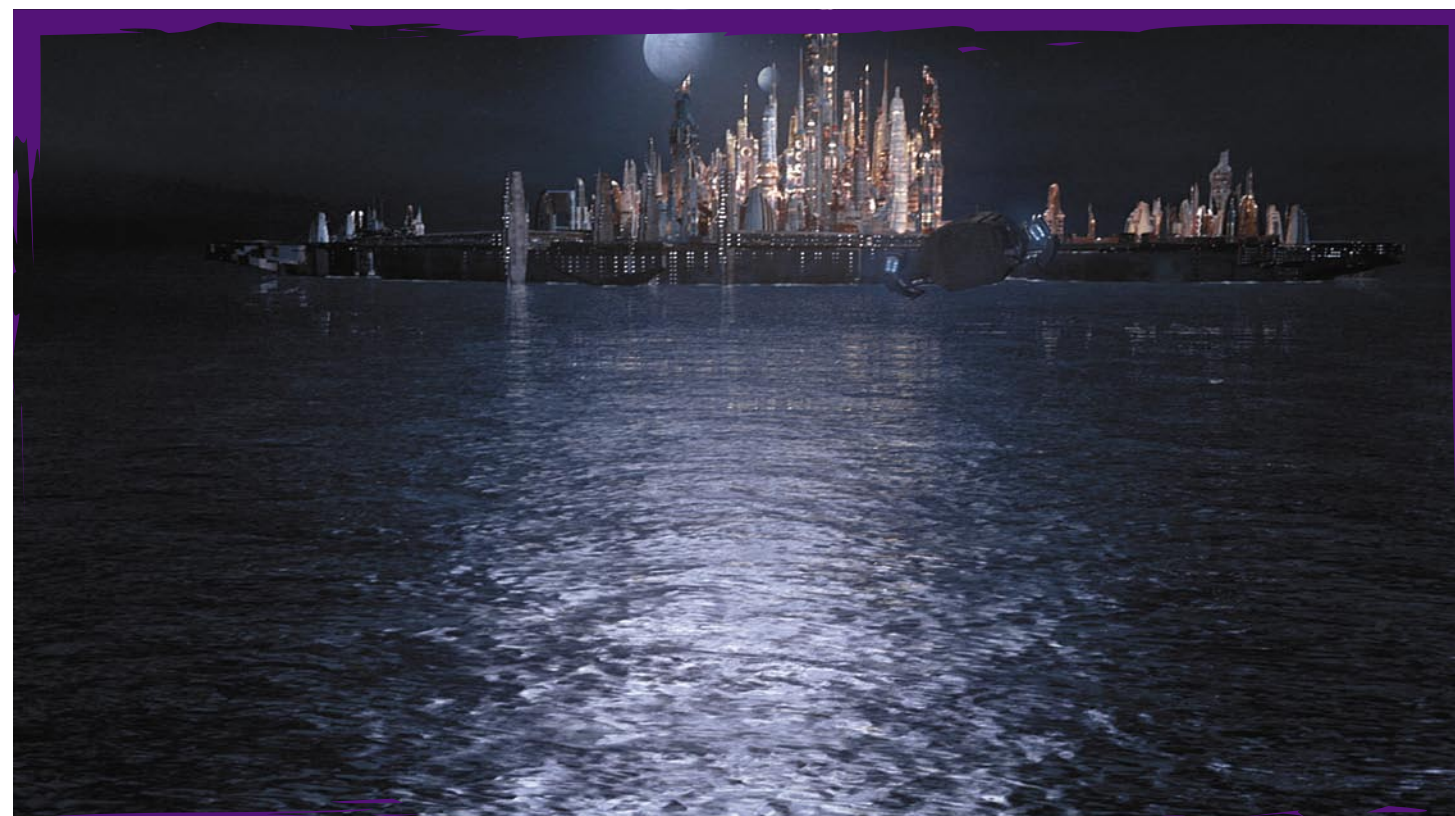
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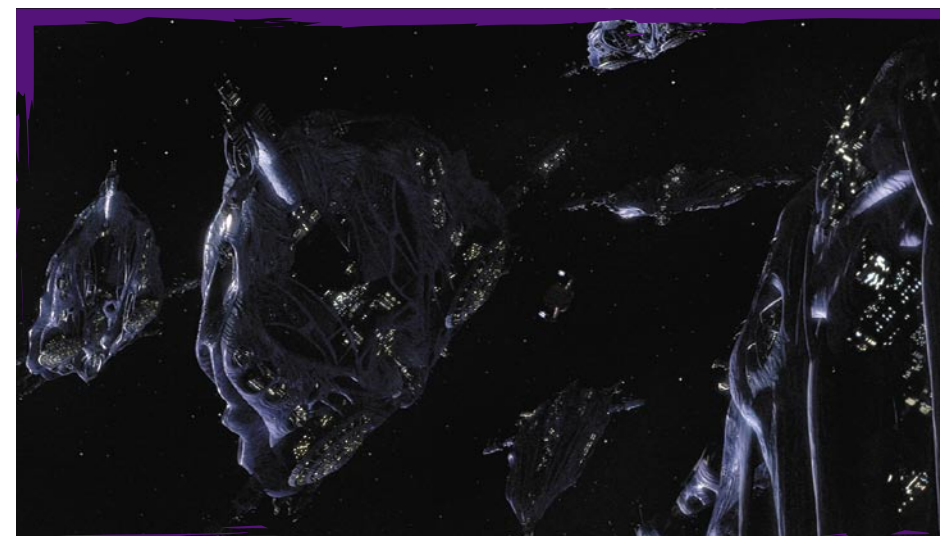
Stargate Atlantis visual effects supervisor Mark Savela and his VFX department may be firmly entrenched in their work for the show's fifth season, but the contributions they made last year are still fresh in their minds.



WHEN HE last spoke with TV Zone, Savela

gave readers the behind-the-scenes VFX lowdown on the first half of Season Four, up to and including the mid-year cliffhanger *This Mortal Coil*. This time around, he picks up with the resolution to that episode, *Be All My Sins Remember'd*, which has friends and foes joining forces against a common adversary.

"Basically what happens is we get together with the Wraith and get some help from the Travelers to try to take care of the [Human-Form] Replicators once and for all," says Savela. "Our Wraith ally Todd [Christopher Heyerdahl] from the [third season] episode *Common Ground* enlists, I believe, seven Wraith hive ships, and Larrin [Jill Wagner] provides six Travelers





ships as well as her Aurora-class ship. Together with our ships, the Apollo and the Daedalus, we take our armada of 16 ships and go up against 30 Replicator Aurora-class ships, so there's a 'tiny' Space battle with 46 ships orbiting the Replicator home world and trying to destroy each other," jokes the VFX supervisor.

"One of the main things we wanted for these scenes was to barely see any black, or any [Outer] Space. We wanted lots of background action with the foreground action, and with that there were a bunch of [story] beats to tell. The Replicators kind of start to overpower us, and then we turn the tables. It was a very complex group of scenes and battle to try to actually envision, and a VFX company called

Image Engine took on the job of creating the entire battle. When we planned out the scenes, we sat with them and had these little model ships on the boardroom table that we moved around to plot out the action. It was quite an undertaking.

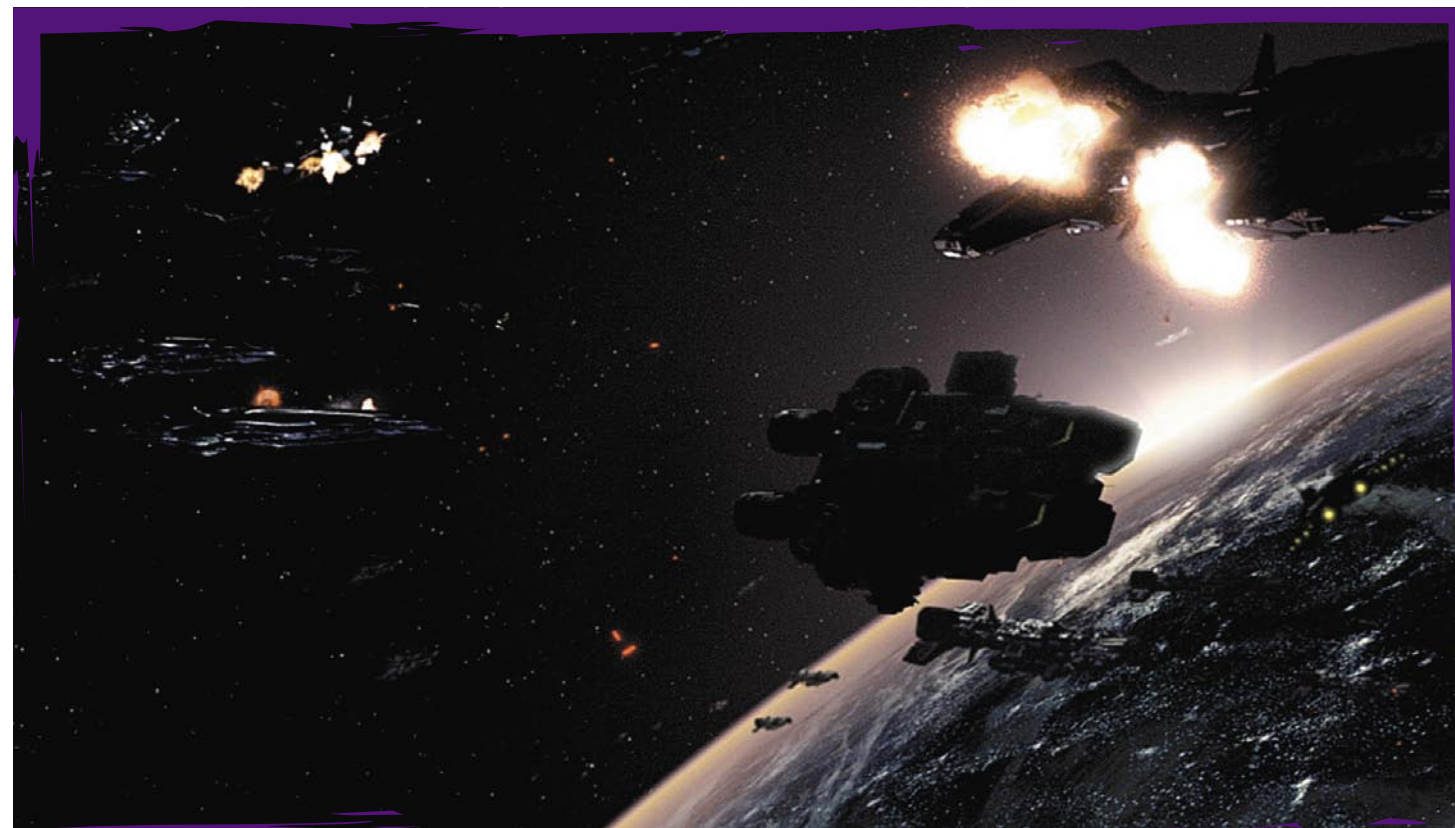
"While the Space battle is going on, Dr McKay has made a [Human-Form] Replicator named FRAN [Friendly Replicator ANDroid] and, with her help, plans to use the anti-Replicator technology/theory in reverse. He sends her down to the Replicator planet where she acts like a magnet, breaking apart all the Replicators to nanite particles. FRAN then absorbs all these particles until she becomes one giant blob. I think this was the first time on the show where I

read this in the script and actually got quite scared, because if something like this isn't properly executed then there's the fear of it looking cheesy.

"The Replicator blob bursts out of one of the buildings and grows to the size of a city suburb. It then starts to sink into the planet, and when that happens it absorbs all the Replicators on the surface, along with those flying the ships from above. So while the battle is going on, the Aurora-class ships start to come to a halt because their crews are turning into nanite particles and being pulled down to the planet to join the big Replicator blob. That's how our heroes end up getting away. They take their ships and jump into hyperspace just before the planet explodes. It all sounds easy, right?

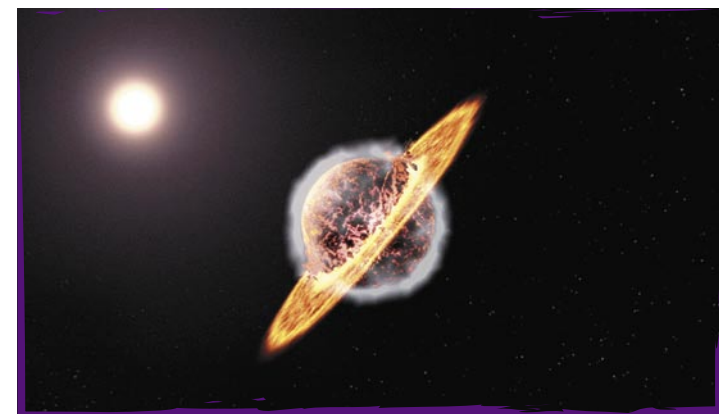
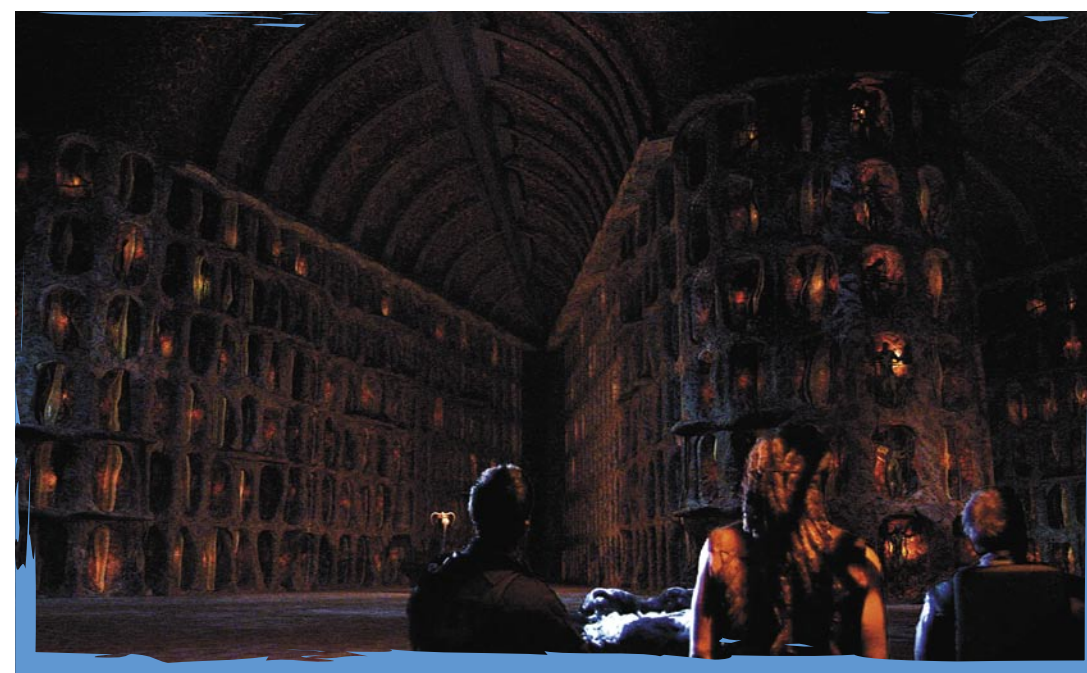
Going into this episode it was quite a challenge to keep the [creative] bar where we had it and make sure everything looked great. I'm happy to say that the episode turned out wonderful. At the end, there's a shot where we go back to the planet and weave through all the debris. It's a big long shot, but eventually we come across a Replicator Aurora-class ship that is being captained by a special guest-star [Torri Higginson as Dr Elizabeth Weir], which is cool."

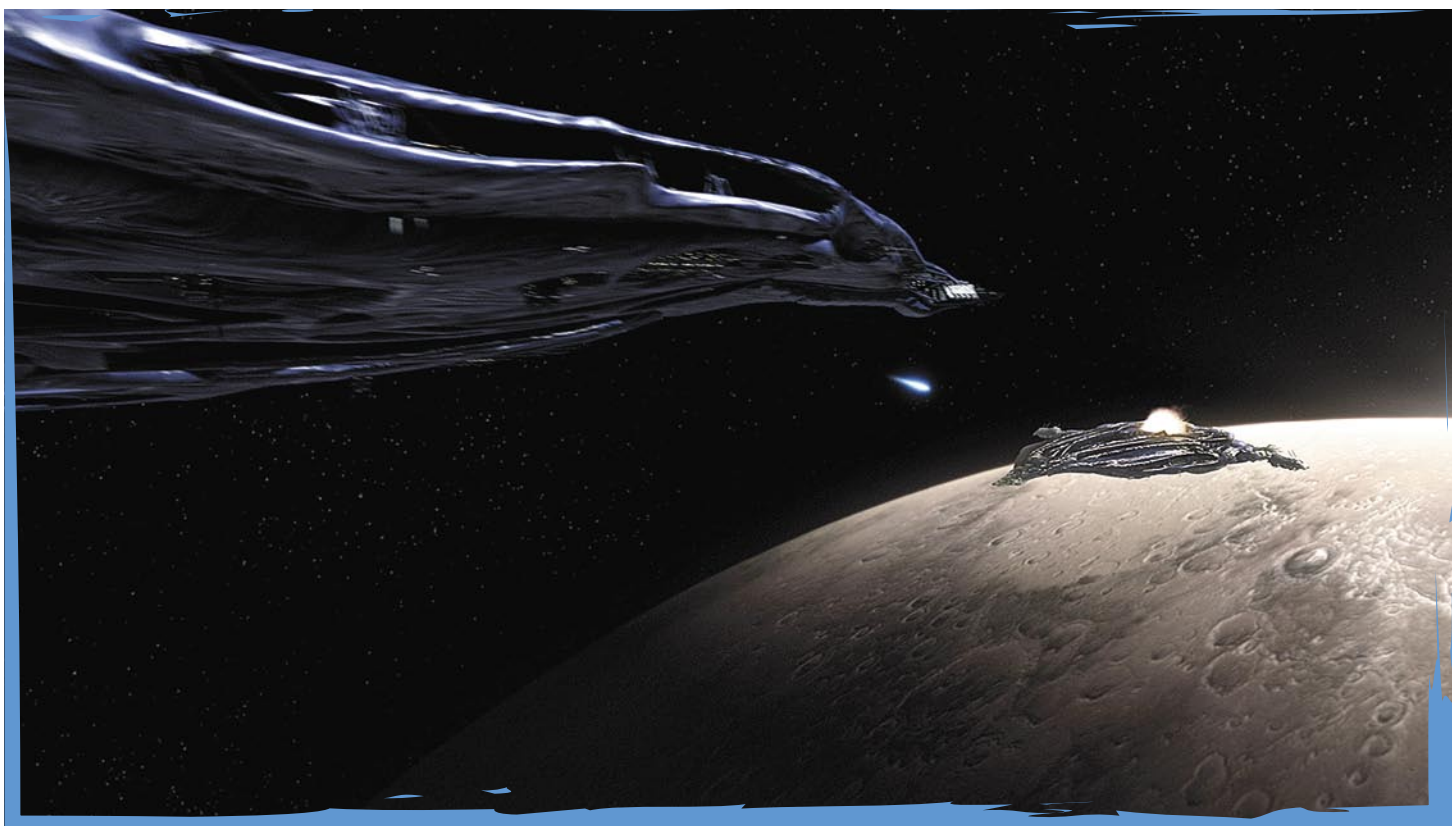
THE NEXT episode shot in production order for Season Four of *Atlantis* was *Spoils of War*, which revisits the battle in *Be All My Sins Remember'd*, but from the Wraiths' point of view. "*Spoils of*



War was tricky because we had to think about it at the same time we were cutting together *Be All My Sins*," notes Savela. "For example, if we had three beats for a specific shot in *Be All My Sins*, but only one beat for that same shot in *Spoils of War* we had to determine the one beat we wanted and how long it should be. You sort of had to be there," chuckles the VFX supervisor. "It was a confusing couple of episodes to work on, but fun at the same time.

"In *Spoils of War* we actually get to see a Wraith cloning facility, which is bigger than the Wraith lab that we've seen before. There's also a really nice shot where a Wraith Queen is sitting in her chair and basically 'attached' to the facility. However, when she wakes up, everything





that she is attached to retracts into her chair. We also get to see a Wraith hive ship crashing into the cloning facility and exploding.”

VFX CO-ORDINATOR Shannon Gurney took one of the **Atlantis** characters to new heights when working on *Quarantine*. “I seem to keep getting the episodes where people are hanging onto something or climbing something,” says Gurney with a smile. “In this one, Colonel Sheppard scales the exterior of

an Atlantis tower, so we shot lots of different angles on a green screen set of him coming out of a practical window and climbing. In addition to that, the construction department built a separate set piece, which was a 20-or 30-foot tall exterior of the tower. That was for the super high climbing shots of Sheppard and this huge city environment. We filmed those shots on a green screen set, too.

“The majority of our VFX work in this episode involves Sheppard climbing, but there’s

one shot where Ronon and Keller are stuck in the infirmary and have to rig up something to try to break open the doors. They decide to take an oxygen tank, which is about three feet long, and rig it so that it will hopefully blast through the doors. Because we couldn’t do that practically, we ended up shooting some [VFX] plates that would allow us to add a CGI oxygen tank into the shot during post-production. So on set we had the SFX guys rig up some falling cabinets as well as glass breaking and

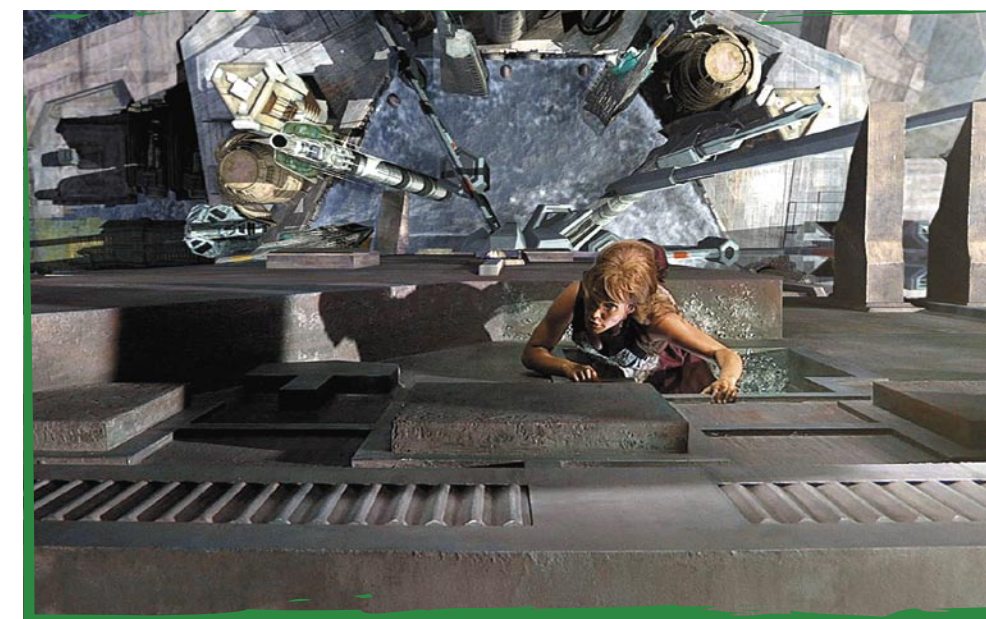
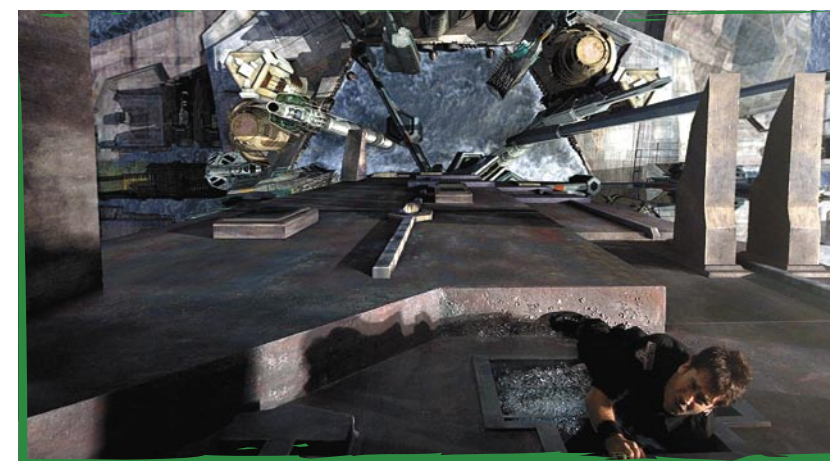
various dents in the walls, all of which were timed so that when we added in the oxygen tank and had it flying all over the room, it would look as if it was causing all the damage.

“Again, the episodes I get are never the big Space ones, but rather those with different effects and ones we don’t normally do, like the oxygen tank and the big rope set [referring to an earlier Season Four episode, *Missing*]. Those types of shots are a big collaborative effort between us, the stunt guys and the SFX



team. They tend to be some of the best shots, too, because you’re incorporating a number of practical elements, and I think the CGI that we then do just enhances things.”

HAVING DONE some Wraith stunner blasts and hive ships in Space VFX shots for the two-part *The Kindred*, Savela began work on *Midway*, where most of the action took place on board the Midway Space Station. “In this episode, the Wraith take over





Midway Station while Ronon and Teal'c are there and, per usual, our heroes love to shoot up Wraith, so they kill a bunch of them," says the VFX supervisor.

"The big VFX challenge with this story, though, was a whole bunch of Stargate puddle pass-throughs we did. So we used the gate room ramp over on our Stargate Command set to shoot the pass-throughs, but then created the 3-D environment of the Midway Space Station behind

it. There's one especially gorgeous shot where we took the camera, put it high up and began filming on the front side of the gate as Teal'c and Ronon stepped through the puddle. We then dropped the camera in behind them to reveal the whole other side of the Midway Station. It's a really impressive shot. Unfortunately, and I don't know if some fans got mad at us or not, but at the end of the episode we blew up the Midway Station, so it's gone."



NEXT UP for Savelle and the Atlantis VFX department was the effects-light episode *Harmony*, followed by the busier *Trio*. "Harmony was a fun episode, and in it there are a bunch of mini Ancients drones, which were interesting to create," he recalls.

"As for *Trio*, which was written by [executive producer] Martin Gero and directed by Martin Wood, it was supposed to be a smallish show and shot

on one set that could tilt. The actual story takes place in a room which is part of an old underground Genii mine, and that our characters end up trapped in after falling through a hole in the ground. The support beams eventually start to give out and the set goes to an 18° tilt and then 20-odd degrees. Outside the room, we had to show the underground mining facility, which is a really impressive matte painting done by newcomers to this series,





Stage3 Media, the same people who make **Sanctuary** [former **Atlantis** regular Amanda Tapping's new show].

"There was a ton of [digital] wire removals in this episode, because the characters were trying to come up with different ways to get out of this room that they're trapped in, including climbing up crates they had stacked up in an effort to reach the hole in the ceiling. Our three actors had to be harnessed and wired up at the same time, and if you watch any Martin Wood episodes, you know he does not like to lock off the camera. So there were times where we had to take out wires that were supporting the actors throughout these huge moving shots.

"We also had to do a lot of 3-D effects shots involving the

supports buckling as well as a shot where Dr Keller is hanging by a rope in the middle of the cavern where they find a mine shaft and make their escape. There was also the final big shot where the support beams collapse and the room our guys were in falls into the cavern. So it turned out to be a pretty big episode, and a change of pace for us to work on because there were no space shots in it. They were all what we call photo-real shots, which was different from what we'd been doing up to that point last year."

