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50 Years of Star Trek

By Joe Braswell

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["Star Trek" theme]

Male narrator:

America tunes in to
catch a glimpse of the future
and launches a global phenomenon.
A television series like no other
that unites us in its vision
of a better world to come.
Here's a group of people
who are solving problems together,
and they're all
different, diverse people.

Narrator:

secret history of "Star Trek."
It's epic 50-year mission.
That was what was so
brilliant about "Star Trek"
was that it was human
nature and human instinct
and the drive to want to know more
combined with adventure.

Narrator:

the "Star Trek" universe.
And Gene says, "Do you
want to be on Star Trek?"
I said, "Yes. Yes!"

Narrator:

crew reveal the stories
you've never heard.
Roddenberry looked
at the beard and goes,
"I love the beard. It's nautical."

Narrator:

Nimoy's final full interview.
If I were given the
choice of any character
ever portrayed on
television, I would choose Spock.

Happy anniversary, "Star Trek."
Happy 50th. Wow, way to go.
Before anybody else were
touching on subjects,
racism, segregation, discrimination,
before any other TV shows did.

"Star Trek:

probably my first acting job.
There's an optimism to it
that I think we've never
needed more than now.
Seven of Nine's one of my favorite
"Star Trek" characters
because she was so hot.

Narrator:

conversation with cast members,
comedians, scientists, and academics
covering all things "Star Trek."
That was one of my big
fears in accepting the role.
Happy 50th anniversary, "Star Trek."
You know how old that makes me?
We're here on the 50th
anniversary of "Star Trek"
at the Griffith Observatory
outside the Leonard Nimoy theater
to discuss "Star Trek" with
a lot of great people
and a lot of fine
minds and Kevin Pollak.
[laughter