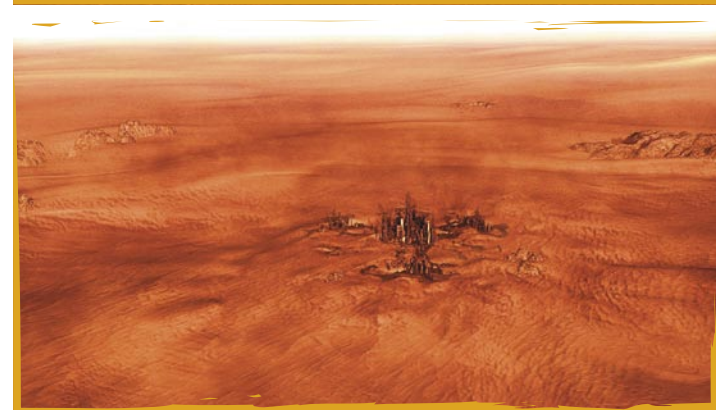
THE PENULTIMATE episode shot for Season Four, **Outcast**, finds Sheppard and Ronon trying to track down a Human-Form Replicator that is loose on Earth. "With *Outcast* we did a



lot of shots that were kind of add-ons after the fact," explains Savelle. "For instance, when this particular Replicator is 'born' on Earth, there's a scene where he opens his eyes for the first time and that needed a little something extra. I think it was Paul Mullie's [Atlantis executive producer]

idea to have a [VFX] chrome effect over his eyes, like we did in *Mortal Coil*. That was just one of the things to show that this was, in fact, a Replicator.

"For this episode we also did three new establishing VFX shots of the Apollo in orbit over Earth, which are all pretty beautiful.





And then our last 'little' sequence is where the Replicator is beamed out of a room and into the atmosphere above Earth, where he starts falling, goes through the atmosphere and ultimately burns up.

"It was a neat sequence to do because we filmed our actor on

a green screen and he was hung by wires, which we could turn. So we would move the camera in and out and physically turn him as opposed to the camera. The shot starts with us facing the Replicator and then we do a reveal of Earth, so the camera



moves around and shows us where he's falling to, and for added affect we hit our actor with a ton of wind from these huge fans. It actually worked out great and looked really nice in the end."

LAST BUT not least – no pun intended – is *Atlantis's* Season Four finale *The Last Man*, which gives Colonel Sheppard, and audiences, a peek into a possible future for our characters. "We get to see our new ship, which is a Daedalus-class called the Phoenix, and like the Daedalus and the Apollo, it's equipped with Asgard beam weapons," says Savelle. "Colonel Carter takes the Phoenix and goes after the Human/Wraith hybrid Michael [Connor Trinneer] as well as some of his followers who are on board a number of Wraith hive ships. So we did these shots that were a lot different than what we had been used to. They were kind of cowboy or renegade style, which isn't really what we've seen in the past, but we really wanted to emphasize that Carter was on this dangerous mission."

"There's a shot where Carter uses the Phoenix to ram one of the hive ships, which then takes out three other hive ships. It's really hard to wrap your head around something like that when

you're reading it on a piece of paper, but we actually did it and it looks pretty damn cool," enthuses the VFX supervisor. "There are some great Atlantis shots in *The Last Man* where it's in the Future and the planet has dried up, so the city is sitting in the middle of a desert at the bottom of an ocean floor. At one point, Sheppard has to make his way through a sandstorm, which was filmed here on the effects stage with blowing particles and massive fans. We [the VFX department] then added in a lot of the floor as well as the ground and sand dunes. Our very last shot from Season Four is quite spectacular and is where one of Michael's experimental facilities explodes with our heroes inside. It began as a complete 3-D matte painting before we went in and 'blew' it all up."

"I really enjoyed the work we did on the show last year, especially the Space stuff in *Be All My Sins Remember'd* and *The Last Man*. It's pretty amazing to watch the explosions and the ships blow up. The shots look nicer than anything we'd done before. It's a continuing progression and, hopefully, we'll keep getting better and better at it, and audiences will like what we're doing more and more."



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CLOSED CIRCLE

The latest Stargate DVD, *Continuum*, assessed....



↩ General Landry believes SG-1 without knowing them... and forbids them to try and put history 'right'

⇒ Heading for Russia as the world comes to an end...

DVD DETAILS

Continuum is released on Region 2 DVD on 18th August, price £19.99 from MGM



ACCOMPANIED BY General O'Neill, SG-1 attend the execution of the last system lord, Ba'al – sorry, make that the extraction, which is fairer on the host, but makes no difference at all to the Ba'al parasite. Which is probably why he delivers a threat or two about his 'ultimate fail-safe' as his end draws nigh. Then people start to disappear... have they, as O'Neill suggests, sneaked off to the loo and got lost during the interminable list of Ba'al's crimes, or is something a bit more Sci-Fi going on?

Take a guess! Yep, we're soon in an alternate history where the Stargate got lost back in 1939, and the SGC never happened, which sounds like an involved (anti-)continuity fest. But despite that, *Continuum* shows off all the strengths of Stargate in just the way that *The Ark of Truth* highlighted its late season tendency to get swamped by continuity, technobabble and obvious plotting. In the alternate universe we see there are loads of 'valentines to the fans', in the form of reappearances by characters long-gone in 'normality' (such as a brief, cutting, appearance by Apophis), but you don't need to know the back plot (and most of them, to be honest, amount to visually familiar figures turning up in the background of a meeting of Ba'al's loyal warlords, which add nothing except the pleased feeling that 'They didn't need to get that right, but they did').

More disappointing, for many, will be the minimal role of Jack O'Neill, who's effectively restricted to three cameo scenes, and doesn't even turn up for the crucial scenes despite the plot setting up his involvement earlier (to be fair, events have got in his way by then, and Sam/Jackers will love her reaction to his apparent death. Well, actual death. Time-wimey, parallel-universey). Similarly, Landry only gets one scene, and it's actually President Hayes and General Hammond who get the meat of the supporting roles (though, perhaps wisely, the question of whether George Hammond would still be the same man in a world where the Stargate programme never existed, and he hence never met those odd people in 1969, is left unexplored. That's a question for an alternate script where Don S Davis is the



lead... one we'll sadly never see. At least he gets a good send-off here).

A real strength is that *Continuum* tackles the existential question head on – for the people of the new timeline, this is reality, and they're not going to help to get it erased (particularly O'Neill, whose son never died in this timeline. Pity we never see him, actually – that could have added a real tragic weight to the story). In the same vein, once the survivors of the original timeline are released into new lives but restricted going anywhere near anything that might associate them with the Stargate, we're given some nice red herrings about how they might deal with the situation that come to nothing, emphasizing that heroes can only be heroes when there's a position to behave like heroes.

Which leads nicely to Teal'c's role. For a pleasantly long time it seems we're going to escape the cliché of the alternative Teal'c, first prime to Ba'al, realizing that the alternate world is better and making a moral choice to aid Mitchell and co, and once it finally comes after all it feels right, closing the circle to *Children of the Gods* all those years ago. And similarly, the final grandfather paradox of Mitchell's role in setting things to rights also

works, partly because you wonder right to the end quite how firmly the 'paradox circle' will be closed.

Not that there aren't flaws – for starters, the visually affecting image of a one-legged Dr Jackson (a frost-bite victim after his arctic adventures, the filming of which really does make this look like a major movie) hits home, but his maiming seems to be forgotten later on. OK, prosthetic limbs can be astonishingly effective (check out the recent controversy over whether an accomplished Paralympic runner's artificial legs would give him an unfair advantage if he was allowed to compete with able-bodied rivals), but there's no acknowledgement of the physiotherapy effort that would be needed for Daniel to run as effectively as he does in later scenes. Showing the devastation of Washington from the vantage point of our heroes, in their sky-high jets, robs it of the impact of seeing Famous Big Buildings get blasted. And if the series were still on air, we could follow up on the intriguing question of whether Ba'al's host has any hope of recovery (still, *Serpent's Song* covered that idea very well all those years ago). But, on the whole, if this were to be the end for SG-1, then it's a nice note to end on.

Anthony Brown

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A real strength is that *Continuum* tackles the existential question head on – for the people of the new timeline, this is reality

FAREWELL, HAMMOND OF TEXAS

Sadly, the release of Continuum coincides with the passing of one of its stars, the much-loved actor Don S Davis...

ONE OF the unexpected pleasures of the DVD movie **Stargate: Continuum** is the size of General Hammond's role. His quiet presence in many scenes is a poignant reminder of how much the



series lost when actor Don S Davis stepped down from a full time role on **Stargate SG-1** at the end of its seventh season... poignant because of the news that Mr Davis is no longer with us to see his performance for himself, after suffering a massive heart attack on June 29th.

Born on August 4th 1942 in Aurora, Missouri, Davis did indeed have a military career, but not in the Air Force or Navy, like his most famous characters, but in the US Army, rising to the rank of captain in the late 1960s. Before this, he'd already achieved a bachelor degree in Science and a double major in Theatre and Art from Southwest Missouri State College in 1965, and returned to academia to complete his Master Degree in 1970, adding a PhD to his academic qualifications in 1982, just as his acting career began in earnest.

HIS FIRST television role came in 1982 in the opening episode of the short-lived **Happy Days** spin-off **Joanie Loves Chachie**, playing Benny (for which he was credited as 'Don Totalmedia Davis'), and in 1986 he played a surgeon in the Science Fiction pilot **I-Man** (starring Scott Bakula as a man who becomes able to heal all wounds almost instantly after exposure to an alien gas). But more significantly for his long-term career, regular work came in 1987 on the Richard Dean Anderson vehicle **MacGyver**, as the stand-in and stunt



double for Dana Elcar, who played Pete Thornton, the head of the Phoenix Foundation and easy-going 'boss' to Anderson's inventive troubleshooter. Standing in for the co-star while the lighting crew set up for takes, or for over-the-shoulder reversal shots, could seem an unrewarding role, but it's one where commitment and attention to detail can catch the attention of observant producers, and that was the case here, with Davis being rewarded with two speaking guest spots – the first, as a cement truck driver in **Burn Out** early in Season Three, a relatively minor part with an element of stunt work (as it meant working with controlled explosions), the second, in **The Endangered** towards the end of that season, a more substantial character role as poacher Wyatt Porter.

These weren't the only non-stunt roles which Davis took during the course of **MacGyver**'s seven season, between 1987 and 1994, though there were plenty of those. A first example of a broadening range of authority roles came as Dr Morris in the Stairway to Heaven episode of the cult undercover drama **Wiseguy**, Judge Richard Batke in **LA Law** (*Bound for Glory*), and

a first encounter with Space-based drama as Phil Clowson in **Beyond the Stars** (about a teenage would-be astronaut who befriends the first man on the moon) – not mention dozens of small film roles. But the impact he'd made on **MacGyver** star and producer Richard Dean Anderson would perhaps be most significant, as Anderson was approached to take the lead in a television adaptation of the hit movie **Stargate**, and spotted a role for Davis in the form of General George Hammond, head of Stargate Command.

BUT BEFORE this there'd be two other significant recurring roles as military men who were, just as importantly, fathers in two of the 1990s' most high profile series. First, there was Davis's part as Major Garland Briggs in David Lynch's mind-bending **Twin Peaks**. In the first season, Briggs seemed to be merely the disapproving father of 'bad boy' Bobby Briggs, the cuckolded boyfriend of Laura Palmer – disapproving in that peculiarly silent, non-condemnatory way that only a career military man can achieve, with his few taciturn



↑ The late, great Don S Davis in his most memorable role, as General George Hammond

↔ Davis as Scully's father in **The X-Files**, as spirit guide and phantom vision of a killer

↔ Davis's last Stargate performance, in **Continuum**



SELECTED TV ROLES

I-Man	Surgeon (1986)
MacGyver	Cement Truck Driver (<i>Blow Out</i> , 1987) Wyatt Porter (<i>The Endangered</i> , 1988)
Wiseguy	Dr Morris (<i>Stairway to Heaven</i> , 1989)
LA Law	Judge Richard Batke (<i>Bound for Glory</i> , 1990)
Broken Badges	Chief Sterling (Three episodes, 1990)
21 Jump Street	(Five episodes, 1987-1991)
Twin Peaks	Major Garland Briggs (1990-1991)
Nightmare Café	Sheriff Dan Filcher (<i>Aliens Ate My Lunch</i> , 1992)
Knots Landing	Warden Vernon Howard (<i>Little Girl Lost</i> , 1992)
Columbo	Bertie (<i>A Bird in the Hand</i> , 1992)
Highlander	Balance (<i>The Return of Amanda</i> , 1993)
Northern Exposure	Lloyd Hillegas (<i>Blood Ties</i> , 1994)
MANTIS	Admiral Farallon (<i>Tango Blue</i> , 1994)
The X-Files	Captain William Scully (<i>Beyond the Sea & One Breath</i> , 1994)
The Outer Limits	Detective Wilson (<i>Living Hell</i> , 1995) General Callahan (<i>The Voice of Reason</i> , 1995)
Madison	Mr Winslow (Seven episodes, 1994-96)
Prison of Zenda, Inc	Colonel Zapf (1996)
Profit	Former Sheriff Crewer (<i>Pilot & Hero</i> , 1996)
Poltergeist: The Legacy	Harold Taggart (<i>The Inheritance</i> , 1996)
Viper	Lloyd (<i>Street Pirates</i> , 1996)
The Sentinel	Wilton Fisker (<i>Crossroads</i> , 1998)
Honey, I Shrunk the Kids	Mr Washington (<i>Honey, It's No Fun Being an Illegal Alien</i> , 1998)
Stargate SG-1 & Stargate Atlantis	General George Hammond (1997-2008)
The Twilight Zone	Dr Tate (<i>Memphis</i> , 2003)
Andromeda	Avineri (<i>The Eschatology of Our Present</i> , 2004)
NCIS	MTAC Control Officer (<i>Chained</i> , 2004)
The West Wing	Reverend Don Butler (<i>In God We Trust</i> , 2005)
The Dead Zone	Senator Harlan Ellis (Three episodes, 2005-06)
Psych	Mr McCallum (<i>Pilot</i> , 2006)
Supernatural	Trotter (<i>Sin City</i> , 2007)
Flash Gordon	Mitchell (<i>Conspiracy Theory & Revolution</i> , 2008)
Burn Up	The Man (2008)

IN HIS OWN WORDS

Don S Davis Spoke to our magazines many times, including...
.....*Starburst* #347
.....*TV Zone* #116, 270
.....*TV Zone Specials* #61, 55, 52,
..... 50, 46, 42, 38
..... *Starburst Special* #51

↓ Don S Davis in one of his last roles, as the sinister 'The Man' in the BBC political drama **Burn Up**

words simply making clear the depths of his disappointment at his son's failings. But as the series went on, Major Briggs's secret work with the UFO-investigating Project Blue Book became increasingly important, as it became clear that he knew far more about the Owl-infested woods and the Black Lodge than he was allowed to reveal. Perhaps Davis's finest moments came as the series recovered its momentum in the latter half of the second season, as he appeared in almost every episode, and was able to show off his talent for deadpan comedy in his straight-faced reaction to the schemes of the insane ex-FBI agent Windom Earle – even when ambushed by a talking pantomime horse.

DAVIS REPRISED the role for the big screen prequel/sequel **Fire: Walk with Me**, although his part was one of many left on the over-running movie's cutting room floor, and also appeared in **Knots Landing**, **MANTIS**, **Highlander**, **Northern Exposure** and **Nightmare Cafe** in the early 1990s, before becoming another military father in another cult series as Captain William Scully, late father to Dana Scully, in **The X-Files**. Appearing in only two episodes, and one of those (*One Breath*) only in Scully's near death experiences, it was nevertheless one of the most significant guest roles in the series' history, as the emotionally affecting *Beyond the Sea* was arguably the episode which opened the series up from monster-of-the-week with hints of conspiracy' to explore the emotional lives of the central characters, proving to doubtful network executives that the different approaches could be combined.

THEN CAME the part of General Hammond, potentially a minor figure who'd simply see the SG-1 team off on their mission, or pass on a bureaucratic block from the Pentagon. But right from the start, Davis managed to embue the character

with a paternal, flexible undercurrent behind the blue serge starch of his uniform, something which was eventually explained by the Time loop storyline featured in the second season episode *1968* – a one that might well never have come about had Davis's performance not hinted at hidden depths that intrigued the writers. In keeping with **Stargate's** realistic handling of contemporary military procedure, opportunities for Davis's character to take a risky trip through the Gate were rare, but he relished the few occasions when they occurred, and always brought an extra edge of class to the smallest of scenes.

When the launch of **Stargate Atlantis** and the personnel shuffling caused by the reduced role of Richard Dean Anderson saw Davis shift from a credited regular role to very occasional guest appearances, many fans were disappointed, not knowing that his health had made such a move advisable. But aside from getting more spotlighted roles when he did appear, he was also able to take on more guest spots in other series, including **Andromeda**, **Psych**, a recurring part as Senator Harlan Ellis on **The Dead Zone**, as the televangelist and presidential candidate Reverend Don Butler in **The West Wing**, and (most recently) as Dale Arden's boss Mitchell in **Flash Gordon**. He was also able to give more time to his love of art, painting and sculpting.

Davis passed away before the official release of his last appearance as Hammond in **Stargate: Continuum**, where even as an alternate version of Hammond who has no back history with the SG-1 team, he brings an air of authoritative support to all his scenes. His family have requested that, rather than flowers or gifts, fans pay tribute to him with donations to the American Heart Foundation. He also left one more television role behind, in the BBC's political thriller **Burn Up**. Once again it's a role which makes use of Davis's imposing and potentially menacing presence, but for once he's not playing against this, instead providing the menace as one of the 'Men in Black' behind the conspiracy of oil who dominate global politics and business.

It's a performance that shows how menacing Davis could be when he chose – but it's for the geniality with which he underlaid the stern facades of Captain Scully, Major Briggs and Hammond of Texas that his performances will be remembered and treasured in years to come.

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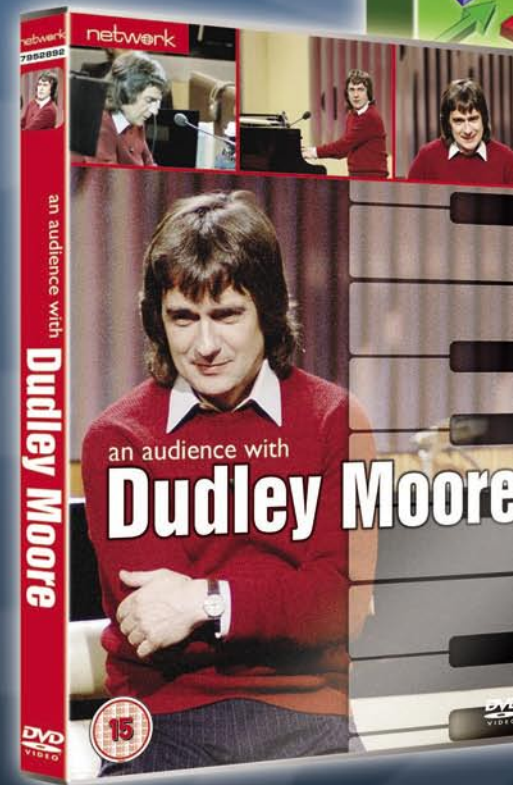
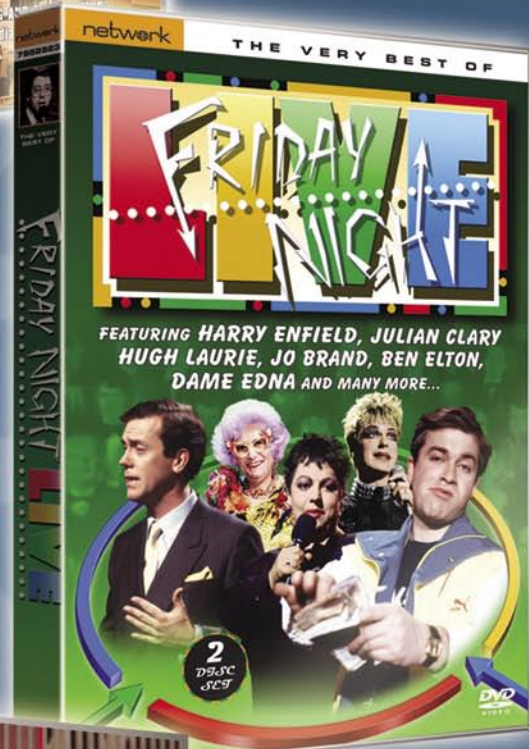
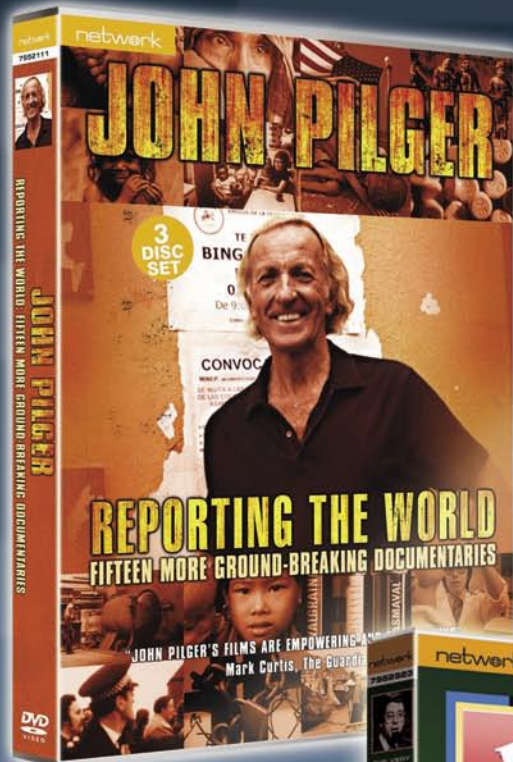
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Complete guide to both seasons



Regular Cast & Crew

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 Ben Hawkins **Nick Stahl**
 Brother Justin Crowe **Clancy Brown**
 Ruthie **Adrienne Barbeau**
 Professor Lodz **Patrick Bauchau**
 Lila **Debra Christofferson**
 Jones **Tim DeKay**
 Sofie **Clea Duvall**
 Rita Sue Dreifuss **Cynthia Ettinger**
 Gecko **John Fleck**
 Libby Dreifuss **Carla Gallo**
 Stumpy Dreifuss **Toby Huss**
 Apollonia **Diane Salinger**
 Iris Crowe **Amy Madigan**
 Alexandria **Karyne Steben**
 Caledonia **Sarah Steben**

Gabriel **Brian Turk**
 Reverend Norman Balthus . **Ralph Waite**

 Creator/Executive producer **Daniel Knauf**
 Executive producers **Howard Klein**
 **Ron Moore**
 Co-Executive producers . . **David Knoller**
 **Nicole Yorkin**
 **& Dawn Prestwich**
 Supervising producers . . . **Dan Hassid**
 **William Schmidt**
 Consulting producer **Toni Graphia**
 Costume Design **Terry Dresbach**
 Original music **Jeff Beal**
 **Wendy Melvoin**
 **& Lisa Coleman**

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Russian Soldier **Michael Massee**
 Dora Mae Dreifuss **Amanda Aday**
 Henry 'Hack' Scudder **John Savage**
 Tattooed Man **Don Swayze**
 Maddy Crane **Jenna Boyd**
 Lean Man **EJ Callahan**
 Eleanor **K Callan**
 Jasper **Frank Collison**
 Prostitute **Gigi de Leon**
 Young Ben **Ryan Hanson**
 Junior **Joshua Harto**
 Flora Hawkins **Lucinda Jenney**
 Bulldozer Driver **Jack McGee**
 Giant **Matthew McGrory**
 Tammy Crane **Bobby Preston**
 Talker **Brett Rickaby**
 Flasher **Ted Rooney**
 Red **Joe Unger**

After the death of his mother, a travelling carnival picks up Ben Hawkins, a young man with an unusual ability.

Writer **Daniel Knauf**
 Director **Rodrigo Garcia**
First US transmission: 14th Sep 2003

A2 *After the Ball is Over*

Russian Soldier **Michael Massee**
 Dora Mae Dreifuss **Amanda Aday**
 Carroll Templeton **Ron Perkins**
 Henry 'Hack' Scudder **John Savage**
 Flasher **Ted Rooney**
 Eleanor **K Callan**
 Mr Chin **George Kee Cheung**
 Prostitute **Gigi de Leon**
 Emma Templeton **Kathleen Gati**
 Garrett **Dennis W Hall**
 Wheel Man **Brent Hinkley**
 Waitress **Linda Eve Miller**
 Possum **Bill Moseley**
 Clark **Patrick T O'Brien**
 Lester **Stephen White**
 Minnie **Lisa K Wyatt**

As Justin seeks to expand his ministry into a new venue, Ben discovers a photograph of surprising significance.

Writers **Daniel Knauf**
 **& Ronald D Moore**
 Director **Jeremy Podeswa**
First US transmission: 21st Sep 2003

A3 *Tipton*

Dora Mae Dreifuss **Amanda Aday**
 Councilman Glenn Templeton **Glenn Shadix**
 Young Becca Donovan **Susan Walters**
 Henry 'Hack' Scudder **John Savage**
 Woman - 10 in 1 **Judy Jean Berns**
 Eleanor **K Callan**
 Mrs Crabb **Lisa Dalton**



Reverend Goyer **James Lashly**
 Passerby **Adrian Lee**
 Ned Munson **Matt McCoy**
 Becca Donovan **Deborah Strang**
 Farmer **Mark Colson**
 Crusty Farmer **Stu Eriksen**
 Second Woman **Edie Magolin**
 Big Man **Nick Mize**
 Possum **Bill Moseley**
 Man - 10 in 1 **Nick Pernice**
 Old Lady **Janet Rotblatt**
 First Woman **Heather Shropman**
 Dairy Farmer **Don Oscar Smith**
 Maddy Crane **Haley Nicole Smith**
 Lester **Stephen White**

Ben continues to follow clues to his family's past in a town where the carnival isn't allowed, so instead of the full show, Samson decides to put on a faith healer set, showcasing Ben's abilities.

Writer **Daniel Knauf**
 Story by **Henry Bromell**
 Director **Rodrigo Garcia**
First US transmission: 28th Sep 2003

A4 *Black Blizzard*

Dora Mae Dreifuss **Amanda Aday**
 Miss Jolene **Judith Hoag**
 Harlan Staub **Gabriel Mann**
 Grover **Carson Elrod**
 Osgood **Blake Shields**
 Possum **Bill Moseley**
 Asa **Billy Beck**
 Mackey **Jesse Burch**

↑ If you were ever to run away and join the circus... steer well clear of this one!

↔ Ben Hawkins (Nick Stahl) and Brother Justin Crowe (Clancy Brown), the white and black kings of the desert chess-board

⇒ A disturbing dream vision for Ben... which may prove to ave family importance





Newt **Ron Michaelson**
Polly Ann **Aria Wallace**

During a strong blizzard, Lodz confronts Ben about his abilities, Samson visits a house of ill repute, and Sofie goes searching for affection.

Writer **William Schmidt**
Director **Peter Medak**
First US transmission: 5th Oct 2003

A5 *Babylon*

Dora Mae Dreifuss **Amanda Aday**
Stangler **John Hannah**
Henry 'Hack' Scudder **John Savage**
CL Dill **David Darmsteder**
First Guy **Lou Glenn**
Ike Gukor **Thomas Kopache**
Barley **Scott MacDonald**
Second Guy **Paul Yeuell**

The carnival arrives in the strange town of Babylon, where the locals are less than friendly, Samson orders the strippers to keep themselves covered, and Ben is taken and trapped in a cave, where he sees some familiar faces.

Writers **Dawn Prestwich**
. **& Nicole Yorkin**



Director **Tim Hunter**
First US transmission: 12th Oct 2003

A6 *Pick a Number*

Russian Soldier **Michael Massee**
Dora Mae Dreifuss **Amanda Aday**
Talkative Hobo **Michael Cavanaugh**
Stangler **John Hannah**
Tommy Dolan **Robert Knepper**
Lou Edwards **Peter Jason**
Pepper **Leonard Kelly-Young**
Burley **Scott MacDonald**
Possum **Bill Moseley**
Man – Announcer **Mark Ankeny**
Frank **John Churchill**
Foreman **Joe Keyes**
Joe **Tyler Reign**

Seeking justice, the carnival folk head into Babylon looking for someone to pay for a recent tragedy. Meanwhile, Ben continues to explore the mine.

Writer **Ronald D Moore**
Director **Rodrigo Garcia**
First US transmission: 19th Oct 2003

A7 *The River*

Tommy Dolan **Robert Knepper**
Coreen Templeton **Lorna Scott**
Councilman Glenn Templeton **Glenn Shadix**
Eleanor **K Callan**
Young Balthus **Spencer Garrett**
Patrolman **Ritchie Montgomery**
Alexsei **Jordan Orr**
Irina **Erin Sanders**
Lester **Stephen White**

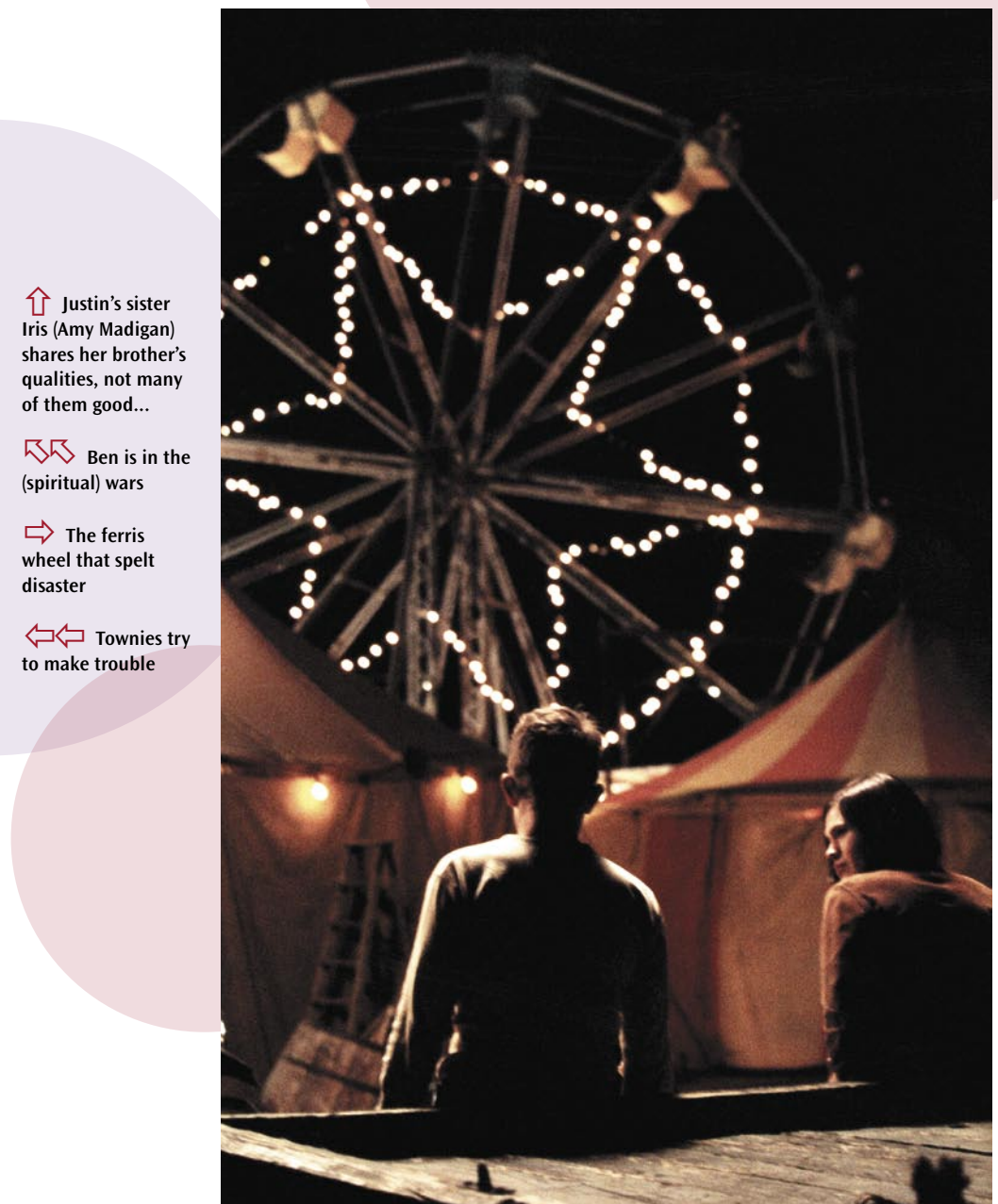
A reporter pays a visit to Iris to do a story on Brother Justin, who has leapt into a river and washed up on shore, meeting two unusual children. Ben learns more than he'd like about Ruthie, and Libby is determined to go to Hollywood.

Writer **Toni Graphia**
Director **Alison MacLean**
First US transmission: 26th Oct 2003

A8 *Lonnigan, Texas*

Russian Soldier **Michael Massee**
Fineas Boffo **John Doe**
Psychiatrist **Richard Fancy**
Lobster Girl **Cathy Berry**
Bunny **Michael Robert Brandon**
Russian Priest **Eugene Lazrev**
Pa **Michael D Nye**
Daddy **Cletus Young**

Justin has learnt what is within him, and been committed to an asylum. Ben is sent to acquire a 'scorpion man' before other local freak shows get him, Sofie is



↑ Justin's sister Iris (Amy Madigan) shares her brother's qualities, not many of them good...

↔ Ben is in the (spiritual) wars

⇒ The ferris wheel that spelt disaster

↔ Townies try to make trouble



↩ The reptile-skinned Gecko (John Fleck)

⇒ Proud Manager Samson (Michael J Anderson)

🏠 Ben with Ruthie (Adrienne Barbeau) before healing Gabriel's arm

↓ Stumpy (Toby Huss) takes a break from the 'Cooch Show'



made an offer to join the cooch show and Stumpy offers Jonesy a deal.

Writer Daniel Knauf
Director Scott Winant
First US transmission: 2nd Nov 2003

A9 *Insomnia*

Psychiatrist Richard Fancy
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
Jasper/Third Talker Frank Collison
Male Performer Gary Imhoff
Burley Scott MacDonald
Ajax Joe Mellis
Possum Bill Moseley
Female Performer Laura Owens
First Talker Ted Rooney
Lady with Watch Susan Savage
Osgood Blake Shields
Tattooed Man Don Savage
Townie Richard Wharton
Announcer Mark Ankeny
Hick Clay Chappell
Emily Hunter Johnson

Sofie's mother appears to be losing her mind, Samson warns Ben about Lodz and seeks revenge for recent actions, the carnival undertakes a fireball show, where they try to fleece every patron, and Iris appeals for Justin to return as he is released from the asylum.

Writer William Schmidt
Director Jack Bender
First US transmission: 9th Nov 2003

A10 *Hot and Bothered*

Fineas Boffo John Doe
Catalina de la Rosa . Valeria Hernandez
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
Henry 'Hack' Scudder . . . John Savage
Etta Mae Maria Bembenek
Burley Scott MacDonald
Frank Mooney Kim Robillard
Osgood Blake Shields
Tattooed Man Don Swayze
Toady Michael Waltman
Man in Glasses Andy Forrest
Slim/Wheel Man Brent Hinkley
Paco Marco Morales
Possum Bill Moseley
Woman Stephanie Nash
Young Man Will Shivers

Justin returns to Iris and meets Tommy Dolan. Libby sees Jonesy and her mother together. Samson and Ben visit the Templars in search of information on Scutter, and Sofie and Jonesy go on a date that is disrupted by visions from Sofie's mother.

Writers Nicole Yorkin
. & Dawn Prestwich



Director Jeremy Podeswa
First US transmission: 16th Nov 2003

A11 *Day of the Dead*

Catalina Valeria Hernandez
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
Henry 'Hack' Scudder . . . John Savage
Proprietor Luis Contreras



Vendor Octavio Gomez
Old Woman Gina Morelli
Bartender Tony Perez
Mexican Child Amir

Lodz seeks vengeance on Ruthie, Sofie does a reading for Stumpy and learns more than she wanted to, and Justin learns who burnt his church down.

Writer Toni Graphia
Director John Patterson
First US transmission: 23rd Nov 2003

A12 *The Day That Was The Day*

Texas Ranger Jon Gries
Catalina Valeria Hernandez
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
Henry 'Hack' Scudder . . . John Savage
Young Balthus Spencer Garrett
Burley Scott MacDonald
Drunk Santos Morales
Possum Bill Moseley
Alexsei Jordan Orr
Bartender Tony Perez
Irina Erin Sanders
Osgood Blake Shields

Ben visits Management and is told that to save a life, he must first take another. As he tries to decide who will pay the price, Sofie teaches Libby and Jonesy a lesson, Lodz gets a present and Justin attempts to halt his own rise to power.

Writer Ronald D Moore
Director Rodrigo Garcia
First US transmission: 30th Nov 2003

B1 *Los Moscos*

Varlyn Stroud John Carroll Lynch
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
Burley Scott MacDonald
Osgood Blake Shields
Engineer Darin Cooper



↩ Samson with the Giant (Matthew McGrory)

↩ Ben builds a relationship with Tarot-card reader Sofie (Clea Duvall)

⇒ Justin's power increases

First Volunteer Kelly Lynn Warren
Bishop Naughton John Aylward
Wilfred Talbot Smith Time Winters
Texas Ranger Jon Gries
Rubber Boy Daniel Browning Smith

Justin's ministry spreads using the medium of radio, and both he and Ben receive visions, causing Justin to pick a site for a new temple and Ben to seek out Henry Scudder on the instructions of Management. Meanwhile, Sofie goes missing.

Writer Daniel Knauf
Director Jeremy Podeswa
First US transmission: 9th Jan 2005

B2 Alamagordo, NM

Varlyn Stroud John Carroll Lynch
Eleanor McGill K Callan
Burley Scott MacDonald
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
OSgood Blake Shields
Second Nun Tracey Evans
Garrett Dennis W Hall
Prison Guard Price Carson
Father Kerrigan Derrick O'Connor
Cooch patron John Blevins
Ada Sarah Amstutz
Carni Wife Olga Karavaeva
Celeste Watkins Eliza Pryor Nagel
Hiroshi Saemi Nakamura
Migrant Worker Tom Roberts
Rubber Boy Daniel Browning Smith
Sister Agatha Beth Tapper

Ben finds Father Kerrigan and learns of Scudder's connection to the Templars, then encounters a dazed Sofie on his way back to the carnival. Meanwhile Justin dedicates the Temple of Jericho and gains new apostles.

Writer William Schmidt
Director Jack Bender
First US transmission: 16th Jan 2005

B3 Ingram, TX

Professor Lodz Patrick Bauchau
Bud Everhard Kurt Fuller
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
Varlyn Stroud John Carroll Lynch
Alvin Mark Boone Junior
Ern Leo Fitzpatrick
Lee Jimm Simpson
Radio Announcer Mark Ankeny
Stooped Man James Carraway
Octavia Sydney Dever
Heavy Set Girl Taylor Morgan Lewis
Burley Scott MacDonald
Waitress Fay Masterson
Celeste Eliza Pryor Nagel
Ginny Devon Reeves
One Man Andrew A Rolfes

Brother Justin's apostle visits Babylon, while Ben continues on his quest to find Scudder, falling into the clutches of some very dangerous people. Sofie's new job causes ructions, Stumpy is forced to make payment to the local sheriff and Ruthie is haunted.

Writer John J McLaughlin
Director John Patterson
First US transmission: 23rd Jan 2005

B4 Old Cherry Blossom Road

Varlyn Stroud John Carroll Lynch
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
OSgood Blake Shields
Burley Scott MacDonald
Voice of Management Linda Hunt
Voice of Sword Swallower David Michie
Opal Andrea Morris
Altar Boy Christopher Nathaniel
Celeste Watkins Eliza Pryor Nagel
Ginny Devon Reeves
Frank Mooney Kim Robillard
Rubber Boy Daniel Browning Smith
B-Dub Jim Cody Williams
Clyde Gene Wolande
The Crone Ellen Geer
Ern Leo Fitzpatrick
Octavia Sydney Dever
Fletch John Allsopp
Alvin Mark Boone Jr

Ben is taken to meet a blind woman who claims to be his grandmother and learns more about Henry Scudder. The carnies take offence at Sofie's determination to succeed as a manual worker, Stumpy attempts to start a daytime show and Iris discovers Justin's latest handiwork.

Writers Dawn Prestwich
& Nicole Yorkin
Director Steve Shill
First US transmission: 30th Jan 2005

B5 Creed, OK

Tommy Doyle Robert Knepper
Varlyn Stroud John Carroll Lynch
Evander Geddes Dakin Matthews
Henry 'Hack' Scudder . . . John Savage
Fletch John Allsopp
Burley Scott MacDonald
Doting Dad Jonathan Nail
OSgood Blake Shields
Keenan Bowler . . . Derik Van Derbeken
First Volunteer Kelly Lynn Warren
Clyde Gene Wolande

Visiting a mask maker in search of Scudder, Ben has a disturbing experience. Ruthie tells Sofie that she is able to see her mother, Justin learns what Iris did to further his mission and Justin's disciple visits the carnival.



Writer Tracy Tormé
Director Jeremy Podeswa
First US transmission: 6th Feb 2005

B6 The Road to Damascus

OSgood Blake Shields
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
Burley Scott MacDonald
Varlyn Stoud John Carroll Lynch
Rubber Boy Daniel Browning Smith
Kid Wil Myer
Possum Bill Moseley
Hoppy Rene Kirby
Charlie Lewis James Hawthorne
Prosecutor Eamon Hunt

Bert Paul Hipp
Dottie Lisa Brounstein
Little Girl Lilli Babb
Sabina Bree Walker
Man David Higlen

Stumpy continues to lie about his financial status, causing a confrontation with Rita Sue, while as Ben and Sofie become intimate, their closeness prompts a series of visitations. Meanwhile, Brother Justin sees his own brand of justice served for the fire at the mission.

Writers Nicole Yorkin
& Dawn Prestwich



⇒ Ben cannot convince Sofie to return to the Carnivale...
⇐ ...But he must rescue her from the clutches of Brother Justin

Director Tucker Gates
First US transmission: 13th Feb 2005

B7 Damascus, NE

Varlyn Stroud John Carroll Lynch
Tommy Dolan Robert Knepper
Osgood Blake Shields
Burley Scott MacDonald
Bert Paul Hipp
Prosecutor Eamon Hunt
Charlie Lewis James Hawthorne
Hoppy Rene Kirby
Possum Bill Moseley
Kid Wil Myer
Rubber Boy Daniel Browning Smith
Dottie Lisa Brounstein
Little Girl Lilli Babb
Man David Higlen
Sabina Bree Walker

Ben finally finds Henry Scudder, but he's been followed by Brother Justin's agent, leading to a series of powerful conflicts. Meanwhile, the synod decides to vet Justin's radio sermons, but the preacher is less than enthused.

Writer John J McLaughlin
Story by William Schmidt
Director Alan Taylor
First US transmission: 20th Feb 2005



B8 Outskirts, Damascus, NE

Bert Paul Hipp
Varlyn Stroud John Carroll Lynch
Wilfred Talbot Smith Time Winters
Young Lucius Belyakov Michael Massee
Bud Everhard Kurt Fuller
Councilman Ned Munson Matt McCoy
Councilman Glenn Templeton Glenn Shadix
Henry 'Hack' Scudder John Savage
Rubber Boy Daniel Browning Smith
Eleanor McGill K Callan
Townie Woman Kathleen Mary Carthy
Management Cameron Clapp
Jasper Frank Collison
Punk's Girlfriend Cassandra Grae
Boy Tristan Jarred
Mother Sonja Mobley
Punk Joe Sikora
Attendant Scott Vance

Ben gains Management's power but has to fight to regain Samson's trust. Scudder is abducted by Justin's disciple, making Ben decide to give chase, and the drunken marriage of Libby and Jonesy causes ructions.

Writer Daniel Knauf
Director Tim Hunter
First US transmission: 27th Feb 2005

B9 Lincoln Highway

Rowlett Jeff Austin
Varlyn Stroud John Carroll Lynch
Councilman Ned Munson Matt McCoy
Councilman Val Templeton Glenn Shadix
Henry 'Hack' Scudder John Savage
J Callan Eleanor McGill
Bill McKechnie Jeff Doucette
Burley Scott MacDonald
Osgood Blake Shields
Volunteer Kelly Lynn Warren
Unknown Christopher Murray

Ben heads off solo in search of Scudder, but encounters a dying Jonesy, who's been tarred and feathered in vengeance for the recent death at the carnival. Meanwhile, Sofie falls under the influence of Justin and Ruthie gets a message from beyond the grave.

Writer William Schmidt
Director Rodrigo Garcia
First US transmission: 6th Mar 2005

B10 Cheyenne, WY

Professor Lodz Patrick Bauchau
Varlyn Stourd John Carroll Lynch
Klaus Wolf Muser
Wilfrid Talbot Smith Time Winters
Henry 'Hack' Scudder John Savage



Young Sofie Jillian Henry
Young Brother Justin Jamie Kaler
Young Apollonia Elizabeth Kate
Older Thug John Grantham
Younger Thug Daniel Riordan

the rest of the carnival folk demand a reason to help Hawkins in his mission.

Writers Dawn Prestwich & Nicole Yorkin
Story by John J McLaughlin
Director Dan Lerner
First US transmission: 20th Mar 2005

B12 New Canaan, CA

Val Stroud John Carroll Lynch
Bert Paul Hipp
Sabina Bree Walker
Little Girl Lilli Babb
Rubber Boy Daniel Browning Smith
Deaf Boy Kyle Dietz
Husband Karl Harmann
Young Brother Justin Jamie Kaler
Young Apollonia Jamie Kaler
Burley Scott MacDonald
Old Man Sam Menning
Osgood Blake Shields
Frail Woman Rachel Singer
Tattooed Man Don Swayze
Toady Michael Waltman
Unknown Stephen Duvall

In order to weaken Justin, Samson suggests arranging a trip for him on the Big Wheel while Ben holds a healing sessions, taking the essence to heal others from Justin himself. Meanwhile, Sofie learns some disturbing facts about Justin and pays the terrible price...

Writer Daniel Knauf
Story by Tracy Torme
Director Scott Winant
First US transmission: 27th Mar 2005

PREVIOUSLY IN TV ZONE...
INTERVIEW
Creator
Daniel Knauf
..... TV Zone #187
FEATURE
New Series
..... TV Zone #186

Jonesy insists on going with Ben to find Henry Scudder and confront Brother Justin, and makes Libby swear to keep secret what she's seen. Unfortunately, to shut up Rita Sue, she tells all, piqueing the interest of Lila, whose relationship with Ruthie takes a decidedly odd turn. Meanwhile, Iris makes plans with Norman.

Writer Tracy Tormé
Director Todd Field
First US transmission: 13th Mar 2005

B11 Outside New Canaan

Gabriel Ben Turk
Varlyn Stoud John Carroll Lynch
Burley Scott MacDonald
Councilman Ned Munsted Matt McCoy
Councilman Glenn Templeton Glenn Shadix
Volunteer George Barker Barrett III
Leroy Matt Beck
Willie Dave Hanson
Clyde Gene Wolande
Baptized Boy Steven A Miller
Unknown Stephen Duvall

Brother Justin holds a baptismal event which Sofie decides to take part in, to Ben's horror. With Ben now inside Justin's encampment, he searches for a way to get past the security and kill the cleric, while



Return to the Labyrinth

Nothing could deny us the chance of talking to the woman behind Belor, the most terrifying witch queen of 1980s childrens TV...

THERE'S A downside to being an attractive young actress, and that is that you can find yourself only playing 'attractive young actress' roles – the hero's girlfriend, who'll either get taken hostage (and maybe killed), or turn out to be a treacherous enemy agent (and definitely killed). When she got the script for *Into the Labyrinth* Pamela Salem had already been both in *The Professionals* alone (and got romanced by both Bodie and Doyle in the process)... and leapt at the sheer range that the part of witch-queen Belor would offer her, thanks to the alternate identities she'd take on from one time zone to another.

"Yes, well, actually it was absolutely lovely to get," comments the actress, who's Indian-born, English-raised and now American-based. "It's a dream when you can play several different parts as one role, especially for television, because we had a wonderful girl doing the make-up, Cheryl, and she was just fabulous. Every time you could try different characters with the experts making you look like it, not like on stage where you've got to get your own moustaches and things! So it was tremendous fun to do – I mean when do you get the chance to play Queen Victoria and an Indian goddess and so on in one series?" In that sense, the HTV

children's series pre-empted *Quantum Leap* by eight years, except both Salem and co-star Ron Moody got the chance to play different characters each week. "While you're right actually, and some of the fun was, we were hoping, that some of the children wouldn't recognize it was the witch till she revealed herself. That was always fun; pretend to be nice when you were horrible, that's the stuff that fairy tales were made of."

← Pamela Salem as the *eevil* Belor

↓ Only three children stand in the way of Belor's ultimate power

Another side to the role was that Salem would get to go head-to-head with an actor of the power of Ron Moody each week, as the 'real' Belor and her imprisoned nemesis, the magician Rothgo, would face off on some sort of astral plane. "Yes. I'd worked with Ron before, and we became very good friends. We always used to argue on politics and everything actually. When we first met



we were staying at a sort of Holiday Inn and they gave us a central table. We shouted so loudly about our politics that we were eventually put to a corner table every other night; I always laughed about that. We used to have huge debates and both of us are very, very, you know, voluble I suppose! But we weren't that bad, or they'd have barred us from the dining room! We were great friends and I think he's the most wonderful actor and I loved working with him, really. He had that 'Time Lord' so perfectly, don't you think?"

Which side was each on in the political rows, we can't help wondering. "Oh, I don't know, whatever we were arguing about we always would take the opposite sides I think, just to have a very good debate," Salem says. "But basically we agreed on most things. Politics and culture and civilization, and how to solve the world, we used to tell each other we were both messianic. We had the answers for everything, you know!" Almost method acting when playing two such powerful, but diametrically

→ Facing *The Robots of Death*, and *The West Wing*'s idea of the British weather

→ Salem as Professor Rachel Jensen in *Remembrance of the Daleks*

“He's the most wonderful actor and I loved working with him, really. He had that 'Time Lord' so perfectly, don't you think?”



← Rothgo in the Holmesian guise of detective TJ Shadrach

↓ Belor attempts to win Phil's support at the close of *Into the Labyrinth*'s second season



opposed, forces of nature. "That's true, I never thought of that!" the actress says. "It warmed up the voice, there's no doubt about that."

A COMPLICATION TO the confrontations between these two 'Time Lords,' as Salem calls them in a Freudian slip which gives away her interest in other TVSF shows (and indeed, most of *Into the Labyrinth*'s writers had just finished stints in *Doctor Who*, while in hindsight Moody regretted turning down the chance to play the third Doctor, so it's as good a term as any for mysterious Time travelling beings of unknown origin and awesome powers), was that it would take place on an astral plane, with CSO camera tricks altering backgrounds and creating doubles of the characters. "It was called green screen at that point," the actress recalls. "We did it mostly face-to-face. It was just coming in towards the end of the third run, all that computer graphics, because I remember this cameraman coming down and showing us how it worked and you'd think, 'My goodness, the possibilities we've got here'. Now, of course, it looks like *Jurassic Park* really exists, sort of thing, but it was just starting then, and actually that would make a lot of those effects easier. Most of our stuff was face-to-face though, as far as I remember, just occasionally there was that green screen, because it stuck in my mind how we did it – it didn't become a constant thing that we became very used to; I was very impressed with this green screen, yet now it's like 'back with the ark'."

One of the advantages of making a series like *Into the Labyrinth* at one of the smaller ITV companies like HTV was that something that a larger company could have seen as a cheap filler, set almost entirely in one cave, was a bit of a prestige project which inspired everyone's enthusiasm. "Absolutely," Salem agrees. "Talk about it being tight on the budget, one of the things we were trying to prove was that if you do one set with that background, you could do many, many different scenes within that set. They made that set very adaptable, as you know, with standing stones and things like that, and they did prove the point that you could make it for much cheaper, this series, than if you were changing sets every week."

"And from our point of view," she continues, "that was rather like theatre, because you try to do that in the theatre – use as little as possible to make as many different scenes and



Two Doctors and one PM

PRIOR TO *Into the Labyrinth*, Pamela Salem had her first encounter with Fantasy television in 1976 when she auditioned to play the new companion in Chris Boucher's *The Face of Evil*. The role went to Louise Jameson instead, but Salem got a double consolation prize, in the form of a quick voiceover part as one of the mad computer Xoonon's split personalities in *Face...*, and then an onscreen guest spot as the elegant Sandminer pilot Toos in the next story, *The Robots of Death*. It's a story that's well remembered not only for its stylish design, but also for its portrayal of colonists on a far-away planet in the far future as realistic people, getting on with their job while struck by petty jealousies, ambitions and squabbles rather than technobabble spouting people who might as well be robots.

"Yes, absolutely right, that's a good point," Salem comments. "It was a pretty good one, that one. I loved

doing *Doctor Who*, and that was with Tom Baker of course. He was wonderful; he used to make me laugh! Could never stop laughing when he was around, he was one of the funniest people I've met in my life. You may not have seen that side of him, but he was hysterically funny. Right up there with my sense of humour, but he'd have the room in stitches sometimes, unable to carry on. Bless him, I haven't seen him for a long while now."

The characters proved sufficiently popular for some of the survivors to return in a series of audio plays for CD, *Kaldor City*, with Salem's co-star Russell Hunter reprising his role as Chief Mover Uvanov six times before his death in 2004. Salem, it turns out, wasn't aware of this "No, I didn't know that at all, it was very interesting you said that. I knew that they made books from it; someone actually sent me one, very kindly."

"It's funny that you were talking about the green screen, or blue screen," she goes on. "*The Robots of Death*, actually, when they did the eyes for the robot, that was the first time I'd ever come across it. I think many of us had never come across it, so when the robots got upset and their eyes changed, we were absolutely amazed. That was the first time I'd seen it, so it was rather good. That was nice."

SALEM RETURNED TO *Doctor Who* more than 10 years later, having appeared in Blake's 7 and *The Tripods* (and, of course, *Into the Labyrinth*), in the meantime. "Yes, the *Remembrance of the Daleks*. It felt strange playing another part in that, but that was nice, because the Daleks were such an integral part of *Doctor Who*, so it was nice playing with their return." Though Salem was born in India just after the end of the English

Raj, she was a teenager back in Britain when the series made its debut. "Yes, that's right, I went to school in England so I knew about *Doctor Who* with their [dishmops] and how they started, lovely things that they did."

"In fact, Sylvester McCoy was just recently here in *Lear*," she adds of her 'second' Doctor. "We met up – he'd been doing a theatre season, so we met up at a night of his own show, *The Real McCoy*, he did this one-man piece. It was wonderful, absolutely wonderful, he happened to do it in our local theatre and had been doing it for six months. If you ever get a chance to hear him do it you have to hear it, he was brilliant. It was funny and witty and touching about his life, and really interesting."

Soon after shooting *Remembrance of the Daleks*, Salem joined *EastEnders* for a stint as gangster's moll Joanne, Dirty Den's last love interest before his first 'death', and then decided to try her luck in America in the early 1990s, at the peak of the boom in stateside Science Fiction production. But ironically, given that she's a bit of a Science Fiction fan, she missed out on all the small screen SF action (though she did take a major role in *Gods and Monsters*, the biopic of *Frankenstein* director James Whale), instead gaining a little place in TV history for playing British Prime Minister Maureen Grady in *The West Wing* episode *The Wake-Up Call*. "That was lovely," she says. "They had to imitate the rain and pour water on top of us. It was a far cry from England! I love *West Wing*. That was a brilliant series." Sadly, the set-up – a video conference call to the Oval Office in the middle of a crisis – meant that the actress didn't get to play against Martin Sheen or any of the regular cast. "Absolutely, I was completely on my own in the middle of the lot and I never met anybody else at all, whatsoever. So that was strange, but that would have been the case on the television as well."



sets as you can. The budget was a big consideration and then it proved very successful, so they went on to do two and then three series of it. I hear that they burned the set eventually, so that they couldn't do any more – the crew were probably so bored with it!

"It made for big imagination, because you have that thing where you have to think how to adapt that particular setting, which was very good for the imagination, rather than having millions of pounds to be able to do anything you want. They were able to do some marvellous things and today, of course, you're able to do so much more of them more easily, and I'm sure they do on *Doctor Who* and things, but it was very imaginative at the time."

THERE'S AN old saying about never working with children or animals, but Salem didn't have a problem with the first of these, in the form of the three juvenile heroes Phil (Simon Beal), Helen (Lisa Turner) and Terry (Simon Henderson). "No," she chuckles, when asked if she ever had a 'WC Fields' moment, "I didn't, and in fact I kept up with Simon for a while. I haven't seen him since I got here, but he was doing quite well afterwards." Indeed, Simon Beal, now acting as Charlie Caine, had a stint in *EastEnders* a few years ago. "They were lovely, but you did hope that you had your own bits without them, because nobody would be watching you otherwise! They were

↓ Pamela Salem's dream destination!

very professional and worked terribly hard, those kids, so it was a very civilized series."

Animals were more of a problem, thanks to a little scene where Rothgo transforms himself into a spider so he can creep up on Belor unnoticed and get to the vulnerable point on her neck. "Oh yes! I remember that. That was with Ron, gosh, I remember that, that was a terrifying experience. I do not like spiders very much, and Peter Graham Scott who was producing it turned to me and said – because we didn't always know the scripts in advance – 'By the way, next week you're going to be doing it with a spider, now can you work with a tarantula?' and I thought he was joking."

"He said 'No, I'm serious, do you want a stand-in?' I said 'You want me to work with a tarantula? I'm not able to do that, you can have a stand-in'. The man who brought the two tarantulas – I'm a bit better with spiders now, and I feel terrible for them now, that I hated them so much – I couldn't go near them, but the girl who came to do it for me, she came rushing into the dressing room going, 'I didn't know they were so big!' This spider was meant to climb up and bite Rothgo in the neck," Salem says, misremembering for a moment, "and I thought that's going to be terrifying for the children, and they actually cut the spider in the end, it was much too frightening; it's one's worst nightmare really, a spider climbing up the back of your neck."

"Actually I'm just wondering if it was the other way around..." she says, remembering the details better despite a 28-year gap. "That's right, it was my shoulder, it was Rothgo turning into a spider, and it was on my gown and that's why I didn't want to have the real one there. They had a false spider to attach to the gown, and they came up to me just as we were getting ready and said, 'Which one do you want, the dead one or the false one?' and the spider-man put his hands out and the girl who was dressing me, we both flew out of the place! I burst into tears; you can't help it when you get a fright like that. We had to re-do the make-up and it held up everything for 15 minutes, and I said, 'Please don't just come up and sling two large spiders in my face, because it's not great if you don't like them, I can put up with all sorts of other things, but spiders, no!'"

WHEN IT came to the take, she says, "I just didn't look, but it was too frightening, so they cut some of those scenes, and I quite understand that. But then Peter was

“The producer said, ‘By the way, next week you’re going to be doing it with a spider, can you work with a tarantula?’ and I thought he was joking”

Fly Me to the Moon

SOME ACTORS with a track record in Sci-Fi admit that they'd have no interest in doing it for real, but Pamela Salem actually took active steps to get herself a spaceflight. "I actually have two tickets for the Moon flight, the first commercial Moon flight – they're not for the Moon, they're for the waiting list for the Moon, they make that very clear

on it. When Man first landed on the moon I sent off my request. My father actually thought it was a joke and didn't send it. I said 'Why didn't you send it off?', he said 'Are you serious?' I said 'No, no, you said you'd post it'. So he did post it, so I'm 67,000 and something. But it was with Pan Am, so it does not matter because Pan Am's gone out of business and I'm not sure if they would even honour my place in the waiting list.

However, I shall try." Perhaps the

former Miss Money Penny, who she played opposite Sean Connery in the unofficial film *Never Say Never Again*, could have a word with that lover of Bond film cameos, Richard Branson, about a place on a Virgin spaceflight? "Money Penny's grandmother I think now," Salem laughs. "But, I tell you, if they did have people going to the moon, I really would love to go on a trip. There's an observatory here, you know, and you look through and you are in the little rovers that are going across the Moon. And it's fantastic, because you're actually moving with them, so you might as well be on that surface, and you think 'This is wonderful'. That's probably as near as I'll come to walking about up there. It actually is a marvellous experience and I wonder if they're going to do that with the Mars surface. I'd love to see what that looks like." There is, however, one fan out there who reckons the actress has been to the Moon – to Moonbase Alpha, to be precise. "I remember getting a fan letter once saying 'I think you're so great, I'd love a picture of you and I love you in *Space:1999*. He'd got me completely mixed up with Catherine Schell!"



laughing about it saying, 'Oh, you're such a babe with the spider', and then we had a rat the following week, and it was the sweetest rat, absolutely lovely, but he didn't like rats, Peter, and I said, 'Now you know, everybody has their own thing'. He wouldn't come near the rat! I could hold the rat in my hand and stroke it and he was sweet. I said, 'There you are, you don't mind spiders, I don't mind rats, everybody has their own thing'. You have to be very careful with people when you start flinging them in their face."

Compared with that, the season opening and closing experience of old-age make-up as Belor was sent 'back to the primordial swamp' was a doddle. "It was rather strange, and I will tell you that they give you this story that once it all comes off your skin will feel absolutely wonderful. Everybody tells you that, and you go 'Right, okay', you put up with it because it wrinkles up your face and they put all his rubber on. But your skin does not feel wonderful afterwards at all, that's only to make you feel really good while they're putting it on, because you think afterwards you'll feel better. But obviously, from an actor's point of view, it's great fun to do, because you look at

↑ Imprisoned by Belor, Rothgo's calls for help attract only children, to his initial dismay

➡ On location, just once, for the conclusion of Season Three!

DVD DETAILS

Into the Labyrinth is now available on Network DVD, price £24.99





Comic Misadventures...

NOT CONTENT with playing Time-travelling witches, Prime Ministers and spy drama femme fatales, Pamela Salem also got to play the latter against some of Britain's greatest comedians – but sadly, she doesn't see her work with Frankie Howerd and Morecambe and Wise as amongst their classics. And she could well be right, as the BBC shelved the Howerd series, the World War Two-set *Then Churchill Said to Me*, for almost 20 years before finally showing it in 1999. "I know, I've never seen it actually, because it was shelved," she says, "and I believe it should have remained shelved from what I hear!"

Set in Churchill's wartime bunker, the series saw Howerd play both Private Potts, batman to Nicholas Courtney's blustering Colonel Witherton, and his lookalike, General 'Fearless' Freddy Hollocks – who becomes the target of seductive double agent Baroness Hannah Von Trump (guess who?) in the final episode. "I arrived to do the sixth one and I remember the director," Salem recalls, "He was having a cup of tea, and he said, 'Hello, nice to see you.

Now, just let me tell you, the script will be completely [underdone], you will have a very difficult time, this is the last episode, everything will go wrong', and by the time I finished talking to him I was nearly on the ground in shock. I haven't even started and he says it is going to be..."

"And it was exactly as he said. Great problems with the script, so from the minute you walked through the door they were re-writing and changing things and getting rid of characters, and people went. I think Peter Barkworth's character, we hadn't even started and he was altered from the minute we walked in; I'm one of those people who thinks a script is a script, you know. Once you get a script that has to be re-written from day one, you are in real trouble, and I think the only reason I remained in it was because I was the person who had to pull the trigger at the end!" she laughs.

"I was a French spy and had to wear this blonde wig, which I think was my own wig and I was at the end which is why I think my part wasn't changed, but these people were changed, and they all looked

miserable, and they all said, 'We hated you when you came in with a big smile'. But, in fact, I went back in a taxi with Frankie Howerd and I had a chat with him, and he was lovely. He had arthritis at the time, and a lot of pain, and he didn't ever complain. It wasn't really up to his standards I think, that sometimes happens when good comedians go onto televisions they don't always get the material that's right for them."

"I WILL TELL you a secret," she adds, "in that I was holding the gun (which wasn't a real gun), and I was meant to have my finger through the trigger and I think I had false nails or something, but whatever I was doing I wasn't holding the finger through the trigger! It was a live audience and they shot two separate ends – I don't know which one they chose in the end, because they weren't sure themselves which they wanted to do – so my boyfriend then, husband now, came down to say to me 'Pam, rather than holding your finger through the catch, you're holding it over the catch, you can't pull a gun like that'. But we did it so many

times that I kept putting my hand back there, and I've always wanted to see, was it inside or was it on top of the catch?"

Salem's involvement with Morecambe and Wise, on *Night Train to Murder*, an attempt at a comedy thriller which was meant to launch them into a new film career, was almost as ill-fated. "Well, that was another one that was shelved," Salem recalls ruefully. "I don't know if that was anything to do with me, but it was shelved for years. That also was all over the place."

"But, my goodness, the pleasure of meeting Morecambe; he was one of the nicest people I've ever met in my life. He was really genuine, he was just the same on as off, everything about him was wonderful. I would have read the telephone book to have done that with him. He was such a fantastic character, and obviously Wise too, but it's Morecambe that made it for me, he was a generous, sweet, kind man, really, really lovely."

"It was a mess, they cobbled it together in some way," she says of the actual film. "I haven't seen that one either. I daren't because I know it was shelved for a long time! One of these days when I'm brave enough, I'll look at them!"

In *TV Zone Special* #81, the duo's regular writer Eddie Braben, who wasn't involved with the film, told us that he reckoned that Morecambe and Wise didn't work if you took them out of the studio, into a structured plot, partly because they weren't a double-act – they were a treble-act, with the audience's feedback being essential to their interplay. "Absolutely right," Salem agrees. "It was very strange. The jokes didn't seem to me to work when they were doing them, because they fell flat, and yet he was one of my favourite comedians. But I don't care because it was just so lovely meeting him."

"And I got a very beautiful pair of shoes out of it, especially made for me!" Typical woman...

yourself and think, 'My God, is that what I'm going to look like one day?' Playing Queen Victoria as well, I found that great fun to do. I'd forgotten about getting that very old one and withering up, yes."

Other highlights from Belor's varied guises included playing the Goddess Kali in the second season episode *Cave of Diamonds*. "I got my sister to do the arms for Kali because she's a wonderful puppeteer. That was great fun, because we were brought up in India of course, and I said to her, 'Can you imagine if somebody had said we would be doing Kali and her arms in an HTV production, done up in gold, we wouldn't have believed it.'"

There was also an elaborate swordfight in the *Treasure Island* episode that opened Season Three, which at first glance seems to be entirely Salem's work. Not so, she admits. "I did some basic moves, and I did do fencing at university, but they wouldn't let me do it, said 'This is a sabre, it's different,' so I did have a stunt double, and the girl who did it, Susanne Crowley, is out here and we're friends, which is amazing! And she did it beautifully – they wouldn't allow me to do it all. They've obviously married it very well, but she, lovely Suzie, is out here, so we remember that's where we first met, on the floor there. She's doing well out here, producing, so it's a small world."

OUT HERE being Los Angeles, where the actress now runs a theatre company, Salem K, which has just finished its 2008 season of three plays, including Alan Ayckbourn's *Snake in the Grass* (see box for more details), though the actress is also keen to pioneer new writing. "I often think that a good story is repeated in different series anyway," she says of the balance between new work and the trend, particularly on the big screen, for reinterpretations of nostalgic classics. "Like Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*, it's the same story of good and evil, and they do it so beautifully with all the CG, that I think rather than bring old things back, give new writers the chance to do them as new stuff."

"I'm not a big one for redoing all these things that have been done brilliantly, like *Psycho*," she adds, "it's like trying to copy a Picasso. There are some wonderful new writers around, and everytime you redo an old one, you're stopping a new writer running with one of his stories. So I'm always a bit cautious about something that's been done before – they say there are



“From an actor's point of view, it's great fun to do, because you look at yourself and think, 'My God, is that what I'm going to look like one day?'”



↑ A Civil War era guise for Rothgo

↗ How not to pull a gun on Frankie Howerd

↖ Pamela Salem has fond memories of Morecambe and Wise, even if the actual film was disappointing

➡ Phil was the only one of the three kids to appear in every season

only seven stories, so the stories will get repeated in a different way, but repeating it in the same way..."

However, the actress is willing to make an exception for one reinvention – the new take on Batman, The Dark Knight directed by Christopher Nolan (whose earlier film The Prestige was, coincidentally, based on a book by an Into the Labyrinth writer, Christopher Priest), which she was about to see at a BAFTA West Coast screening. "I loved the other Batman, Batman Begins, that to me really got the Batman from the comics. I just thought it's got that dark, thoughtful quality, which the best stories have. Dark and Light, and that's why you should take the dark and light seriously, and not trivialize it."

That's something which perhaps got lost when Into the Labyrinth itself got revamped for its third season. Despite the intriguing concept of shifting the characters into Delta Time, where fiction is reality, few fans of the series would quote it as the series' best. "I haven't seen them for a long time, so my feelings are more of being in it, but that's quite possible," Salem comments, when we suggest that

“ Good and evil is fighting, and it's difficult when you make the evil/good funny; it doesn't become as strong as it was, you know ”

opening each third season episode with Belor rather than Rothgo setting the scene indicated that the audience was becoming too comfortable with her. "Sometimes I think as series go on they do get a little bit comfortable, but I'd need to see it again to make my mind up."

THE BIGGEST change, aside from cutting down the juvenile cast from a trio to one character, Phil, was the replacement of Ron Moody's Rothgo with stage player, showman and award-winning children's TV presenter Chris Harris as the more overtly comic Lazlo. "I'd seen Chris in that Will Kemp..." Salem says, "his one-man show. When Will Kemp was fired by Shakespeare, he said he would prove that he had a huge following,

ON STAGE...

The 2008 season of Pamela Salem's theatre company, Salem K, staged work by Alan Ayckbourn, among others, and details of the 2009 season can be found at <http://salemktheatreco.org/index.html>

← The arrival of Chris Harris in place of Ron Moody meant a change of style for Into the Labyrinth's final season

and he danced all the way from one place to another and was followed by hundreds of people. He did that as a one-man show and it was really wonderful. I met him and he's really a very comic character, and I think it was difficult to fit a comic character into such a serious role," perhaps putting her finger on the problem of the third run. Lazlo develops some gravitas in the later episodes, but initially it took away from Belor's malevolence that she didn't seem to be able to triumph over someone so comic, whereas Moody's Rothgo always had a sense of immense power waiting to be let loose. "Those Time Lords, to me," Salem muses, "Good and evil is fighting, and it's difficult when you make the evil/good funny; it doesn't become as strong as it was, you know. I think that was the problem, they had to do it more like a comic character, which made it much harder to play with, because the whole thing gets watered down. It was very serious, the first two, which is what I like. Children, I think, take those things quite seriously. So it was neither a comedy nor serious, the third one, and it was very difficult to fit Chris's particular persona into what was written as a more serious battle going on. It was an uneasier mix." And if Belor's opponent is too comic, it's difficult to make her too threatening – particularly with the third season giving her a comically incompetent minion in the form of Howard Goorney's Bran. "You've absolutely hit the nail on the head, I mean, I used to have that discussion when we were there, saying, 'This really makes it difficult because you're laughing at this battle when you should really be taking sides, and wanting her to be overcome, etc' But if you're all a little bit jokey, I think you take the strength away from the battle, and that, for me, is why I think the first two were probably more successful in content than the third one, although the third one was a very fun to do parts. But that's not really why you're doing it. It was a shift that was a very difficult shift for Chris, and for me, for all of us really, because it just put us into a slightly different category of battle."

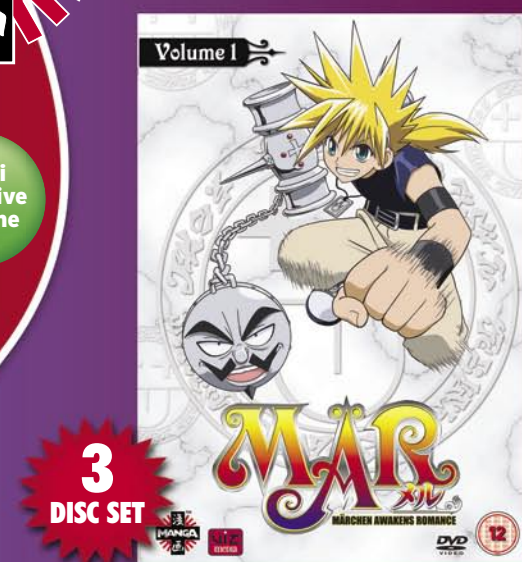
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DIAMOND MINE

One Foot in the Grave Part Two

Life is still providing Victor Meldrew with daily endurance tests in the second part of our fond remembrance

AFTER THE first two seasons established Victor Meldrew (Richard Wilson) as a character that so many of us could relate to, the next eight years would prove that there was plenty of life in the old dog yet (which is more than can be said for the dog delivered to the Meldrew household at one point). Before handing directorial duties to Christine Gernon for the sixth and last season, in which Victor finally had both feet in the grave, the excellent Susan Belbin interpreted the scribbles of David Renwick for another three seasons and

several Christmas specials which collectively proved just how much the show had grown in confidence and stature. Whilst the episode *Hearts of Darkness* proved **One Foot...**'s most controversial episode at the time, the final moment of Victor's demise clashed with the first millionaire winner on ITV's **Who Wants To Be a Millionaire**, sparking allegations of fixing that were quickly withdrawn. Despite a few lapses, the overall quality remained terrific throughout the 1990s as it became harder and harder to deny that there is a little Victor Meldrew in all of us.

C0 The Man in the Long Black Coat

VICTOR AND Patrick are still having a one-upmanship war following the events of the previous Christmas, eight months ago. The problems escalate for Victor when it transpires that the manure he bought from a salesman might have radioactive qualities.

My personal pick for the best 'special'. Theme music singer Eric Idle is rightly given a cameo as a health inspector, and it's an instalment that hits the funny bone over and over like a clockwork mallet yet still covers some sombre ground by veering into drink driving horror territory, covering an issue that at the time was gaining more publicity on TV and also featured in a storyline for the BBC's **EastEnders** the following Christmas. Unusually, this hour-long episode served as a set-up for the third season and followed the events of the

previous special after a year's departure from screens, while, plot-wise, it mainly served to flesh out Patrick and Pippa as fully-rounded supporting characters rather than antagonists that pop up now and again. Although any mended bridges between Patrick and Victor start to wobble all too soon in future episodes, what makes their silent truce at the end all the more touching and poignant is that now they have something tragic in common; the death of a baby, after pregnant Pippa pays the price for driving a bus after a lunchtime knees-up. Still, this was but one black cloud, consistent with the unpredictable tone, over a bumper package of shimmering wit.

C1 Monday Morning Will Be Fine

THE MELDREWS are burgled and, with no television to watch and an unreliable carpenter also adding to the woes, Victor's nerves are wound more

tightly than ever, and a terrible sore throat makes even moaning difficult

Just as the public has been without a regular Meldrew dose, now the Meldrews must also go without favourite shows. As accurate as Victor's observations about people becoming addicted to that box in the corner of the room are, is it not slightly self-defeating to criticize television consumption using, er, television?

Anyway, the scenes that produce the most fun take place in a pub where Victor runs into an old classmate who mistakes him for somebody else and starts reminiscing about a mad character called Victor Meldrew, whose caricature was famously on the wall of the girls' changing room. Did I mention that this man is also engaged to a friend of Margaret's whom the latter has lied to to get out of a wedding, meaning that Victor cannot reveal who he really is? "This must be the coincidence of all time!" says the groom-to-be. Er, quite,



➡ The most patient wife in Britain, Margaret Meldrew (Annette Crosbie) sticks with her husband through thick and thin

though the result builds up to the perfect introduction of Victor's secondary catchphrase, "My, Go-oooood!" through heavily clenched teeth.

C2 Dreamland

MRS WARBOYS is in a café telling a pair of ladies about the recent incidents in the Meldrew household that she found herself involved in. One evening, Margaret does not come home from work, and is reported as a missing person when it transpires that she never even turned up.

More structural experimentation with the formula as along comes the first episode to be told in flashback. The device itself is of no real importance, as, unlike the few subsequent flashback tales, nothing interesting happens in the present time, besides a final chuckle at the end when it is revealed that Mrs Warboys has been blabbing everything to total strangers.





What brings the episode down, in the second half, is the unusual length of time given to a completely serious thread and how out of character Margaret acts by pulling that kind of a disappearing act. How could she go to “sodding” Newbury for a whole three days without so much as a word to anybody, leaving her husband worried sick and the police wasting manpower combing the area for her? Because of an enigmatic recurring nightmare about a prison cell, that’s what, and in the end it is down to a Noel Edmunds sweater and pair of dead man’s shoes of all things to stop *Dreamland* falling completely flat.

C3 The Broken Reflection

VICTOR’S ACCIDENT-PRONE, slightly deaf, and rather simple brother Alfred comes over from New Zealand to stay for two weeks. Will his sibling last a fortnight without going mad, and will he leave Patrick and Pippa’s house standing whilst they are on holiday?

Following the events of the last special, Renwick had painted himself into a bit of a corner regarding the vibe between Patrick and Victor. They have to get in each other’s bad books again, but how? As such, there is a slightly awkward transition from Patrick being in Victor’s debt the last time they were together to him now feeling Victor untrustworthy to houseisit for them.

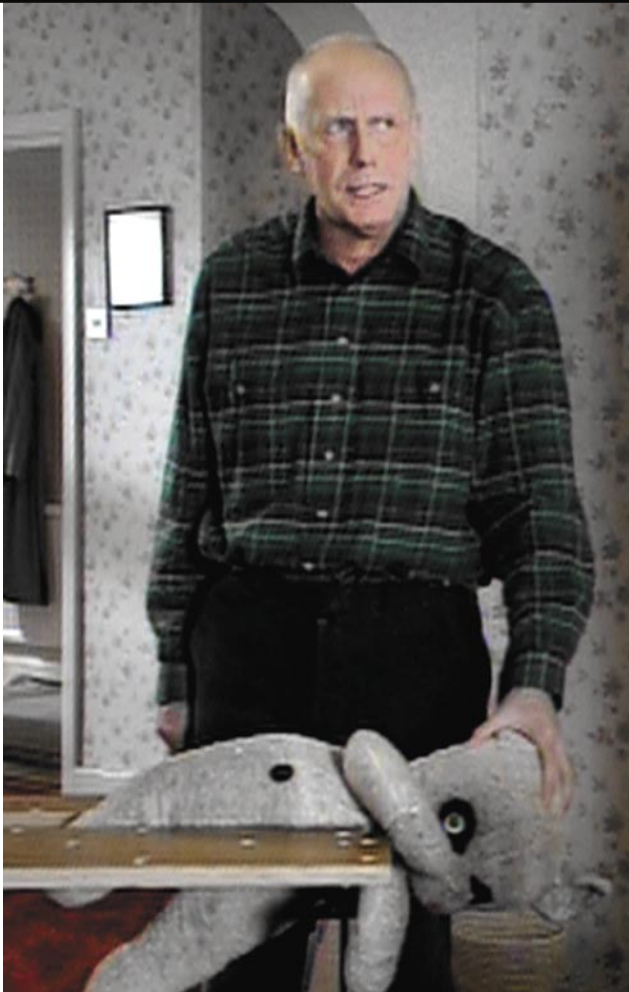
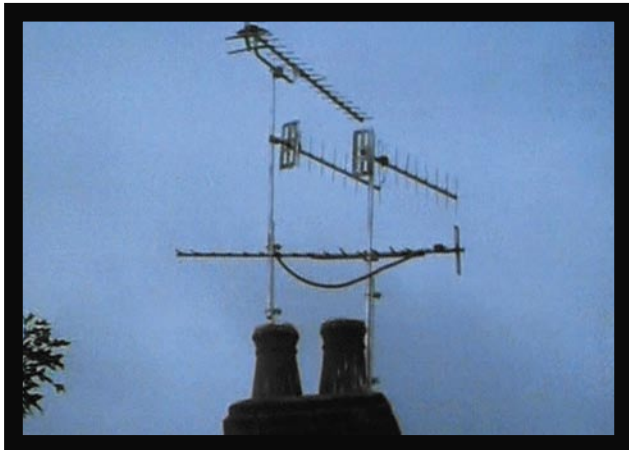
As with several episodes there is a very brilliantly funny scenario that does not seem to be important to the overall plot, yet ends up playing an important part in later events. Time and time again, Renwick proves himself to be a master of this – the kind of McGuffin with teeth that come back to bite Victor on the behind. In this case, the tape recorder left behind by the computer salesman that Victor gets sweet revenge on, becoming the means by which Alfred finds out what his brother thought of him. The Little Lord Nitpick in me has never liked the way that Victor’s tone is so different on the recording to when we first hear him speak his mind, but as the only episode to feature a close relative to Victor’s (not counting cousin Ivor), the exchanges between Wilson and Richard Pearson makes for a tastier helping of sweet and sour than that dodgy Chinese restaurant could offer.

C4 The Beast in the Cage

IT IS A Bank Holiday, and the Meldrews, along with Mrs Warboys, have made the mistake of attempting to have a day out and are stuck in snail-paced motorway traffic. Even while he is confined in a Honda, everything conspires to make the experience evermore torturous for Victor.

‘The beast had long been caged – it came out roaring.’ So said Robert Louis Stevenson in his seminal *The Strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Victor barely gets a chance to come out of his cage, yet manages plenty of roaring, as well as snapping, griping and silent stewing in a gold-plated comedy classic. A situation that almost anyone can relate to one way or another becomes the four-wheeled stage for a script that is as shiny and well oiled as that smug git’s Ferrari, as electric shocks, prickly heat, Mrs Warboys’ prattling, irritating drivers in the lanes either side, a wasp in an ice cube and having to stare at a horse’s backside for hours all turn a frustrating situation into Hell via the motorway. Margaret’s patient filling in of her crossword while Victor is ranting through the sunroof is one of the many moments of visual humour that complement Renwick’s stinging lines and Victor’s commentaries. It is a slight pity that we never got to see this in its complete entirety as a scene explaining the real meaning of the title and the trio’s destination had to be cut due to time restraints. Then again, the way Victor erupts to Mrs Warboys’ most bizarre bit of gossip, perhaps the revelation that she loves zoos (and they would have been visiting Whipsnade) because otherwise lions and tigers would go around eating everybody would have tipped him over the edge!

The car mechanic’s song is easily one of the top five moments of the entire series. All together now, Viic-tor Meldrew, Viic-tor Meldrew... C5 *Beware the Trickster on the Roof* NICK SWAINNEY returns from Africa with a souvenir for the Meldrews – a paperweight with a scorpion in the middle that is supposed to bring a bad luck curse on the owner – if you believe



such nonsense! Meanwhile, Patrick and Pippa have put their house on the market.

Another splendidly funny episode to follow from the misery of the Bank Holiday fiasco, from Victor’s cheerfully blunt dismissal of godbotherers at the front door who have interrupted his surgery on a teddy bear, to the ‘cot’ with the damaged back leg turning up in the back garden. “I wonder what china basin was a misprint for, Chinese Bison?” All Victor needs after a phone call from a burglar with a neck so brass it would need a daily polish.

Aside from an awful but brief ‘child crying’ sound effect (he looks about seven yet cries like a baby) there is much to enjoy involving Margaret’s paranoia over the talisman and the various, and hilarious, plagues of bad luck that in any other house might be evidence of a curse.

The end twist is a neat little laugh-while-you-sigh-of-relief moment, and the final frame, a sweet illusion that one emulates involuntarily.

C6 The Worst Horror of All

DESPITE HAVING a shed roof fall on his head, Victor is in high spirits for a change – he has got a new job! Before then however, the Meldrews must avoid old ‘friends’ Ronnie and Mildred and be part of a live audience at the BBC.

Another season draws to a close, and falls somewhere in the centre in

the hilarity stakes; not as great as the previous two episodes, yet a little funnier than the first three, courtesy of two outstanding scenes. The first, one of the best justifications yet for a bellowed, “I don’t believe it!”, the second a classic slice of Meldrew revenge that serves as a triumphant climax to an overall outstanding season, that garners a well-deserved round of applause.

Continuing the break from the location comfort zones, the programme wryly turns the mirror on itself, showing the characters sitting at a (poorly attended) recording of a sitcom. Whilst this whole plot angle that sees the Meldrews mistake a concussed hospital worker for Jean’s cousin, the scenes at the BBC, hospital and posh hotel, demonstrate a bold leap forward. In the earlier seasons we would have likely just seen the Meldrews returning home from places like that to describe everything for the benefit of those listening.

Just one thing; what did happen to that dumped Citroen 2CV with the busted mattress?

D1 The Pit and the Pendulum

VICTOR HAS employed a gardener who looks like a caveman to dig a hole in the back garden and sever the roots from next-door’s tree, but a misunderstanding ensures that loss of

RATINGS

Season Three	
C0	30 Dec 1991 <small>UK</small>
C1	2 Feb 1992 <small>UK</small>
C2	9 Feb 1992 <small>UK</small>
C3	16 Feb 1992 <small>UK</small>
C4	23 Feb 1992 <small>UK</small>
C5	1 Mar 1992 <small>UK</small>
C6	8 Mar 1992 <small>UK</small>



Victor’s idea of a christening gift – Franken-teddy

“I Don’t Believe It! Frankly, neither would we

Surprise, surprise!

Back in the land of the living... for about 10 minutes.





➡ Mrs Warboys (Doreen Mantle) raises Victor's blood pressure

➡➡ Never ask a delivery man to put anything "in the toilet"

➡➡ Home after holidaying, to more misery

➡ A 'nice' day out in the country...

➡ A neighbour's artistic impression

➡ ... and in the heart of the woods, there is indeed a 'witch'



RATINGS	
Season Four	
D1 31 Jan 1993 UK	■■■■■
D2 7 Feb 1993 UK	■■■■■
D3 14 Feb 1993 UK	■■■■■
D4 21 Feb 1993 UK	■■■■■
D5 28 Feb 1993 UK	■■■■■
D6 7 Mar 1993 UK	■■■■■



moisture in the earth is the least of his worries. Not so much one foot in the grave, as up to his neck in one, Victor isn't even safe in his own garden any more! While it probably wouldn't make my personal top 10 episodes, the first episode of a fourth round of misery and mayhem in skewed suburbia does hit the 'tragi-comedy' bullseye more squarely than almost any other episode, when in the final 10 minutes as Margaret breaks the news of her mother's death to Victor... as his head sticks out of the earth in his garden having been buried by the gardener after a misunderstanding.

Poor old Patrick fares just as badly when his new sausage dog (named Denzil, even though it has teats!) retrieves a crab from an unwanted bag of seaweed at the Meldrews and drops it at the entrance to his master's shorts. *Ouch!* This eye-watering incident pretty much dissolves any remaining good feelings between the two and Patrick finding Victor's talking head under a flowerpot hilariously solidifies his feelings that he and Pippa are living next door to an insane asylum.

Unlike the tree in Victor's garden, clearly no life has been sucked out of the series.

D2 Descent into the Maelstrom

MARGARET COLLAPSES with nervous exhaustion and is prescribed bed rest. However, being in the house all day with Victor around, it is not long before she is contemplating going back to work for a rest.

An improvement on the previous episode's laughter factor, thanks to the dry cleaners/gorilla suit sketch and Victor being mistaken for a charity saint. The roared "Where do you think I shop, 'King Kong at C&As'?" gets me every time, although one wonders how, even with Margaret's Putting-Up-With threshold, she can stand her husband talking to her best friend like that and say nothing. It is always delightful when the Meldrews make up after enduring another round of strife that would test

any limit to the max, and Margaret's realization that Victor was willing to take the blame for her mother's pearl earrings disappearing so as not to shatter her perception of the real culprit (guest star Helen Lederer) makes for a truly heart-warming closing scene. Well, not quite, Victor is truly the hero in the episode as somebody else comes to thank him, but I'm surprised he would have wanted to lay eyes on a garden gnome ever again after the trouble they have caused him before!

D3 Hearts of Darkness

THE MELDREWS, Mrs Warboys and Mr Swainey go for a "nice day out in the country", which turns out to be anything but after they take a wrong turn and Victor makes a horrifying discovery whilst looking for help.

The most controversial episode in the whole *One Foot...* canon from the two-thirds covered here, it is very easy to see why. The episode begins with a departure from the norm, substituting the urban neighbourhood for the countryside, the sunny sing-over perfectly rubbing additional mockery into the mishaps that occur en route that sees Victor twice receive a punched nose. Wow, that's fast work even for him. As the episode progresses, and the wicked comedy dovetails with the escalating unease, darkness descends both literally and figuratively when Victor stumbles across an old folks' home while searching for help. To my knowledge at least three slightly different cuts of the scenes inside the folks' home, and the abuse endured by an old man, exist. The DVD version shows more kicking than in the original transmission and, in the next repeat of the episode, it was cut out altogether after viewers complained that it was too vicious a scene and showed nursing staff in a bad light. While I personally think this is daft (one awful nursing home in a sitcom with a slightly surreal edge is not a representative sample) at least for once the Beeb listened to viewers. The comeuppance of the cruel staff is a joy and Victor's confrontation of the odious owner (the pensioner who injects



➡ Victor on call for jury service

➡➡ What is on Mrs Warboys' mind?



her was played by the lady who voiced Margaret's mother on the Meldrews' answer machine) turns grim back to grin. What a splendid turnaround that while Victor does not have much success as a town crusader but in the countryside he is a geriatric Lone Ranger.

Two side notes; *Panorama* has since exposed cruelty in care homes that's not so far removed from fiction, and, less seriously, how did they get the ice to chink with such perfect timing in the camera-shot-through-the-glass scene?

D4 Warm Champagne

THE MELDREWS return from holiday to find that their front garden has been doubling as a cricket playground courtesy of the little horrors that have moved into the neighbourhood and Victor is soon feuding with the parents. An exasperated Margaret finds solace in the company of a man she met on the beach. Would she ever cheat on her husband of over 30 years?

Even with some rather weak moments in the script, this episode keeps most of its fizz from start to finish. The highlights include one of the better *One Foot...* sight gags courtesy of a pub sign artist (who Victor sadly does not get even with), the mix up with the Meldrews' house and an old people's home, and Patrick's mighty blunder at the end. The lows, the aforementioned plotting. When

the Meldrews arrive home from holiday, Victor's feet are burnt so badly he can only shuffle around on his knees. The next morning he can walk fine without so much as a limp. Also, why would Victor and Margaret continue to sleep in their bedroom with a street light poking through the window when we know they have a spare, or just use the sofa or a mattress? Margaret's decision to stay with the man whose head she constantly wants to "ram through a television screen" and her use of Christmas presents as a metaphor for potential affairs are so sweetly rendered that one can just about forgive the backdrop flapping in the background when Victor answers the door to her!

D5 The Trial

VICTOR SPENDS a day cooped up at home on a rainy day waiting on call for jury duty. Even in nobody's company but his own, there is no end of things to have Victor either contemplating his own mortality or reaching for the telephone to chew somebody's ear off.

As if we needed any more proof of the series' pedigree, an entire episode is sustained by nothing more than the central character pottering about his house and a script that captures every one of Victor Meldrew's most entertaining and endearing qualities. So it is not entirely without interaction



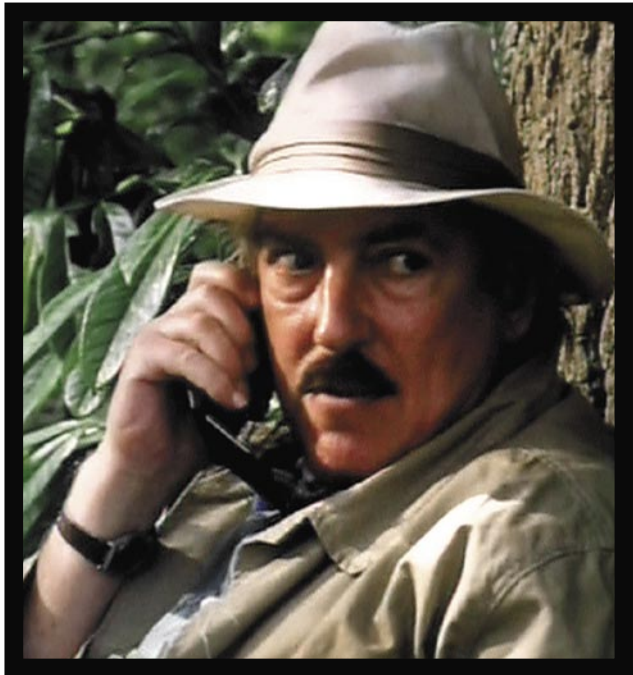


⚡ A police cell? No, the villa

👉 Has Mrs Warboys found love?



👉👉 Martin Trout (Peter Cook) will do anything to recover a roll of film



RATINGS

Season Five

E0 26 Dec 1993 UK

E1 25 Dec 1995 UK

E2 1 Jan 1995 UK

E3 8 Jan 1995 UK

E4 15 Jan 1995 UK

E5 22 Jan 1995 UK

E6 29 Jan 1995 UK

Sp125 Dec 1995 UK

Sp226 Dec 1996 UK

Sp325 Dec 1997 UK

with other characters as Victor has four different telephone conversations, one of which is a defining moment in the season for its ridiculous visual and Victor's explosion. Yes, its the yucca plant in the toilet bowl, although on first transmission this being shown over and over in the preview clip meant that it could never be as funny as going in cold. Fair's fair though, in such a dialogue-led episode, there wasn't much else they could have shown with such instant hilarity.

Continuity-wise, it was nice to know that Victor seemed to have made up with his brother Alfred, who we last saw in *The Broken Reflection*, as, having such a knack for alienating people, it would be sad to think he had no close family left.

"I'll never be rude to anybody again," he vows, in a brief spiritual epiphany. This lasts about three seconds. Phew!

D6 *The Secret of the Seven Sorcerers*

VICTOR REVIVES an old hobby of his, conjuring tricks, with a local circle of amateur magicians, but finds it hard to concentrate when a practical joker keeps sending the fire brigade around. Meanwhile, Mrs Warboys is convinced that her husband is having an affair and takes desperate measures to discover the truth.

A decent wrap-up to the season in which all the supporting players share ample contributions in the various woven incidents. Even Mrs Warboys's invisible husband is central to a sub-plot. May I also nominate Victor's 'headphones' sketch as a contender for one of the funniest moments out of the six episodes? That is the beauty of all great comedies; you know it by heart, yet it never fails to have you laughing.

Victor's new part-time job as a lollypop man seems a tad superfluous as nothing really comes of it, besides giving him a reason not to be in the house the whole time, therefore preventing the next cock-up, and who was that practical joker that kept calling the fire brigade? Renwick even acknowledges that he has been known to leave threads hanging, not always to the episode's credit, in the sixth season episode *The Futility of the Fly*. It is nice, however, that this far into the series, smaller additions to Victor's character still play a part; remember him dusting off his magician's equipment in the very first episode?

Another triumphant round of laughter and life lessons and larger-than life pickles. Next stop, Portugal!

E0 *One Foot in the Algarve*

VICTOR AND Margaret accompany Mrs Warboys on a trip to Portugal to meet her pen pal Alfonso, unaware that a seedy reporter is hot on their trail, believing Margaret to be in possession of an explosive roll of camera film. What is Alfonso's secret, and why are there no pictures of his beloved wife (who died in a freak accident) in his villa?

A brave and successful experiment, where the teams steps so far out of the comfort zone that they are virtually in another country. Hold on, they are! With Peter Cook's portrayal of a

sleazy tabloid photographer as a cross between Inspector Clouseau and Dick Dastardly always hovering in the wings, a young couple having the misfortune to cross paths with Victor, and a possible skeleton in the closet, the multiple fun factors go down like a pina colada in the Mediterranean dusk. From the very first moment Cook's character is drowned out on the phone by Victor's final rant on the phone before giving England a break, you just know that the self-serving git has unknowingly met his match.

Donkeys, a villa that resembles a Turkish jail, impromptu boxing practice, ratbags on the beach, a severed foot, lost negatives, and "something beginning with 'H'"?

Olé!

E1 *The Man Who Blew Away*

POOR VICTOR endures pranks involving artificial limbs, is called a 'useless tosser' by a Christmas cracker, and receives a visit from Saint Total Bastard the Patron Saint of Insurance Companies... and that is just for starters.

For my money, the very best **One Foot...** episode in its 'regular' format (ie, not a special, confined to one space or set away from the Meldrew residence). With too many superbly funny yanks of Victor's 'angry disbelief' chord to recount here in reasonable space, I think one can imagine that he spends most of the episode trying to remember to breath in between ranting and raving. Tempering the tragi-comic blend to perfection, after so much laughter we are confronted with the sad final hours of a rather pathetic man who commits suicide off-screen, although not before providing Patrick with one more reason to think he is living next door to a madman devoted to making his neighbour's life a surreal nightmare. That the soundtrack played over the end credits after the Meldrews receive the tragic Mr Fosquett's collection of antique dentures is the Laughing Policeman cements the cruelty of how laughter so quickly becomes ironic.

E2 *Only a Story*

MRS WARBOYS stays with the Meldrews while her house is flooded, to Margaret's chronic irritation. Victor, on the other hand, has acquired a strange new outlook on life all of a sudden...

This is Jean Warboys's finest moment in the whole series, proving once and for all that even a close friend can only put up with her in small doses. This episode does suffer some amazing repetition, namely a wallpaper disaster, a botched photo-development and an escaped pet, all of which have not only happened before, but in a single Season Two episode, *We Have Put Her Living in the Tomb!* At least they resisted giving Victor another nasty cold despite him taking both a bath and later a shower in his clothes, all thanks to his wife's luckless chum. As became increasingly typical as the series progressed, there is more philosophy to enjoy as Mrs Warboys's relationship with her cockatiel (she is allergic to feathers but loves him to



👉👉 These pranks turn out to be the least of Victor's worries

👉 Another wallpaper fiasco

👉 Those will come in handy!

👇 Victor has a new admirer in the form of Millicent Miles (Barbara Windsor)



bits) neatly parallels Margaret's feelings towards Victor, and, by the end, we also see how, with Jean's wide-eyed innocence and being prone to misunderstandings, she and Victor have more in common than they might like to admit.

E3 *The Affair of the Hollow Lady*

VICTOR BECOMES the object of desire for a red-haired widow from the local grocer's, but he has more important things to worry about, such as getting even with the owner of a lousy lock and bolts company.

Would Victor Meldrew be quite as good a character if he didn't get a taste for revenge, the dominant theme in *The Affair of the Hollow Lady*, every now and again? Nothing he ever did to get even topped his phoney appointment with the boy racer computer salesman in the previous season finale, but his way of dealing with being fobbed off on the phone while he struggles with new home 'security' is a classic burst of Meldrew-power. The main part of the story, which revolves around guest star Barbara Windsor's character Millicent Miles (basically, an amorous great-aunt to her **Carry On** characters) is a test to the Meldrews' relationship in a different way to the norm. Faced with the possibility that Victor may have cheated on her, all it takes is one straightforward denial from her husband to convince Margaret otherwise. A testimony to the deep love and trust that exists in what can appear to be a dysfunctional home life. One

cannot fail to applaud Margaret when Millicent's attempt to cause a break-up after Victor spurns her is replied to with his wife's boxing-gloved fist, although men will wince at the method she chooses to show Victor that he is not completely off the hook!

E4 *Re-arranging the Dust*

AN INTERMINABLE wait in a solicitor's office to make a will turns out to be a life-sapping experience for Victor, although things get livelier when he assaults a terrier with a coconut meringue.

By now a one-off requirement for each season, the Meldrews spend the entire episode in just one small space, with boredom virtually oozing from Victor's pores right before our eyes. That is where the well-timed little pauses in-between the dialogue come into play, conveying the emptiness, yet never making us feel like we are also having to tap our feet waiting for something to happen. Chewing gum, bird's mess, breakages... is Victor safe anywhere, or perhaps the question should be, is anywhere safe from him? Victor's row outside a window, first with an irresponsible dog owner, then with an opportunistic solicitor is a funny prelude the 'compensation culture' that would be increasingly tutted about in the British press in the years ahead. As with *Timeless Time* (aka *The One in the Bedroom*) we are treated to a rare, glimpse into the Meldrew's young days, ending on a sweet note.





➡ A power cut combined with toilet flush where the soap is kept equals...



➡ Not the best career move for Victor

➡ Yobs re-decorate the Meldrews' bedroom

➡ Fenella Fortune (Rula Lenska) and hopeful business partner Patrick, look on in mute disbelief



How is this for resourcefulness; the minds in charge even found a good use for the hollow set walls?!

E5 The Hole in the Sky

THE MELDREWS are having a loft conversion built and, of course, everything conspires to make it as chaotic a process as possible, but what else does Margaret have on her mind? An episode that achieves the paradox of remaining in the usual location, time frame and domestic disaster strife template, yet is made up of all manner of unusual notables, big and small. This is the only **One Foot...** episode to have (deep breath) one actor playing two characters (Christopher Ryan as twin builders), the use of the f-word (although they are bleeped in a strange Fourth Wall cracking moment), the mention of a character who we don't actually see until the next season ('Dodgy' Douglas), and Margaret in a far worse mood than Victor for the most part. The last part makes for an interesting character dynamic indeed as, for a change, Victor is quite enjoying himself with new hobbies (seafood recipes, and restoring an old marionette doll) and, even more unusually, he shares somebody's infuriating sense of humour. The episode leaves us with the possibility that, as if their lives were not already a three-act drama already, the sacked Margaret will fall into a similar state of mind as Victor. Thankfully, the character changes very little as the rest of the series plays out, with her outbursts usually directed at Victor's mistakes rather than conveying bitterness with the world in general.

E6 The Exterminating Angel

VICTOR HAS finally found part-time work, as a chauffeur for a millionaire businessman, and is the insurance company ever going to have a headache by the time he is through! The Season Five finale is by no means classic **One Foot...** due to the lack of cutting one-liners and laugh-out-loud moments, yet manages to close on a symbolic note, as Victor succeeds in destroying the final car in his employer's 'Holy Trinity of Internal Combustion', and calmly hands back the keys. Life is now so much of a farce that nothing surprises him any more. Something doesn't add up regarding the second appearance of Ronnie and Mildred either. In *The Worst Horror...* we are given the impression that they live in a different part of the country and drop in unexpectedly when "they're down here", yet now they seem to be living only a reasonable drive away. Perhaps the most intriguing moment occurs near the beginning as Victor uses a new pair of binoculars to spy on his neighbour's strange naked habits, gasping that he can't take much more of this, yet keeps his eyes to glued to the lenses. Just the umpteenth example of Victor having too much time on his hands, or Renwick's subtle, sly dig at pressure groups and media watchdogs who incessantly complain about things that they simultaneously can't help watching? Your call.

Sp1 The Wisdom of the Witch

SITTING ON a bench in a cemetery, writing a letter, Margaret recalls the events of the past few weeks. After the Meldrews celebrated their (disastrous) 37th anniversary and, later that night, received news of a relative's death in a freak accident, a white witch warned of a 'sudden and untimely end' for Victor, to occur during a long journey that weekend... The first in a trio of hour-long episodes that regulated the series to a quota of annual yuletide specials, bridging the long wait for the sixth and final season. Every **One Foot...** special is just that, a sitcom classic, but this one was nearly not only the last double-length entry, but the finale of the series. With rumours that Victor was to be killed off that Christmas, he looked to be a gonner at the end, the tombstone being revealed to bear his name, sd it looked as if the sweet shop owner's prophecy had been proven correct. It would have, had the creators not wisely realized that Victor still had plenty of life in him, and plans to kill him off were put on hold for a few more years.

While it is hardly a good thing that the best jokes are used up in the first half ("They were only using me as a scarecrow!" Victor's restaurant explosion) the story here is really the strange mystical bond between the Meldrews and the Trenchs (we finally find out Patrick and Pippa's surname and a great choice it is to, given the hedgerow war zone they are locked in) and how they are seemingly destined to never escape each other as the latter attempt to move house. Patrick goes to do shopping and ends up in the boot of Victor's car being driven up north. The Trenchs' furniture ends up in the hands of a house clearance firm hired by Margaret due to a misunderstanding. Patrick is being garrotted and who should save him? Even the scenes of Victor and Patrick sharing cooking tips and playing backgammon, having been thrust together in an old house during a snowstorm, is a touching differences-aside scene that shows that they really could have been friends under better circumstances.

So the witch was not right after all, but the ending is still magic.

Sp2 Starbound

VICTOR, MARGARET and Mrs Warboys return from a short holiday to find a stranger living in the Meldrews' shed. Several days after the police move the mystery man on, there is a disturbing discovery to be made, which explains why Victor has been acting so out of character... jolly!

Where does one begin? The dog with the most appropriate name, or Victor Meldrew's Surgical Support Recycling Plant, the sketching schoolchildren or the great Ray Winstone as... now that would be telling? This *Starbound* trips the Light Fantastic of Meldrew-rific belly laughs and madcap mystery (the latter of which concerns Mr Swainey's disappearing mother, strange lights and burn marks in the lawn and Victor's bizarre behaviour)

that, by the end, has literally brought the house down.

Does it have its imperfections? Only a few, and they barely matter. The name of Rula Lenska's rich businesswoman, Fenella Fortune, is more suited to **Wallace and Gromitt**, and why is Patrick so eager to avoid Victor after having his life saved by him the last time that they were together? Okay, judging by the outcome, he was right to have warning signs flash before his eyes after discovering that Victor had somehow got a job as Ms Fortune's gardener. He might be a thorn in Patrick's side, but he is still a prize specimen to us.

Sp3 Endgame

THE MELDREWS have new neighbours – Derek and Betty McVitie and, Margaret is determined that, given this fresh opportunity, the two households will share normal neighbourly relations. Meanwhile, Victor has bought himself a new toy; an old caravan that later appears in a rag called *Psychic News*...

The sixth and final special episode, and this time it is the other Meldrew who dips a foot into the grave, another teased sign that the series itself has not got long to live. Of the **One Foot...** specials, what can I say that has not been said five times already? Zinging one-liners, tick, catastrophic mix-ups, tick, the ridiculous being brewed from ordinary situations while staying on the right side of believable, tick, a penny dropping with such a clang that our funny bones are tickled for a full minute, tick.

Think not that the formula is becoming so familiar as to become in danger of becoming stale, for as well as the ever-varied circumstances we are also introduced to two new characters played by Marian McLoughlin and Tim Brooke-Taylor, blissfully unaware of the kind of luck that living next-door to Victor Meldrew will bring. How nice to see McLoughlin in such a charming role after playing a rape victim in *Cracker's Men Should Weep* not so long before.

Despite the sixth season having many funny and touching moments, some might argue that the producers should have obeyed the title of *Endgame*, and called it a day. Personally, I have thought as much several times, then recalled a good Season Six sketch and felt grateful that the game continued for one more round.

F1 The Executioner's Song

ON THE advice of a self-help guru, Patrick decides to face his fear and visit Victor, but quickly comes to regret it, even though the latter believes that he has a suitable birthday present for Patrick to help build bridges.

The slightly troubled (more on that in a mo) sixth season opens with typical Meldrew fare, a poor review of a suicide in a parish magazine, and yet another (but fantastic) wallpaper debacle – then dips into unsafe territory that **One Foot...** seems to have briefly wandered into without a map. Whereas the series has never been short of risqué or dark subject matters, these were usually quite innocently touched upon and used to

highlight Victor's childish side. Sorry but I far prefer Victor's rant about, "I didn't know whose price list to ask for first," and his advice to just, "put a red light over the door and be done with it," (while suspecting a Chinese take-away of doubling as a pick-up joint), in *The Broken Reflection* far more than him walking into an actual T & A parlour in a Chinese restaurant. There is a time and a place.

Got to love that commentary on modern art though. Show somebody a pile of crap for the right price, tagged with the right credentials and soon enough people see a work of art. Now that is the kind of thing we want from the show!

F2 Tales of Terror

WHEN A cast-member for Mr Swainey's local theatre production 'Tales of Terror', falls ill, Victor takes over as Count Dracula, but, as usual, real-life is far more chilling.

"What's got into you, going all coarse and crude all of a sudden?" asked Margaret halfway through *The Beast in the Cage* several years previously. With so much toilet humour in one episode of **One Foot...** I am inclined to ask the same here. Just as the previous episode sexed up the content, not to any great advantage, the humour continued to take on a rougher edge, using bodily function sniggers and/or death throughout a whole episode in contrast to the occasional naughty giggles of past episodes that were quickly polished over with a return to more harmless comedy.

It is also a bit of a mystery why Renwick penned such a cruel fate for Ronnie and Mildred, considering they never did the Meldrews any harm, just grated on them a great deal from afar. And yes, they still seem to be living considerably nearer to River Bank than on our first introduction to them in Season Three.

One of the weakest episodes all around, with even the funniest sketch, the bricked up bedroom door, an utterly daft concept even with belief gamely suspended.

F3 The Futility of the Fly

DEEP-FRIED FINGER in a bag of chips, a cracked tooth in the bath and a very unusual gift sent from out of nowhere? Just a typical day in the Meldrew household and, unbeknownst to Victor and Margaret, somebody else is making notes of it all...

A fun episode, even though the big plot hole is all too obvious by the end, with the cleaner Katie, being able to re-create several scenes for her pier-end stage comedy, when she wasn't present at the time. The last appearance of Mrs Warboys unfortunately doesn't paint her in a very good light (although that's nothing compared to what is painted on her by the end), showing us that she can't resist opening an envelope to read private mail. Even so, ...*Fly* is an entertaining episode, and one must overlook things like the aforementioned plot hole as one overlooks the absurdity of the old maid recalling every conversation from the last 15 years in *Wuthering Heights*. That



➡ New neighbours the McVities are going to regret that trip to the estate agents...

➡ How does one explain this little embarrassment?

➡ Personalized wallpaper

➡ Life is one big horror show





opening scene on the stage is very funny and if there was any doubt that nobody would be acceptable as Victor Meldrew than Richard Wilson then here it is. You just know that every word from 'Milton's' mouth would sound funnier from Victor's. I give up guessing about that plastic fly though...

F4 *Threatening Weather*

A POWER CUT during a heat wave renders the Meldreus' electric fans useless. Victor searches for ways to keep cool, while Margaret simply tries to keep her cool.

The last of the **One Foot...** single-location plays is the most missable, yet just about succeeds in capturing the fenced-in tension and character dynamic of the superior episodes before it.

The final one-location episode is far from dull (far indeed), yet cannot quite capture the clever use of space and feeling of fenced in frustration that made the previous ones like this so special. Victor could always just nip outside if he is that hot. Sorry, but the 'threat' of the midges over a pond across the road don't quite cut it! Also, we are given the impression that it is only early evening, ('too early' to go to bed) so why so dark in the middle of summer?

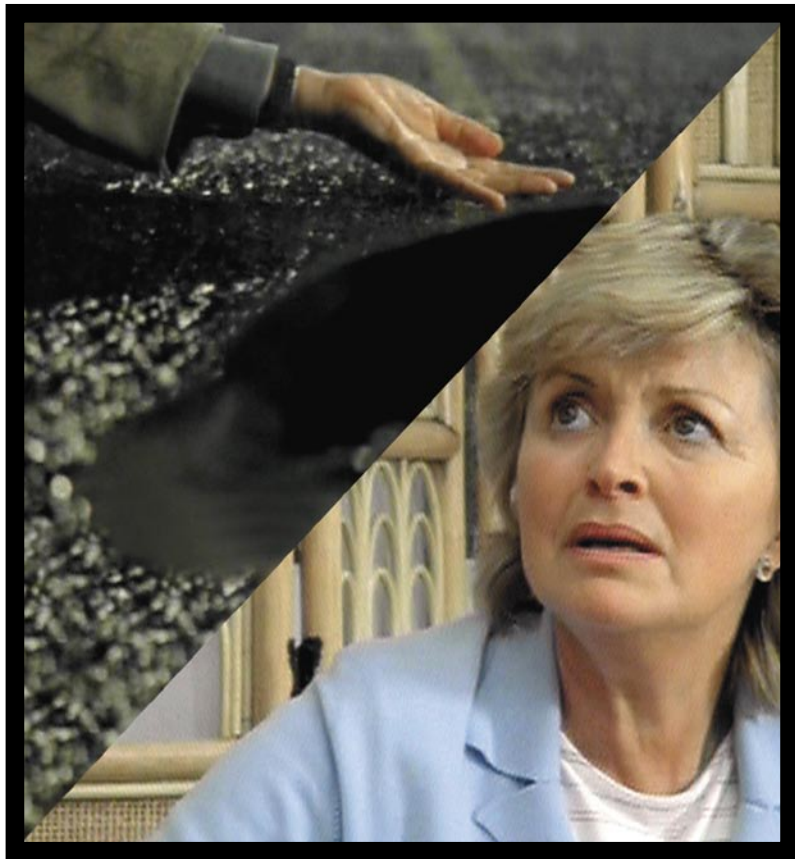
One notable element of *Threatening Weather* is that it underscores better than perhaps any other episode a frequent blot on **One Foot...** scripts. Namely the overly-contrived way for Victor to get out his funniest lines by describing scenes in great ranting detail to Margaret at which

she was recently present and needs no recap to remember. Bear that in mind in two episodes time when Margaret cries "I know... I was there!" as Victor recaps everything. Perhaps a blot can be forgivable though if the pen swirls it into something beautiful, in this case a hilarious anecdote about the dinner party from Hell, delivered by Victor moments before a lampshade falls on his nether regions. Margaret: "At least it fell on something soft."

F5 *The Dawn of Man*

PATRICK'S GAY twin brother is visiting, and Victor's theories about the kind of mix-ups that that could potentially cause pale in comparison to the woes involving fishing bait and 'popcorn' that befall him.

Between Patrick getting a cork stuck up his backside, Victor being smashed through a window by a thug and a videotape of hardcore gay porn, has it really come to **One Foot...** using material more suited to the likes of **Two Pints of Lager and a Packet of Crisps** (though with far more wit at least)? It is ironic that the episode would end with a spoof of **2001's** prologue (as Victor grapples with polystyrene), for the signs are now too hard to ignore that the show has little more room to evolve in a sophisticated way, unless another special were to be penned that would eclipse this season. Well, we all knew that wasn't going to happen as Victor's death was announced long in advance. I also would have liked to have seen more of Patrick's



An alternate Victor and Margaret

Short-lived relief during a power cut

RIP Victor Meldrew

RATINGS	
Season Six	
F1	16 Oct 2000 UK
F2	23 Oct 2000 UK
F3	30 Oct 2000 UK
F4	6 Nov 2000 UK
F5	13 Nov 2000 UK
F6	20 Nov 2000 UK

brother, whose acidic dialogue could have been used for more than just a short phone call.

This episode's saving grace is that it does develop the character of one of the most under-developed regulars, Mr Swainey, as he is finally forced to evaluate whether being an overgrown boy scout all those years was worth it. Of course it was!

F6 *Things Aren't Simple Anymore*

VICTOR MELDREW is no more, killed by a hit and run driver following a fiasco of an old boys' reunion. While recalling the last weeks of his life, Margaret keeps herself busy with good causes, but has said a silent vow that she will extract justice herself if she ever meets her late husband's killer.

Okay, let's leave aside for the moment the issue of whether such a loved character should have been killed off. In reviewing the very last episode, and Victor Meldrew's tragic stage exit, the main question should be whether David Renwick, Meldrew's creator, puppeteer, guardian, and ultimately, his killer, gave the character as fitting a send off as possible. There are many things that are spot on with *Things Aren't Simple Anymore* as a finale. Christine Gernon's gentle direction that turns the moment of Victor's death from an ignominious ending into a swift passing complete with the symbolic purity of the rain and soft heavenly streetlight, for starters. An upbeat montage of Victor's final gripes to end with, and a brilliant piece

of ambiguity when Margaret discovers the identity of her husband's accidental killer, Glynis (Hannah Gordon). Does Margaret lace Glynis's glass of juice with ground sleeping pills, keeping good her promise to kill the killer? We don't know, but upon repeat viewings, fans can occupy themselves with raking over the evidence. For the defence, there is the central scene where the kindly vicar implores Margaret to choose the strength to forgive over an appetite for revenge, the discovery that the killer is, like Margaret, a new widow, and would she not be more intense as she sits in the car afterwards instead of sighing as if a huge weight has dropped off her shoulders? For the prosecution, there is Margaret's state of mind leading up to the confrontation as well as the question of why she would even take the drink to Glynis instead of the newspaper cuttings unless it was important that she drink from it.

If this episode sorely lacks something it is a glimpse of how all the supporting characters react to Victor's death. Knocking together a quick montage of placing flowers at his grave wouldn't have been difficult and I think even Patrick would have looked at the headstone with deep regret.

Let us not get too gloomy; at least the series knew when to call it a day, and the jaunty ending is a beautifully fitting, perk-up tribute to the wackiness of modern life and one very vocal Human being caught in the middle of it.

Stuart Weightman



DOCTOR WHO

K9 & TALES

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K9 AND COMPANY - the Doctor's two companions Sarah Jane Smith and K9 appear together the first TV spin off from Doctor Who. In this one-off special, Sarah Jane pays a Christmas visit to her Aunt Lavana in the village of Moreton Harwood. But something is horribly wrong. Lavana is missing and Sarah Jane and K9 find themselves in the middle of a mystery.

DVD Special Features:

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- **The K9 Files, Dreams and Fantasy**, making of both stories with actors Elisabeth Sladen, John Leeson, Louise Jameson, John Leeson, plus writers and directors

- **Behind The Scenes**

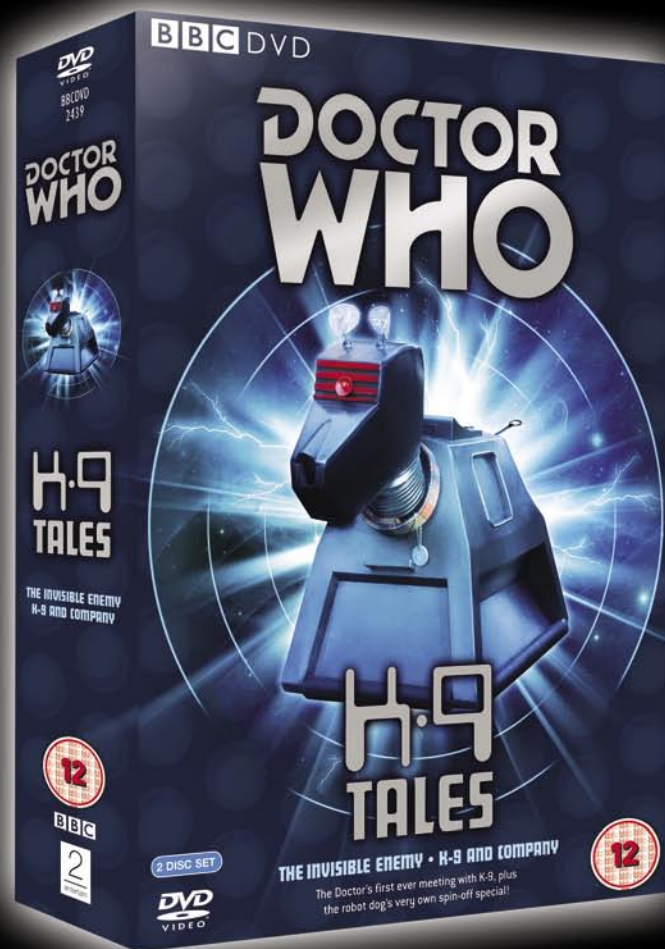
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Who Didn't Write Who

*As the Tom Baker serial **The Brain of Morbius**, supposedly written by Robin Bland, comes to DVD, we discover the truth behind those onscreen pseudonyms...*

AN UNEARTHLY CHILD

Who created **Doctor Who**? Unlike most series, there isn't the easy answer of a creator credit on the opening titles. It's traditional to give the credit to Sydney Newman, the drama department chief who came up with the idea of a family Science Fiction adventure to fill a particular slot in the Saturday schedules. Certainly, a lot of the ideas which reached the screen seem familiar from the earlier **Pathfinders in Space** serials which Malcolm Hulke and Eric Paice had written for him at ITV, in particular an irascible and untrustworthy old man. But the idea didn't spring fully formed from Newman and his colleague Donald Wilson, as a script unit group headed by Alice Frick was charged with reading a wide range of contemporary Science Fiction and suggesting possible formats, including a group of scientific troubleshooters (**Doomwatch**, anyone?) and a series about telepathic teenagers (shades of **The Tomorrow People**) as well as one about Time travel. Alongside this, writer CE 'Bunny' Webber was tasked to outline characters for the series, coming up, perhaps predictably, with a line-up of teenage girl, older woman, handsome hero and irritable old man. By May 1963, Webber has turned Frick's report and Newman's ideas into a format similar to that which reached the screen, and also outlined an opening story, in which the two suspicious school teachers encounter the Doctor in the first episode, and end up exploring their own schoolroom in miniaturized form.

The 'Giants' idea, a favourite of Newman's, would go through many hands before finally opening the series' second season in the form of Louis Marks's *Planet of Giants*, and had been dropped in favour of a story set at the dawn of time from Australian writer Anthony Coburn before Verity Lambert, another person often seen as one of its core creators, joined the series as its producer. But the core story of episode one didn't change, though we may



never know how much of Webber's script survives in the final version of first episode *An Unearthly Child*. But it could be a lot, particularly in the untransmitted first recording.

But it's Coburn's name that's on the opening titles of the first episode, which could have had a long-lasting effect if the series had been made in America. American Writers Guild rules state that the credited writer of the first episode is the show's creator – hence Sol Saks is the official creator of *Bewitched*, even though producer William Dozier invented it as a vehicle for his wife, Elizabeth Montgomery, Gene Roddenberry wrote a framing plot for Dorothy Fontana's introductory episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, and Linwood Boomer would have been credited on every episode of *Red Dwarf* (USA) had it made it past his pilot adaptation of Grant-Naylor's British scripts. So, if **Doctor Who** were an American series, there'd be even less excuse for newspapers and quizzes to give the credit to Terry Nation (or, increasingly often, Russell T Davies) – Anthony Coburn would get the title, and the Coburn family would probably be much better off...



THE DALEKS' MASTER PLAN

However tangled attempts to work out who contributed what to the birth of *Doctor Who* might be, there's no doubt that Terry Nation created the monsters which gave it a crucial boost five weeks into its run – the Daleks. Well, so long as you overlook the crucial contribution of designer Raymond Cusick, of course, who as a BBC employee couldn't take any credit (though he did get an ex-gratia payment of £100, a Blue Peter badge and a tour of the current *Doctor Who* studios in later years). Nation's got a credit on every episode in which they've appeared ever since (except when the producer forgot, and a hasty voiceover had to be added), and of course the royalties.

But how substantial was Nation's contribution to some of the actual scripts that bore his name? In particular, *The Daleks Masterplan*, his last 1960s contribution before he tried to launch his creations in America and became the lead writer on *The Avengers*. In theory, the credits make it clear – Nation contributed most of the first half of this epic 12-part tale, with old colleague Dennis Spooner providing the later episodes from Nation's ideas. But everyone involved with the production recalls that Nation's scripts came in short and late, with script editor Donald Tosh even going so far as to recall that as he became increasingly anxious about the undelivered scripts, Nation eventually stopped off in a taxi en route to the airport for a flight to America, dropping off a wad of notes, but no actual scripts. Hence director Douglas Camfield improvised certain sequences for the pre-filming at Ealing studios from these notes, while Tosh reportedly wrote up the actual scripts to fit round them.

THE CELESTIAL TOYMAKER

You might have thought Tosh's successor Gerry Davis would have it a bit easier, but no such luck, as one of the scripts he inherited was from Tosh's era. Tosh had been impressed by a *Waiting for Godot*-like play about a dinner party in which the title characters, *George and Margaret*, never appeared. He liked the idea of a *Doctor Who* story in which they did appear, and fortunately, the play's author Gerald Savory happened to be the BBC drama department's new chief, and was flattered enough to let him use the characters. Writer Brian Hayles came up with a script that saw them as the centre piece of a dark, psychological battle of wills between the Doctor and the all-powerful Celestial Toymaker, and the parts had already been cast when Savory dropped his bombshell, as Davis put it, he didn't like the scripts, and wouldn't let his characters be used, leaving Davis to frame a new story around the same actors within days so the designers could get to work on replacement sets.

Tosh later expressed regret that the story had gone ahead at all once its original idea was lost, while Davis, in the final irony, later admitted that he'd taken co-credit on the novelization while letting his protégée Alison Bingeman actually write it so as to get her a start as a published writer.

THE MASSACRE

After *Masterplan*, Tosh might have expected a quiet life for the remainder of his time on *Doctor Who*. No such luck, as the authorial history of the next story, *The Massacre*, is equally tangled. Series veteran John Lucarotti had been commissioned to write a story about the Viking discovery of America by the previous production team. Then incomers John Wiles and Donald Tosh asked him to abandon this and instead focus on the 17th century massacre of Paris's Protestants by the Catholic majority on St Bartholemew's Day – and write the script without the Doctor, but giving William Hartnell an alternate role. Unenthusiastically, Lucarotti fulfilled the commission, but it's clear that the transmitted version is heavily rewritten from his scripts, and when he was asked to novelise them he abandoned almost everything from the televised version in favour of a new story based around the same rough characters and situation.

Still, he retained the onscreen credit (as far as can be told, with the episodes missing and no telesnaps of the credits available) despite Tosh's rewrites, as Tosh was a BBC staffer... until the final episode, when his successor Gerry Davis took over as script editor, and Tosh was given a joint credit for a legendary final sequence in which the Doctor is left alone, abandoned by all his companions...

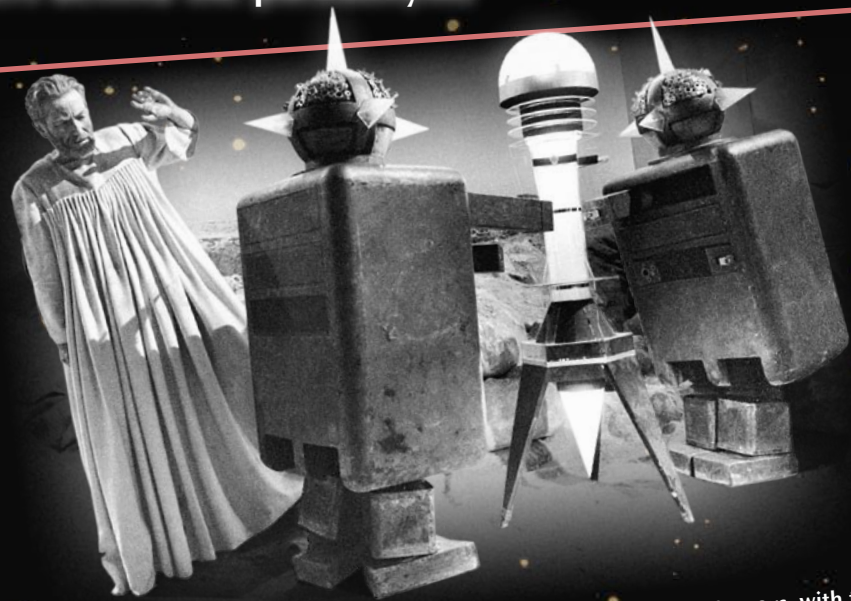
THE HIGHLANDERS

Davis's luck didn't get better either... the ill-health of Cyberman creator Kit Pedler meant that Davis often contributed to scripts for which Pedler got sole credit, and he was also responsible for a script for which veteran writer Elwyn Jones got the screen credit, *The Highlanders*. Jones had been keen to write for *Doctor Who*, suggesting the aftermath of the 1746 Battle of Culloden as a suitable stage for a tale of a swashbuckling adventure but, when problems with other scripts meant it had to be pulled forward to become Patrick Troughton's second story, he was too busy to actually complete the scripts. Davis dashed off first drafts in time for the extensive location filming, and worked on the final drafts on a portable typewriter while actually on location.

THE DOMINATORS

Next up comes a tangled tale of merchandising rights and overt political satire that put an effective end to the career of what was, in autumn 1968, *Doctor Who*'s third most successful monster, the Yeti. After the quickfire success of their debut story, *The Abominable Snowmen* and rapid return in *The Web of Fear*, expectations were high for writers Mervyn Haisman and Henry Lincoln's next contribution, *The Dominators*, and the new robotic monsters it would showcase.

The past record of monsters specifically designed to rival the Daleks should have been a warning sign. The BBC immediately set out to promote the Quarks as the next big thing, persuading *TV Comic* to let them take over from the position as resident monster previously held by the Daleks and the Cybermen, but Haisman and Lincoln were angered that they'd not been consulted – particularly over the royalties. And before that the scripts had run into trouble, with script editor Derrick Sherwin feeling they were a heavy-handed attack on the hippie culture and pacifist opposition to the Vietnam War and nuclear weapons. And worse, they were dull, leading him to suggest cutting the serial from six to five episodes,



with Sherwin himself adding a one-episode prologue to the following story, *The Mind Robber* (as he was on the BBC's staff, this is the only *Doctor Who* episode known not to carry an onscreen writer credit). Haisman and Lincoln were outraged at the changes, insisting that the pseudonym Norman Ashby be used, and work on a third Yeti story was abandoned, along with the Quarks' future prospects, as Brian Hayles's *Ice Warriors* instead stepped up to become the third most commonly seen monster of *Doctor Who*'s original run. Eventually, Haisman and

Lincoln went their separate ways, with the latter becoming one of the three writers of the book that first suggested the Holy Grail might be Christ's descendants, though he wisely skipped his co-authors' attempts to claim a share of Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* earnings. Instead, both Haisman and Lincoln retain official ownership of the character of the Brigadier – even though the character we know and love was arguably born from director Douglas Camfield's suggestions to actor Nicholas Courtney, not in their scripts for *The Web of Fear*.

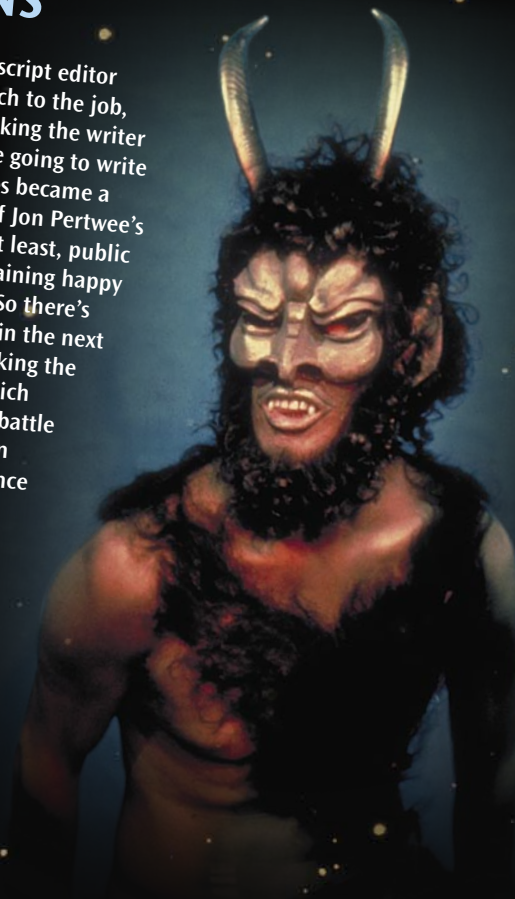
THE AMBASSADORS OF DEATH

It was the pace of change that overcame the final contribution of *Doctor Who*'s original script editor, David Whitaker, as the story which began as 'Invaders from Mars' shifted from the second Doctor's era into that of the third, and a reformatted series with the new Doctor stranded on Earth and working for the Brigadier and UNIT. Rather than force Whitaker through yet another rewrite as he tried to adapt to the new style, the story was largely rewritten by Malcolm Hulke, who'd already shown his skill with the new format (having, ironically, been one of the most regularly rejected hopefuls during the series' early years), introducing many of his trademarks, including sympathetic villains, and a conflict born of misunderstandings and misplaced idealism rather than megalomania and sadism.



THE DÆMONS

Perhaps because of new script editor Terrance Dicks's approach to the job, which he describes as taking the writer to one side and saying 'We are going to write a story together...' script crises became a thing of the past for the rest of Jon Pertwee's tenure as the Time Lord – or at least, public ones did, with the writers remaining happy with any changes Dicks made. So there's only one pseudonymous script in the next four years, with Guy Leopold taking the onscreen credit for the story which ended the Doctor's season-long battle with *The Master*, *The Daemons*, in 1971. Actually, that was a reference to the sons of the real writers, producer Barry Letts and his friend Robert Sloman, but BBC rules meant Letts couldn't take the credit, though he did for the novelization, and even reads it for a talking book to be released next month. The same pairing contributed the conclusion to every remaining Pertwee season, but for simplicity's sake they were simply credited to Sloman alone.



PYRAMIDS OF MARS

Lewis Greifer should have been a great choice as a *Doctor Who* writer, with credits on the likes of *The Prisoner*. In practice, it was instantly obvious that his scripts for *Pyramids of Mars*, with UNIT battling risen mummies which are searching for Martian grain samples from ancient Egypt in the corridors of the British Museum, were unfilmable. With Greifer also unavailable in the Mediterranean (was there some sort of *Doctor Who* writers' convention going on?), Holmes stepped into the breach once more, tapping out a period replacement with UNIT's involvement limited to a mention that its headquarters will later be built on the same site, which is one of the series' acknowledged classics. Pity Stephen Harris never wrote for the series again, then. Except he did, sort of, two stories later (See overleaf)...



REVENGE OF THE CYBERMEN

All change. In 1974, Terrance Dicks moves on and one of his most reliable writers, Robert Holmes, takes over as script editor, with his pro-active approach and the return of some familiar names triggering a string of script identity crises. John Lucarotti was to have returned to the series with a space station based story but, when his scripts arrived, Holmes was horrified to find himself reading a Hartnell story, down to individual episode titles, rather than the atmospheric body horror which he'd been hoping to make the theme of his tenure. With Lucarotti now based in the Mediterranean and inaccessible on any practical timescale, Holmes was given special emergency permission to write the replacement script for *The Ark in Space* himself, and even take the onscreen credit.

Ark was to share sets with another story set on the same space station in a different era, featuring the return of both Gerry Davis and the Cybermen for the first time in more than eight years. Yet Holmes almost instantly decided to write Davis's scripts, introducing location filming that Davis had budget-consciously avoided, and replacing the gold worshipping asteroid miners that Davis had created with the alien Vogans. But Davis's name remained on the screen... and it seems he has to take the credit for introducing the Cybermen's weakness for gold.



THE BRAIN OF MORBIUS

If *Revenge of the Cybermen* changed due to extra money becoming available, then it was budget-watching that led Holmes to extensively rework Terrance Dicks's scripts for the Frankenstein pastiche *The Brain of Morbius*. Producer Philip Hinchcliffe was keen to produce the definitive robot story for *Doctor Who* (an ambition he'd eventually achieve with Chris Boucher's *The Robots of Death*), and, having already scripted *Robot the Inevitable*, Dicks must have seemed the inevitable choice for the job. He came up with a genuinely ingenious idea – that a spaceship crash would leave a fleeing Time Lord criminal horribly injured, but that his devoted robot servant, in the true spirit of the ultimate Gentleman's Gentleman Jeeves, would devote its every effort to keeping his brain alive while crafting a replacement body from the victims of later crashes – unaware that its lack of aesthetic sense was creating a hideous monster for its master to inhabit.

Unfortunately, budget issues as the season's end approached in the days of hyper-inflation made it impossible to afford the monster and the robot... so the robot went in favour of obsessive surgeon Mehendri Solon, in rewrites Holmes performed while Dicks was unavailable on holiday. Dicks was outraged at the result, ordering Holmes to put 'some bland pseudonym' on screen... and swiftly mellowed enough to be immensely amused to see the serial credited to Robin Bland, and to be immensely impressed by actor Philp Madoc's career-best performance as Solon, so that the serial's now one of his favourites.

THE INVASION OF TIME/CITY OF DEATH

With budget pressures looming as the hyper-inflation of the 1970s combined with belt-tightening around the entire BBC to gang up on *Doctor Who*, the last thing the latest producer-script editor team of Graham Williams and Anthony Read needed was to have an experienced writer who they'd used with great success on a number of other series deliver a debut script which called for a night-shoot in a Wembley-sized arena filled with blood thirsty intelligent cats... but that's exactly what David Weir's first *Doctor Who* script 'The Killer Cats of Jin-Seng' demanded. Already under pressure thanks to a looming scene-shifters' strike, Williams and Read had 10 days to come up with a replacement six-parter, written round the sets and costumes that had already been designed (though the cats got dropped altogether, with most of the studio material having to be transferred to location to get round the strike).

And somehow they managed it, leaving only the perennial problem of who should get the credit given that both were on staff and forbidden from commissioning themselves. Williams thought of using the name Richard Thomas, in reference to his son, as a dig at sneering writers who claimed an eight-year-old could write *Doctor Who*, but then it turned out that the Drama Department had finally come up with an all-purpose name to cover such situations – David Agnew, whose previous credits included *Target!*, the cop show Williams had devised, and had been expecting to produce rather than *Doctor Who*.

David Agnew would return to the show two years later, after family problems meant that writer David Fisher couldn't complete his script for a 1920s-set Bulldog Drummond parody called 'Gamble with Time'. This time round, Douglas Adams donned Agnew's mantle, tapping out the script for the Paris-set *City of Death*, one of the series' greatest successes' over a single weekend, fuelled by whisky and black coffee. So David Agnew is Graham Williams, and Anthony Read, and sometime Douglas Adams, with a few ideas from Robert Holmes and David Weir and David Fisher, except when he's working on *Target!*, when he's probably Roger Marshall and Philip Hinchcliffe.

THE TWIN DILEMMA

One of the guiding principles of *Doctor Who* scripting seems to be that *Doctor Who* is one of the most difficult shows around, with script writers who've got a list of successes decades long falling flat on their faces when asked to handle the Time Lord. There can be few disasters greater than *The Twin Dilemma*, one of the last scripts from 30-year veteran Anthony Steven, who reportedly delivered late, producing a final episode which simply dropped the existing plotline in favour of a confrontation with a new enemy in a different dimension. Script editor Eric Saward tried to save it, effectively writing the final script, though the combination of planetary science that's laughable even by the standards of *Doctor Who*, and an inaudible immobile slug was beyond salvation, as he effectively admitted though his novelization, which turns it into an outright comedy – to great effect.

ATTACK OF THE CYBERMEN

Tangled though some of the stories so far might be, they're nothing compared with the problems of tracing the authorial ancestry of *Attack of the Cybermen*. The onscreen credit goes to one Paula Moore – but it's her only television credit. In fact, Moore was Paula Woolsey, a friend of then script editor Eric Saward, who some suggest took the credit in part so that Saward could circumvent the rules against writing for a series while editing it. Except that... fan Ian Levine, the programme's unofficial continuity consultant at the time, maintains he came up with the story, working with Saward, and Woolsey's involvement was minimal. Saward, in turn, denies this.

Though the wonder is that anyone really wants to take the credit at all...

THE TRIAL OF A TIME LORD

Doctor Who's return to the screen after the postponement of Season 23 in 1985 was a crucial moment which had to be got right... yet, ironically, that determination to make a splash led to one of the greatest bust-ups in the series' history. Two of the story slots within the framework of the season-long *Trial of a Time Lord* were filled relatively easily, with scripts from Robert Holmes and Philip Martin, though Martin doesn't recognize much of 'his' final episode, but the others slowly became a catalogue of disaster that eventually led script editor Eric Saward to quit the show, giving an angry interview to *Starburst*. The difficulties in filling the third slot, with at least three scripts being tested out before Pip and Jane Baker were finally commissioned, can be put down to the perennial problems of breaking in new writers and a desire to get it right, but then tragedy really struck with the last two scripts of the season. Veteran Robert Holmes had been commissioned to conclude the story, but fell ill and died before he could complete the scripts. A grief-stricken Saward set out to complete the last work of a man who'd become something of a mentor, with Holmes's work surviving almost unaltered for two-thirds of episode 13 before Saward redrafted the later material to lead into the 14th episode he'd write on the basis of Holmes's notes and their discussion. But then producer John Nathan-Turner, anxious not to offer up an opportunity for the Powers that Be to cancel the show, asked for changes to the dark and ambiguous cliffhanger end – which Saward refused to provide, choosing to quit instead.

As a result, Pip and Jane Baker had to come up with a conclusion – and, for legal reasons, they weren't allowed to know anything of Saward's or Holmes's original plans. So, ironically, this is one occasion when we can be sure that their onscreen credit for episode 14 reflects the absolute ancestry of a troubled episode – no one else was allowed to contribute a word!



VALUABLE LESSONS

- 1 Beware of senior, respected figures within the BBC and the script-writing business who ask if they can have a go at a Doctor Who
- 2 Don't assume that a writer will deliver well just because he's been reliable on other series – or other eras of Doctor Who
- 3 Above all – don't hire a writer who's about to move to the Mediterranean!

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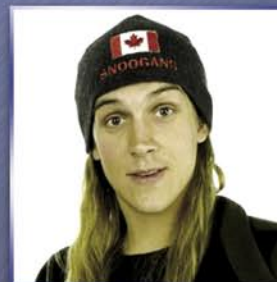
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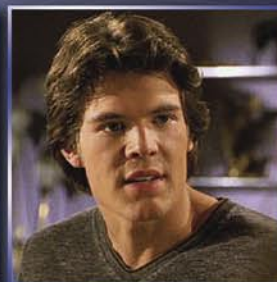
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STARGATE SG-1, FARSCAPE



BRAD DOURIF
LORD OF THE RINGS, CHILDS PLAY



JOHN HURT
ALIEN, 1984, HARRY POTTER



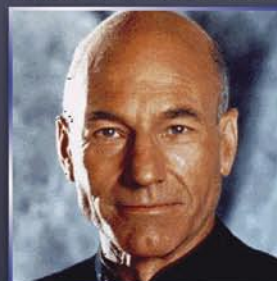
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BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER



MALCOLM McDOWELL
CLOCKWORK ORANGE, HEROES



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HEROES, ALIAS



PATRICK STEWART
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Getting Down to Earth

The two female leads of the archaeological drama discuss getting into the mud... with a few interruptions from adviser Mark Horton!



⇐ Gugu Mbatha-Raw plays intern Viv Davis

⇒ Julie Graham gets to wear sensible clothes as Gillian Magwilde

CAST

Gillian Magwilde
Julie Graham
Viv Davis
Gugu Mbatha-Raw
Ben Ergha
Adrian Lester
Gregory Parton
Hugh Bonneville
Daniel Mastiff
Michael Maloney

ACTRESSES JULIE Graham and Gugu Mbatha-Raw are talking about their new series, **Bonekickers**. At least, they're trying to, but aside from a journalist or two the table is also temporary home to Doctor Mark Horton, Reader in Archaeology at Bristol University, sometime member of the **Time Team** and advisor to the series; and, as anyone who's seen him in **Coast** knows, he's someone so ebullient Brian Blessed would feel intimidated by the competition. Still, Graham, a high profile actress since her days in **Casualty** 20 years ago, through ITV's **William and Mary** and her lead role in the upcoming remake of **Survivors**, is holding her own, particularly in comparing her character of Dr Gillian Magwilde with the real life archaeologists she met while shooting the series.

"There are a lot of female archaeologists," she says, "I think even more in other countries. I did notice that."

"When we return to the students in Bristol, 60% of them will be female," Horton says of his pupils.

"Well that's what I noticed when we'd had real students come out on





“It’s really dangerous, the tide comes in at 20 knots and, unless you get out, you drown. You get stuck and drown”



↑ The mud is about to fly, as the costume masters panic...

↩ When faced with sword-wielding religious fanatics... send down the women!

set,” Graham says of the times when they’d act as extras working on the trenches. “I have to say I did notice a lot of little baby Gillians in this.”

“Then when we took you out to go digging – we went up to Stonehenge...” “Yes, that’s where you taught me how to dig, how to use a trowel...” Graham says. She’s now confident in her trowel-handling abilities. “Easy-peasy, up to my knees in mud, usually in my garden,” she says of practising her technique.

“And if you can imagine what the Bristol channel is like, knee-deep in horrible, black, blooky mud,” says Horton of the shoot for Episode Two. “It’s really dangerous, the tide comes in at 20 knots and, unless you get out, you drown. You get stuck and drown.”

“The thing was, we knew that was coming up,” says Graham, “and they said, ‘It’s going to be January, it’s going to be horrendous, it’s going to be raining, and it was a beautiful, glorious sunny day, and in fact, we all ended up having a mud fight, started by Hugh. He got me right down the back of my neck! Costume and make-up were like, ‘No!’ Then we all had handfuls of mud and we were just waiting for ‘Cut, that’s a wrap,’ and then, ‘Arrrrh!’”

“It sounds like you all had far too much fun on this!” says Horton.

“Far too much fun, I know,” Graham agrees.

THIS IS one of the first things we’re all realizing from talking to the **Bonekickers** crowd – that despite his towering reputation as a serious actor, co-star Hugh Bonneville doesn’t have too far to go to get into character as the disrespectful Dr ‘Dolly’ Parton. “No acting required at all... he was always drunk!” Graham comments, while Horton promises of Parton’s sexist comments about his female colleagues’ chests, “And they get worse!”

“Oh, he’s harmless,” interjects Gugu Mbatha-Raw, who should be familiar to viewers as Martha Jones’s sister Tish in last year’s run of **Doctor Who**. Not something you can say of the series’ stunt work, which saw her and Graham abseiling into an underground vault of ancient crosses (soon to be set on fire), pursued by a sword-wielding religious nutter, in the first episode. And it wasn’t a stunt woman. “Yes! That was me!”

“We insisted,” says Graham. “We were like, ‘Please, you’ve got to let us do it.’”

“It was cold,” moans Mbatha-Raw.

“They just had to make sure that we weren’t scared of heights,” Graham explains, “but it was so cold in there that we were going, ‘Burn the crosses now!’”

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VISUAL IMAGINATION



↩ Dr Parton is sexist, but harmless. Hugh Bonneville, on the other hand, is pure trouble

➡ Gugu Mbatha-Raw, in sensible clothes

🏠 Adrian Lester and Hugh Bonneville let the women take charge!



The drop was, she adds, “About 40 feet, but the best fun is being pulled up. They were pulling us up really slowly and we were saying to the guys, ‘Pull us up really quickly’ to a team of about four men in each corner!” There were some stunt personnel involved. “The close sword stuff was done by stunt people; they didn’t want to risk a real beheading! We filmed that separately and then had to pretend...”

NOT THAT Graham actually has a sword... at least stiletto shoes could have been whipped off and turned into an improvised epee. “It’s a no high heel job,” Graham comments. “I think I got to wear a frock once. For the reception, yeah. It was my favourite show, wearing clothes, because it was just so comfortable.”

Whereas Mbatha-Raw spent half her time on **Doctor Who** running around in impractical heels, cocktail dresses and power suits. “Oh God, yes,” she says. “Strutting around in tiny little high heels, in fact we filmed in Wells Cathedral for **Bonekickers**, which was also where I ran around in high heels for **Doctor Who**.”

The two actresses had wildly differing attitudes to archaeology before getting their roles, it transpires. “Well I was [interested] because of **Coast**, and generally, who isn’t?” comments Graham, wherea Gugu Mbatha-Raw admits, “I have to say I wasn’t interested... it sparked an interest; but I didn’t have any special interest in it, whereas I’ve got really into **Time Team** now!”

“I was a massive fan of **Coast**,” says Graham. “I was really excited about

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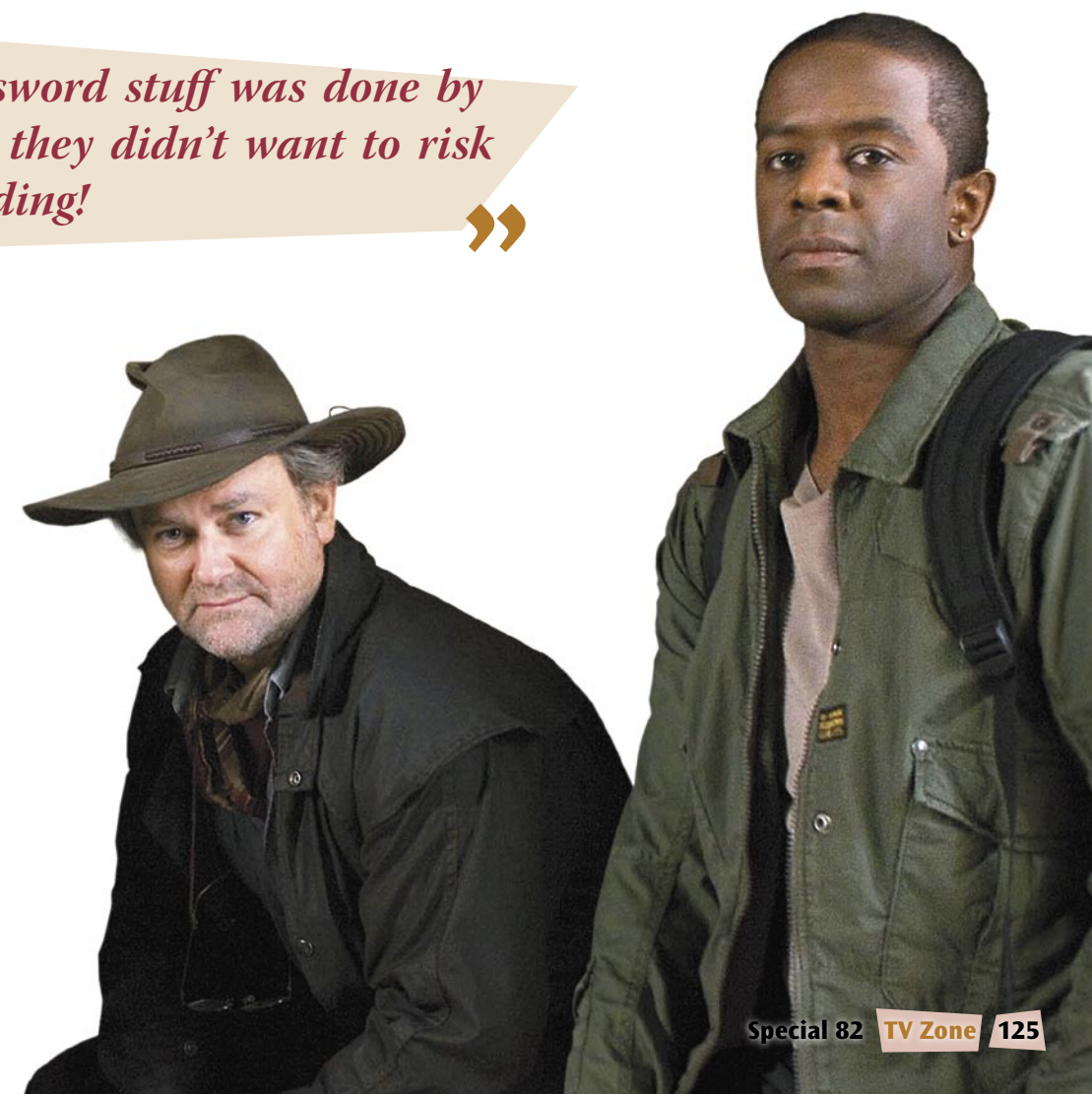
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“The close sword stuff was done by stunt people; they didn’t want to risk a real beheading!”

meeting Mark because I found out that he was going to be the advisor, I remember that...” she lets out an excited gasp... “He didn’t disappoint! In fact the character that Michael Maloney plays, this real media person,” she says, turning to Horton, “the first time I met you it was a real media moment. ‘Hi, I’m Dr Mark Horton, I’m just on the phone to *The Guardian*’... giving some terribly exciting interview. Obviously we don’t do the boring bit of archaeology...”

“We don’t have to take on mad terrorist evangelicals most days of our lives,” Horton admits, disappointingly, “but there is a genuine excitement to finding things...”

“Absolutely, I think the only artistic licence we’ve taken is that finds would take weeks or months to uncover and we do it in a day!” says Graham. “There has to be some artistic licence.”





A Talent for Survival

AFTER BONEKICKERS, Julie Graham's next part is the iconic role of Abby Grant, originally played by Carolyn Seymour, in Adrian Hodges's remake of *Survivors*. Though her daughter is more impressed by one of her co-stars than the prospect of the end of the world – Mbatha-Raw's old screen sister Freema Agyeman, *Doctor Who*'s Martha Jones.

"Well, my daughter is just beside herself because I'm working with Martha Jones," Graham says. "I didn't introduce her because I thought she might explode, but Freema very kindly gave me some photographs. We had five or six hours' journey back to Manchester yesterday, it was hellish, and she just looked at her picture the

whole way back: 'Mummy, I wish I had black hair like Martha's!'" The *Who* worship goes deep, it seems, winning Graham some respect for her *Bonekickers* role as a bonus. "There was an archaeologist on *Doctor Who* the other day," she says, referring to Alex Kingston's role in the newly transmitted *Silence in the Library* episodes, "and my little girl gasped, 'An archaeologist, Mummy, you played an archaeologist!'"

"I'm far too young!" she adds, laughing, when asked if she saw the original *Survivors*. "I vaguely knew about it, but I don't ever remember watching it, I have to say. But yeah, lots of people say, 'That series was amazing', and very excited that it is being remade. It's very prescient."

↑ Dr Parton longs for the pub

↗ Confronted with a historic mystery, Dr Magwilde prepares to dig

FOR THAT reason, Horton's half-expecting there to be far more of an angry response from certain archaeologists than from the likes of Mediawatch who might take against the opening salvo against Christian fundamentalists. "I suspect there's going to be some sort of backlash from the anoraks," he says. "I'm already getting a snifter of this, anoraks have already been writing in to the BBC, complaining that this trivializes archaeology. Of course, they've written without having seen any of it, but you can be absolutely certain that bloggers and anoraks will be out there in force."

"In this day and age of instant information that's always going to be the case," says Graham, "but *Bonekickers* can pride itself in the fact that it's different – there are no police, there are no doctors, no nurses. It's very original, and in fact, the *Bonekickers* team prides itself on the fact that we never call the police!"

WELL, THEY'D only get in the way (and ask awkward questions about the bodies – the recent ones, that is, not the ones the team dig up). And Gillian isn't a woman who lets people get in her way. "Gillian's kick-ass strong!" Graham says. "She's very driven, for anybody who's brilliant at their job you have to be driven, but the reason I loved Gillian on the page was that she's not defined by her gender in any way. She could easily have been a man but just so happens it's a woman, so it's unusual for an actor to read for a part that has no gender definition, and that's really refreshing, actually. She's a very well rounded character and obviously she has a vulnerable side as well – I just love her, and now I've got to go back to being boring old Julie Graham! I texted Hugh the next day saying 'There are small people asking me to get them things now!'"

Graham mentioned Gillian's vulnerable side, and that's most obvious when the touchy subject of her mother's fate comes up. Played by Frances Tomelty in later episodes, she was driven insane by her quest for a legendary relic called 'Tennyson's Glean,' and Gillian shows every sign of following her down the path to obsession and insanity. "Yes, as the episodes go on we learn more about that, and that's an emotional side that you get a glimpse of, with her mother. The thing is Matthew is incredible because he writes so well for women – I know that that sounds like a bit of a cliché, but it's true. It's a truism,



“*I suspect there's going to be some sort of backlash from the anoraks*”

but I think that he was possibly a woman in another life!"

The actress expands on her admiration for Matthew Graham's inventive – dare we say twisted? – mind. "We were saying that they should open a ride at Alton Towers called Matthew Graham's Brain! You can see him going 'I've got an idea for the next series' and the BBC going, 'There's no budget!' He was a goldmine of information about the story coming out of it and what you could kind of get away with even though it wasn't completely grounded... but it's within the realms of possibilities."

"It's got to be grounded in reality..." interjects Gugu Mbatha-Raw. "It's not Indiana Jones, it's not..."

"...utter escapism and adventure." Graham agrees.

"There is a grounding in science," says Mbatha-Raw.

"I challenge anybody to look up any of the facts on Google – you'll find that it's absolutely spot on," Mark Horton cuts in, running us through the *CSI*-like analysis of wood, cloth and bone samples used to source the artefacts unearthed in the first episode. "There is a real technique for dating wood, there is a chronology for cedar that was developed by a German archaeologist called Ernst Curtius. The reference to pollen for example, I don't know if you missed that, there really is that type of pollen called *Gundelia Tournfortii*, which is a form



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that's found in the Syrian desert, and is the strongest candidate for Christ's Crown of Thorns, and indeed was identified on the Turin Shroud – inaccurately so, but that was then claimed as one of the pieces of evidence that it was genuine. So that's a little in-joke, and it is the right image of the right pollen that's shown."

"And it was great knowing that that was accurate," Graham says. "Sometimes when I was learning lines it was like cramming for history A-level – doing some mini three-month degree in Bath! I'm completely enriched with all this knowledge, I'm a real bore now."

HORTON'S CONTRIBUTION extended to ensuring the team's lab set was accurate as well. "I walked onto the set before it was built," Graham says, "and I thought, 'This is a really kind of cold space,'



and when I walked on after it had been dressed, it was like walking into Mark's office – it was wonderful to have that authenticity."

"Because it was filmed in HD we were very, very careful about the absolute detailing," Horton explains. "So for example, you only got glimpses of it, but the boxes of skeletons in the lab, all those boxes

↩ No high heels and tight dresses here

➡ The ebullient Dr Horton – remind you of anyone?

⬇ The Wessex University team: no need for the police with them on the case!



had code numbers on them which were absolutely the right code numbers you would have used, for example."

"It helps you when you're acting if you actually have all the things," concludes Mbatha-Raw. "You've actually got all the real stuff; you don't have to pretend!"

Anthony Brown



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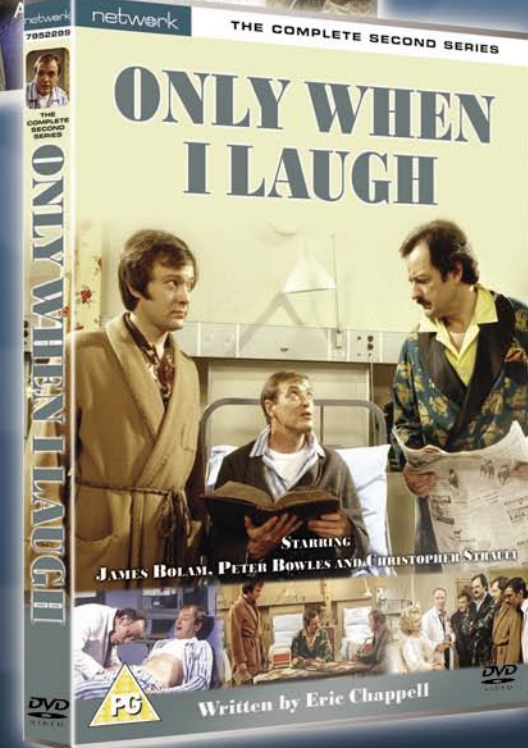
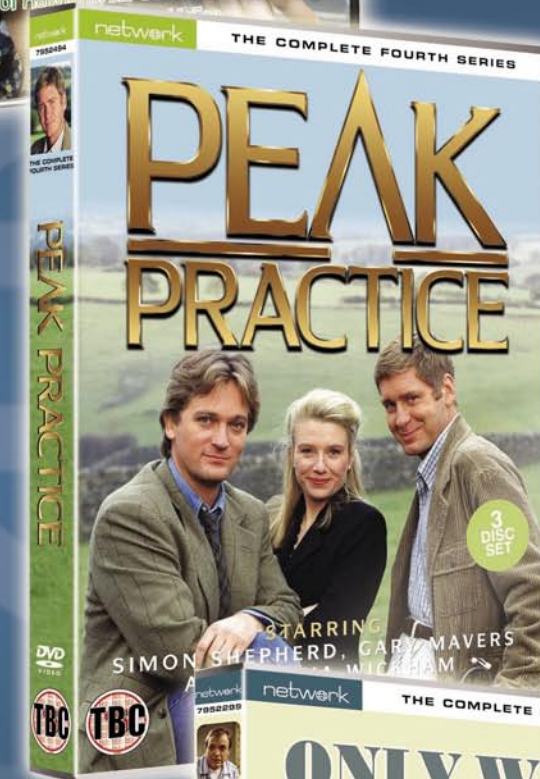
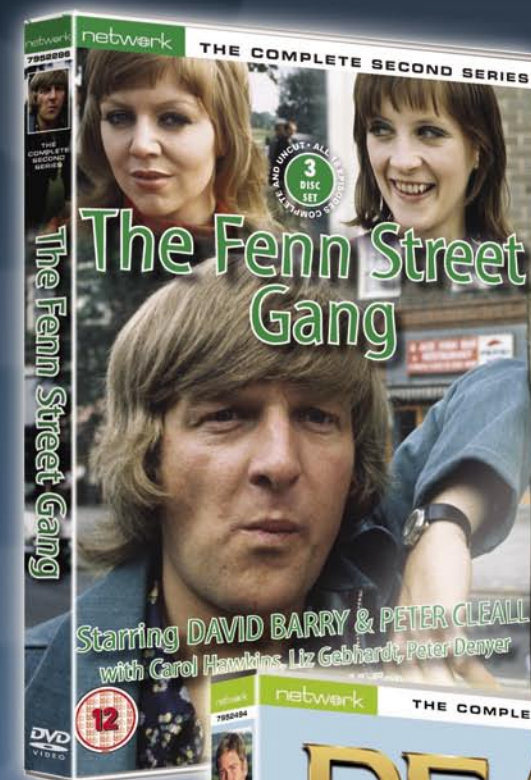
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The Lost



Cities

The cast and director of the popular 1980s cartoon series based on ancient myths share their memories of creating the English version as it comes to DVD

AHH, FOR those days of innocence where the most important things in life were how to spend your school playtime the most wisely, what plush merchandise to demand for Christmas, and never missing your favourite cartoon of the week. For those of us of a certain age (a few years short of 30, since you ask), one such programme was a long-running series called **The Mysterious Cities of Gold**, set in 16th Century Spain and about three children on an ocean-spanning quest to find fabled cities high in the Andes where the streets were literally paved with gold. Even now, hearing that theme music for the first time in the best part of two decades is like

a visit from an old, dear friend that causes the years accumulated since to momentarily melt away.

FOR THE release of the DVD box set of the complete series, Fabulous Films tracked down Canadian director Howard Ryshpan, who also voiced the central adult character, Mendoza, as well as Shiraz Adam, Adrian Knight and Janice Chaikelson, who recorded the English voice dubs for the three child characters. They are, respectively, Esteban, a 12-year-old Barcelonian boy, adopted after being rescued from a sinking ship as a baby and raised in a chapel and believed to be a 'sun-child' capable of summoning the sun's rays when needed. Then there's

← Tao, Esteban and Zia look to the horizon and beyond

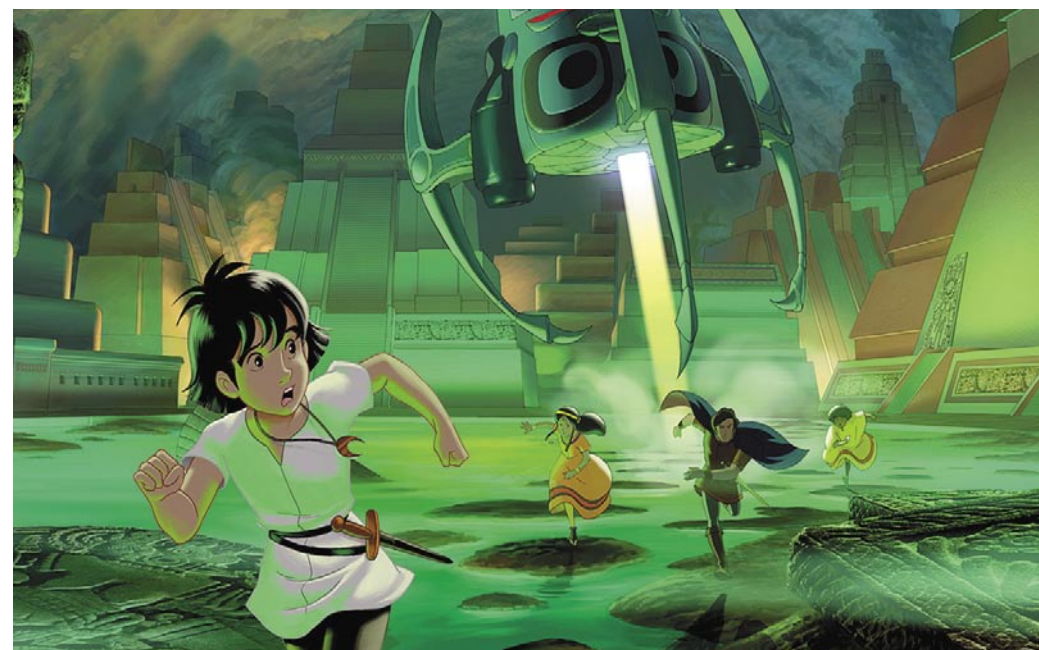
others meet on a Galapagos Island, and Zia, a kidnapped Inca girl, whose father was believed to be a high priest in the Cities of Gold.

"I was engaged on it in 1982; it was going to be done for both the BBC and for Nicolodeon", reveals Ryshpan. "They came to the production house, and the production house then asked me to do it; I was the house director at that time. Every episode was actually based on some form of historical fact, some place name, some area, some tribe, and we always had a little documentary at the end, which explained these things, and I thought, 'What a wonderful thing, here's an opportunity to do something which is both entertaining and educational at the same time.'"

THE MYSTERIOUS CITIES OF GOLD Director & Dubbing Cast

Ryshpan delves into the history of the series and how it came to be translated for English-speaking audiences. “The scripts were adapted from the French version by Kelly Ricard, whose voice you hear doing the opening to it, and the closing one about what is coming in the next episode. She would work on the French adaptation, and then Kelly and I would then work together to come out with the final English scripts. Essentially, we co-wrote it. At the time Canadian accents were very acceptable in animation for children, both in England with the BBC and with the States. In other words we were kind of neutral. In the United States they found it very difficult to understand British accents and, in Britain, the American accent at times was found to be too strong, so Canada was in a neutral area.”

THE JOB of casting the three children to breathe new life into the young characters who had already proved to have great appeal as a trio of little heroes, during its original French run, naturally fell into Ryshpan's lap. “Adrian [Knight] and I had worked on a series before and I knew I wanted him to play in this series,” says Ryshpan. “As to which part I wanted him to play, I didn't know. Adrian had a marvellous facility for reading so I knew I wanted Adrian in one way or another, but for the others I didn't have any people in mind, so I called up a theatre school run by two wonderful ladies, Dorothy Davis and Violet Walters. They did a wonderful job with the children, so I called them up when I was casting, and that's how Janice and Shiraz [Adams] came to audition.”



Then there was the director's own voice role, which he came to do quite be accident. “How was I assigned the part of Mendoza? Well, I wasn't assigned it. We were asked to do auditions; we had groups and groups coming in, children, adults. Doug Parry, who was the recording engineer and whom I worked with on many, many series, and I had a very close working relationship. We put all the auditions together and what we had to send off to France were my selection

↓ Advanced Inca technology adds to the peril

plus three alternatives for each one of the major voices. It was left up to the producers, it was being sent to them the following morning as early as we could get it out, and Doug said to me ‘We have a problem; I said ‘What? He said ‘We're short a voice for Mendoza! I said ‘Oh, all right, I'll record it, quick! So I recorded one for Mendoza, without thinking I just laid one down, and we gave them our preferred selection, and I was one of the other three. Then word came back afterwards on the ones that they had chosen, and they wanted my voice for Mendoza!”

WHILE TODAY'S cartoons frequently use adults to provide the children's voices, the young characters in **Mysterious Cities...** have an undeniably childish ring to the pronunciation and tone. “Twenty-five years ago it was not that common to use young children to do voices. I was certainly quite adamant about using children's voices because children sound like children,” Ryshpan explains. “Another thing that is quite important is that they read lines in a different way than an adult would read them. [If] you have an adult doing a kid's voice, no matter how good they are, they still read it like an adult, whereas a child will often say it in an entirely different way to an adult, but its right, and it comes out right.

“*I was certainly quite adamant about using children's voices because children sound like children*” *Howard Ryshpan*

“We devised a means of having the children in, just talking briefly about the scene; what it was and what they were doing in it, and not even telling them too much beyond. I didn't want to cloud their heads. So, they would then see the original scene run in the French version and then we would then go ahead and rehearse it in the English version, and they would read it as best they could. You can't really give a young child a reading of a line very easily, because even though they make mistakes, they say things that are so true to a child that no adult can do it. So this is really how I would go about it, and I must say that it was, I felt, quite successful.

“We'd have to do a detection of the original French dialogue,” he continues, “then based on that detection, which would be done on a 5-mm opaque

band, then the adaptation would be written trying to follow where that detection of that dialogue was done. Then a calligrapher would go over that on a clear band, and write it in India ink and someone would then type it. The film was then cut into loops and it was put in the projectors. We would do an episode in a day and then if there were any crowds or ‘walla’ as it's called, all the noises with the fights and things, we would do that another day. Sometimes we were recording on 16-mm mag tape and there are two tracks on it, so sometimes because you had to fit in all of these voices here and there, sometimes it became a bit of a jigsaw puzzle. If Doug didn't hit ‘record’ button exactly in those days, it would erase a little bit or it would drop something, so it was not uncommon for us to have little bits

↩ The show's biggest icon, the Golden Condor



↔ From the peaks of the mountains to the ocean floor, all manner of obstacles must be overcome





and pieces. At one and two o'clock in the morning when you're mixing and you're half asleep, you're not going to get out of bed and ask actors to do a couple of words or a short phrase. So, I was a lot younger and my voice a lot more flexible. The union will absolutely shoot me, but I would fill in and do those bits!"

OUT OF the three child leads, Adrian Knight, who voiced Tao, a boy in possession of a strange pot of gold who joins Esteban and Zia several episodes into the series, was the most experienced of the child leads when he was chosen by Ryshpan.

"I was around 12 years old when we did this series. I've dubbed other series; **Ulysses 31**, **Belle and Sebastian**, **Wizard of Oz**", he recalls. "I still do voice work, although not half as much as I used to. I like doing voice work, it's a wonderful, wonderful occupation, I wish everyone were lucky enough to work in that domain."

For a boy that age, following the plot of the 39-episode series was not always easy going, given the arrangement of the shooting schedule.

"We could almost never work out what was going on in the story, because the scenes were not done in chronological order; they had to do scenes according to actor availability, according to issues, so it was often a bit of a hodgepodge of different scenes shot not in sequence, and also sometimes different episodes on the same day."

"I had no idea that it would become this successful, and obviously when we did the show it was pre-Internet, pre-everything at the time. One never would have known at the time that it would have a cult following."

SHIRAZ ADAM, who voiced the central character Esteban, was also no stranger to the dubbing process;

"I had done a number of small characters here and there, but this was my first main character role in a long series," says Adam, who confesses he was not confident at all of getting the role, that Adrian Knight was also hankering after. "I was 10 years old when I played Estaban in **The Mysterious Cities of Gold**. Adrian and myself were running for Esteban, and I was completely sure that Adrian would get the part because he was a much more experienced actor than myself, and he had much more talent, in my view than I was at the time, so it was quite a surprise when I found out



I got the Esteban part. It was exciting; to work on **The Mysterious Cities of Gold** was, for me, a tremendous experience. At the time, the series was playing in French in Montreal, and in French it was a huge hit, in fact all of my friends were large fans including myself. When I heard about this opportunity to play Esteban and I told my friends, some of them just flat-out couldn't believe me."

Janice Chaikelson who played one of the few female characters, the gifted child Zia whose knowledge and encryption techniques are required to guide the others on the journey, can still recall her audition, right down to the line. "I just went in and auditioned,

I think I had probably worked with Howard before and he knew me, I know that afterward we worked together a lot on a lot of different things, but I went in and I remembered my audition line and just ended up getting cast in it."

LIKE HER co-stars, Chaikelson has clear memories of the difficulties and rewards of being a voice-artist for a 1980s cartoon series.

"I never got an entire script in advance, we would usually walk in and they would give us a script and we had a few minutes to look at it, and I think I remember times when Howard had to feed us a line or feed me a line, but

it was mainly just looking at the big screen and at the top of the screen and at the top of the screen there was a band and then the words would go across the band and they would hit the black line and as they hit the black line you wanted to say the words to try and synch up the words to the movement of the lips.

"The difficult thing with dubbing is sometimes you want to put a lot more emotion into what you were saying," she continues, "but because you were trying to synch up the movement to the lips, you would have to rush through lines sometimes, because that was what was going to work and you couldn't get the emotion in that

“We could almost never work out what was going on in the story, because the scenes were not done in chronological order” Adrian Knight

↑ A South American crocodile spots lunch

← Wise, tough, resourceful and determined, but can Mendoza be completely trusted?





you really wanted to. Working with Adrian and Shiraz was great; I have to say Shiraz was really young and, as I explained before, the dubbing process is very complicated because you have to be able to read the words as they're hitting a certain mark, and if there was overlap would be just one top of each other, and you had to know exactly where you were reading. Shiraz was young, and I would get very frustrated with him because it would take a lot of time sometimes to get his lines right, and he's going to hate me for saying that, but we're older now and I think he can deal with it!"

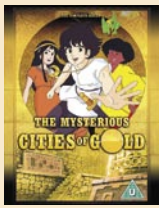
ADAM HIMSELF completely agrees with this... and yes, he can deal with it! "I have to say Janice is completely correct," he grins. "I had such a tremendous time, with reading. I guess in my theatre experience a lot of the scripts were given to me and I had a lot of opportunity to memorize them, to read it over, whereas for voice-over dubbing, [you] pretty much have one opportunity to rehearse and the expectation is that the next opportunity was that you would have to get it right, and for me reading at the speed that I had to read was difficult. So I put a tremendous effort into actually getting the lines correct and then to actually put the emotion into

“Janice may have thought she was frustrated; she never at any point voiced that frustration to me, and I think that really helped me a lot Shiraz Adam”

↑ Is Esteban's real father still alive?

DVD DETAILS

The director and cast discuss the series further on the 39-episode DVD box set of the complete series, available now from Fabulous Films at £54.99



the voice was an additional challenge for me. Janice may have thought she was frustrated; she never at any point voiced that frustration to me, and I think that really helped me a lot."

HOWEVER, SOMETIMES improvisations had to be made when pronunciation and speed became a little too taxing, even as the young star got more used to the pace. "I changed lines! I changed lines, I think, not so much because I was inspired, but I just wasn't able to read that quickly," he reveals. "In fact I invented a few words, so I tried to read as quickly as possible, and through the whole rehearsal period I got a sense of what the character wanted so say, and maybe in my brain, I would associate 'move quickly' with the word 'run' and I sometimes would substitute a word or two, and I would get scolded every so often by Howard, because the

synchronization of the mouth did not match with what word I had inserted, so I really had to stick to the script."

More than 25 years after the show was broadcast to a generation that has since grown up, Adam is still amazed by the cult following that the show has, nurtured by our Internet and YouTube-crazed times that have evolved since.



"Doing voiceovers, it's a certain amount of glamour and a certain amount of non-glamour. The actual recording or any show is not that glamorous; you are in a dark studio, sometimes by yourself. The benefits only come through when you get feedback from the audience, and that only happened many years later when I went to the UK and I met some cousins and I asked them if they had heard about this **Mysterious Cities of Gold** and they said wow, this was their favourite show. That was the most special part."

Stuart Weightman

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When X-Files Ruled the Earth

*On the eve of **The X-Files: I Want to Believe** we take a look back at the rise and (perhaps) fall of the TV phenomenon of the '90s*

AFTER A six-year gap, *The X-Files* returns to our screens this month with the cinema release of second movie *I Want to Believe*. The return of Mulder and Scully is eagerly awaited, but not as much as that of Indiana Jones, or the reinvention of *Star Trek* next year, and it certainly can't compare with the sense of excitement which surrounded the *Doctor Who* season finale, at least in Britain.

It's quite a contrast to the atmosphere of 10 years ago, when the first film was the movie event of the summer. That fevered interest came at the peak of a period when *The X-Files* was the core of the zeitgeist, with Gillian Anderson regularly voted the sexiest woman on the planet and Catatonia's ballad to Mulder and Scully topped the singles chart and was belted out over every pub sound system. It sometimes seemed as if the 50 years of television that had preceded the series' début were merely the overture for the main feature.

SO WAS *The X-Files* really that good? And why has it slipped out of the popular imagination since it left the screen? There wasn't much expectation when *The X-Files* debuted on 10th September 1993. The hype was reserved for Steven Spielberg's association with the educationally-minded underwater adventure series *seaQuest DSV*, which was immediately picked up by British network ITV for a tidy sum and aimed at a primetime Saturday night slot.

A new take on the venerable Superman myth, *Lois and Clark*, inevitably attracted attention from comic-book fans, and was swiftly slotted into a similar slot on BBC1, while Sci-Fi magazines were fascinated by the rival space station-based attractions of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, which had launched in January, and *Babylon 5*, which was about to follow up its pilot movie with its first full season. Meanwhile, *The X-Files*' own network, Fox, knew it had a sure-fire hit on its hands, and poured its promotional might into getting it off to a strong start – but that hit wasn't expected to be *The X-Files*. No, it was *The Adventures of Brisco County Jr*, a fusion of Western and Sci-Fi with cult movie hero Bruce Campbell in the title role, which was confidently expected to extend his existing following to a whole new audience. If the spooky FBI series which followed it in the Friday night





schedule held most of Brisco County's audience it would be doing better than hoped.

After all, it didn't sound that impressive on paper. FBI agents investigate UFOs is one of those one-line pitches every network must get every year, and a variant with Air Force officers rather than FBI agents, the deadly serious **Project UFO**, had only lasted 26 episodes back in 1979 despite having the clout of **Dragnet** legend Jack Webb behind it. In contrast **The X-Files** had as its producer a Californian surfer with only a handful of credits to his name (the most notable being an episode of Gary Cole's politically charged DJ series **Midnight Caller**). True, Chris Carter's references to the fondly remembered, but equally rarely remembered, **Kolchak: The Night Stalker**, as an inspiration made some TV SF fans sit up and pay attention, but that series had folded within a year.

Even the cast wasn't enough to win **The X-Files** much attention. Male lead David Duchovny was a familiar name to some, thanks to either his memorable transvestite role as FBI Agent Dennis/

↩ The X-Files logo through the years...

↗ FBI agents Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) and Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson) as they were in the pilot

↓ Always expecting the bizarre and the spooky

A slightly dumpy unknown red-head with unconventional looks



Denise Bryson in the last run of **Twin Peaks**, or more embarrassingly, as the voyeuristic host of the cable erotica series **The Red Shoe Diaries**. But for the female lead, Carter had ignored all network advice and studio common sense by keeping as far as possible from conventional glamour girls by casting a slightly dumpy unknown red-head with unconventional looks... and then clothing her in dowdy business suits. It would take a miracle for this to last, let alone become a hit.

And it got one, in that most crucially unpredictable of areas – chemistry. Duchovny and co-star Gillian Anderson clicked together instantly, on screen at least. A second stroke of luck – within three weeks of its debut, just as disappointment in the more heavily hyped series, particularly **seaQuest DSV** (already dubbed **Voyage to the Bottom of the Ratings** by some), was growing and viewers were ready to give shows they'd previously overlooked a try, **The X-Files** came up with a cracking episode that made it something those who'd seen it would discuss the next day in the office, thanks to a genuinely scary monster in the form of liver-eating Eugene Tooms.

Still, the ratings were hardly great, with the series coming in 102nd out of 118 network shows in its first year. In earlier ages, that would have been enough to seal its doom, but in the years since **Star Trek's** end the networks had learnt that the Nielsen numbers didn't tell the whole story, and there was a new way to gauge the extent of a show's potential for future success.

THE KEY factor in keeping **The X-Files** alive was the birth of the Internet. Well, not the Internet as we now know it as such, but online message boards and newsgroups, which had just become a popular phenomenon as increasing numbers of people attached a modem to their home computer, or gained access at work or university. And significantly, many of the people most likely to be



online were the people most likely to appreciate Chris Carter's creation. The sheer scale of online traffic showed Fox, whose executives were already realizing that they'd made a big mistake by cancelling Kenneth Johnson's **Alien Nation** after a single season two years before, perhaps costing themselves a show that could have rivalled **Star Trek's** popularity, that they had another series with a loyal (if small), and actively supportive audience, and the potential to suddenly take off.

The newsgroups also contributed to the content of the show, as its producers were able to counter network worries about ongoing plots or ambiguities in the loyalties of supporting characters by showing them how avidly such elements were lapped up, and how prolifically speculation about their implications would spread. It was proof of this interest that persuaded the network to let the series move away from tidily wrapped-up **Monster-of-the-Week** episodes in favour of tales that had messy, inconclusive endings, episodes that explored the family backgrounds and emotional problems of Mulder and Scully, and developed the mystery of the ongoing conspiracy behind the Cigarette Smoking Man and his colleagues. In the short term, these all contributed to making the show a hit. In the long term, they were probably its downfall.

IRONICALLY, ANOTHER thing which helped push the show to world domination was a problem that could have wrecked it – Gillian Anderson's unexpected pregnancy. The publicity that attracted, as rumours that the network wanted her replaced attracted newspaper coverage,

↗ The Cigarette Smoking Man (William B Davis) was a constant thorn in the side of Mulder and Scully

↗ The more glamorous side to Gillian Anderson

and the mystery of her character's resulting disappearance in the opening episodes of Season Two meant that the second run opened with considerably more fanfare than the first (and the temporary set-up of a closed X-Files division and Mulder and Scully as ordinary FBI agents provided an easy 'jumping on point' for new viewers, while also boosting the element of 'Unresolved Sexual Tension', as online posters had dubbed it, by showing that they'd now stick together out of choice, not just duty). The ratings boost wasn't

as massive as it might have been, with the series still only reaching 64th place out of 141 shows, but at least it was in the top half of the chart.

In Britain, it had benefited from a two-stage arrival which meant that it picked up a dedicated following among cult TV fans when run on the satellite channel Sky One, so that when a second screening on the more universally available terrestrial channel BBC2 followed the BBC had already realized from the word of mouth that it was a series worth promoting.



And in the second season it really promoted it, moving it at mid-season from the minority interest channel BBC2 to which all Science Fiction had been confined for the last five years to the mass audience BBC1, in a centre of schedule slot that paid off with terrific ratings and profile – though it was also to backfire the following year, as concerns over whether some episodes were suitable for screening in such a high profile mainstream slot led to changes in transmission order that made a mockery of ongoing plotlines. Spotting a money-spinning

↓ Agents Mulder and Scully first hit the big screen in *The X-Files: Fight the Future*

Ratings reached peaks which could never be matched, and individual stand-alones could be stunningly good

opportunity, Fox's home video division released the mid-season two-parter as a VHS movie ahead of its first transmission, beginning a tradition that would last until the DVD season box set became standard around the turn of the millennium.

Just as significantly, the series' off-screen profile had rocketed. *Rolling Stone* magazine's portraits of Duchovny and Anderson in bed together arguably marked the moment when *The X-Files* ceased to be a cult hit and became a key part of the current zeitgeist – and the fact that Chris Carter was thought

important enough for him to get in on the act for a ménage à trios was also significant. For the next five years Anderson would be a regular on the covers of the burgeoning lads' mags sector, coming top of *FHM*'s second '100 Sexiest Women in the World' poll in 1996. For the next five years there'd be a thriving little industry in unofficial guides and biographies, and there must be quite a few of our readers who've still got a boxful of magazines that they bought because they featured Anderson or Duchovny on the cover buried away at the back of a cupboard. *The X-Files* wasn't a series any more, it was an addiction.

THE MOST obvious way for Fox and 10-13 productions to feed that addiction – and make money in the process – was to shift the series to the big screen, but whereas *Star Trek* had made the move 10 years after its

ending, and its successor *The Next Generation* waited until its TV run had ended before shooting a film, *The X-Files* would be continuing after its big screen début, and would have to fit the movie into an already crowded 24-episode production schedule, with a movie shot between Seasons Four and Five for release only a month after the last episode of the fifth run.

With the series' most creative minds also in demand elsewhere, either moving over to their own creations like *Space: Above and Beyond*, or working on semi-spin off *Millennium*, it was surely inevitable that the strains would show on screen – and they did. Ratings reached peaks which could never be matched, and individual stand-alones could be stunningly good, but the ongoing conspiracy plotline was stagnating as it worked towards the already set point where it had to connect to the movie. The emotional story of Scully's terminal cancer was resolved with exactly the sort of magical Sci-Fi technobabble that should never be applied to so sensitive a subject. And worst of all, the fifth season opener, *Redux*, was for many, the tipping point where they realized that Carter and his team seemed to have forgotten the crucial maxim: show, don't tell. Instead of a well-developed plot, events were moved forward by long voiceovers over shots of darkened corridors, and those voiceovers increasingly had the quality of a teenage would-be poet's immature musings on the nature of life and death.

LOOKING BACK, it's clear that the first *X-Files* move was actually the moment when the bubble burst. Interest in the movie had kept the momentum building through the past two seasons, but once it had been released it could only be downhill from there. Despite opening strongly, the movie's box office dropped off sharply after its opening weekend, and total domestic takings weren't enough to make a profit (overseas revenues and DVD takings eventually managed that), while it's significant that only one of the 15 highest-rating episodes comes from outside the fourth and fifth seasons (Season Six's *The Rain King*). Elsewhere, the Carter star was fading, as *Millennium* would only survive for one more season after becoming one of the first Sci-Fi series to fall prey to yearly revamps, and his next creation, *Dark Realm*, wouldn't make it past Christmas.

Of course, the bizarre thing is that Season Six saw a creative resurgence in *The X-Files* itself, with a string

↗ Agent Doggett (Robert Patrick) replaced Fox Mulder in Season Eight

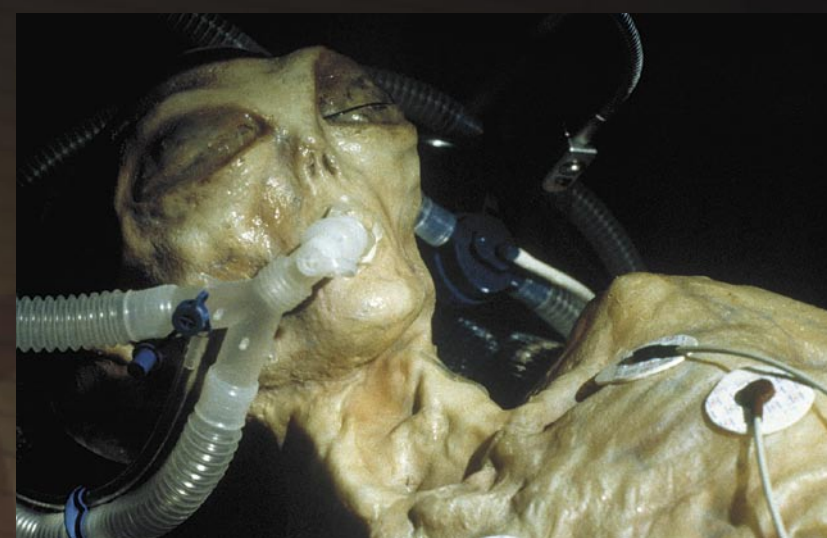
↗ An unfortunate alien in Season Four's *Musings of a Cigarette Smoking Man*

↗ Agent Scully, armed and dangerous in Season Three's *Blood Money*

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of quirky, inventive and original episodes like *Triangle*, *Dreamland* and *The Unnatural*. These delighted fans, but the general audience now saw *The X-Files* as being dominated by the dreary Conspiracy plotline and the still unresolved Mulder-Scully chemistry, and barely noticed its artistic renaissance. The BBC shifted the series back to BBC2, ITV failed to pick up the second and third seasons of *Millennium*, and by the time David Duchovny dropped back to part-time involvement, *The X-Files* had become a niche cult show again. For many of those still watching, the arrival of new characters like Doggett and Reyes gave the show a shot in the

arm, but for the general public it was too late. They'd moved on.

SIGNIFICANTLY, 1997 had seen the birth of *Buffy*, but 1998 was the year that it really took off in the States, and gained mass exposure as it reached terrestrial television in Britain. It didn't catch on instantly, but soon the Slayer's battles had become a critical success with mainstream viewers and reviewers – something which would have been unthinkable 10 years before, when Science Fiction was still a niche interest for nerds and geeks who were kept carefully pinned up in their ghetto. *The X-Files* had changed that, making it respectable,

↓ Mulder and Scully get a little closer in *The X-Files: I Want to Believe*

“The general audience now saw *The X-Files* as being dominated by the dreary Conspiracy plotline”



but now other series were ready to lay claim to its ground. By the time the end actually came in 2002, with producers claiming that 9/11 had made stories about conspiracy theories unpopular with audiences (surely the opposite was the case, to judge by the flood of paperbacks claiming to reveal 'The Truth!'), *The X-Files* had, for many, become one of those series you used to watch, and were surprised to hear had still been running at all.

Yet it never quite went away. With adaptations of old television series having become a staple feature of the big screen, it seemed bizarre that a successful series should just fade away. Talk of a second movie began almost immediately, with the principal obstacles being lawsuits between Carter and the studio (and earlier, from Duchovny) over royalties, and both of the key actors' desire to prove themselves outside the series. With Duchovny riding high on the acclaim for his cable series *Californication* and Anderson having established herself as one of Britain's principal serious actresses in *Bleak House*, the ground was ripe for *The X-Files*' return.

But will the audience be ready to rediscover its love of the series? Immense secrecy surrounds the actual plot of *The X-Files: I Want to Believe*, but there's no doubt that it wisely avoids any hint of the convoluted conspiracy plotline, instead focusing on a stand-alone 'monster of the week' (well, decade, in this case) incident of the sort that first attracted viewers to the series. But casual fans might be confused to find that Mulder and Scully are no longer FBI agents, and even have a child together. It's only later this month that we'll know whether lightning can strike twice...

Diane McGinn

I want to believe



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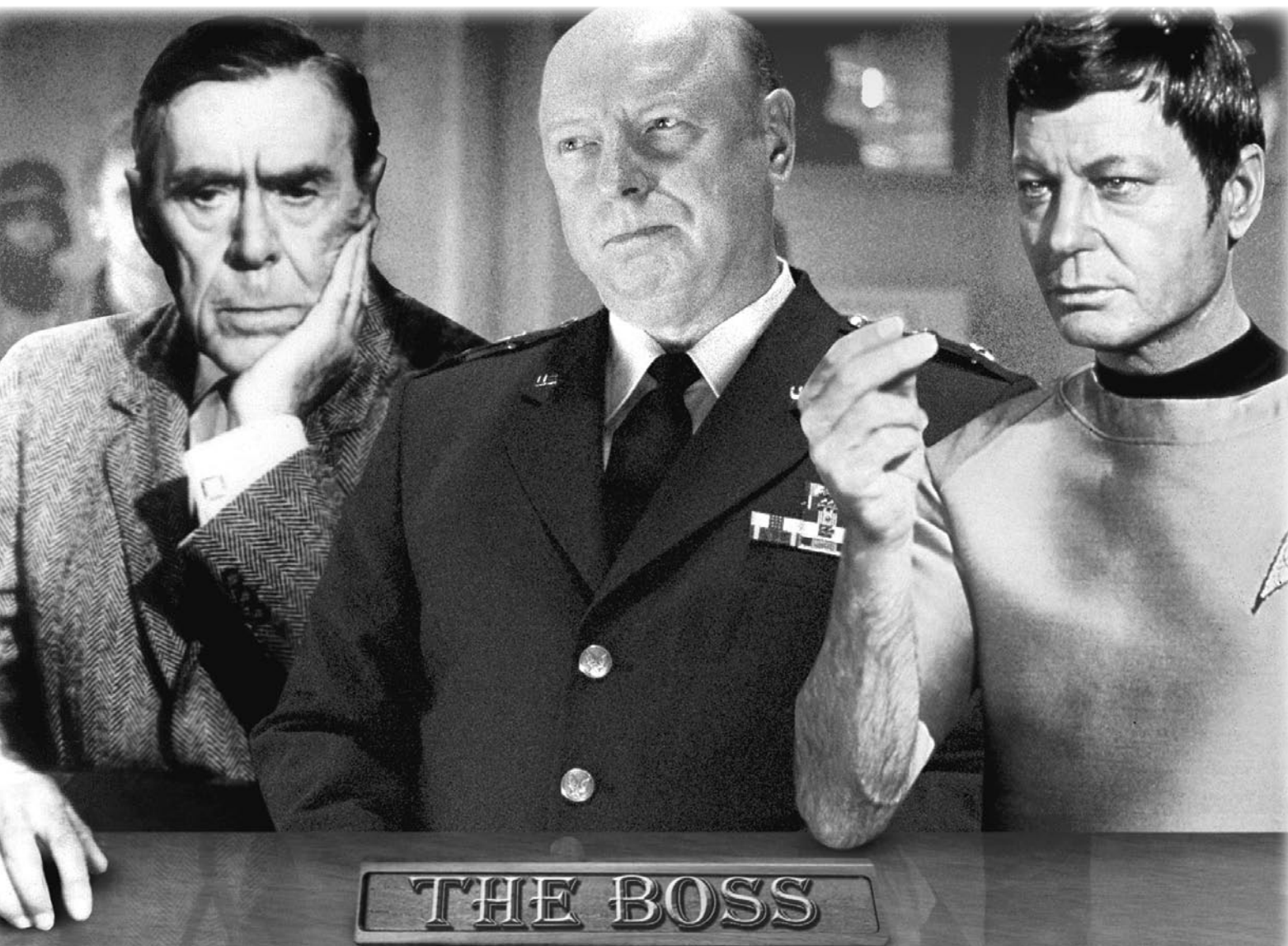


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The Last Word



DON'T MISS...

TV Zone #231,
available from
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ASK A *Stargate* fan to name their favourite character, and you'll get a variety of answers. Sam or Jack, Weir or Rodney, Daniel or Carson (sorry if we've omitted your favourite, but the list could go on all page). Ask them to name their three favourite characters, and I can almost guarantee they'll have said 'Oh, and Hammond,' before filling the slate. There's something universally appealing about the fatherly authority of the man behind the desk which works for everyone, that crosses the battlelines as the dedicated fans of the characters flame each other over on-line.

It's not a new phenomenon either. In the 1960s, fans of *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.* would divide between all-American Napoleon Solo fans and Ruskie-loving followers of Illya Kuryakin, but admiration for U.N.C.L.E. chief Mr Waverley was universal. Good as Patrick Macnee was in *The Avengers*, he simply couldn't fill the space left empty by the late Leo G Carroll when he took over for *The Return of the Man from U.N.C.L.E.*

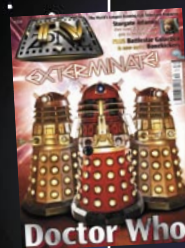
And the role's even there in *Star Trek*: take a look at the role Doctor McCoy plays – the supportive older man who's seen life and knows it all. He might not be behind the desk, and

he might eventually have risen to equal billing with Kirk and Spock, but he's filling the same role (and guess what? In the two *Star Trek* pilots shot before DeForrest Kelley came on board, the doctor was an older man on the verge of retirement). Picard was also intended to be the man in charge, back on the ship, to start with, before Patrick Stewart asked if he could be a man of action as well. And, stuck in sickbay, didn't *Voyager's* holographic Doctor fulfil something of the same role?

So, let's hear it for the man behind the desk – always there, always supportive, and always popular!

Diane McGinn

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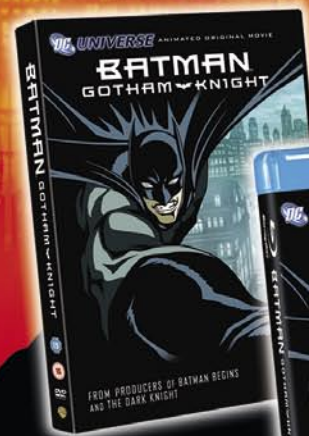
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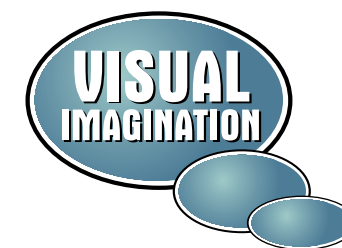
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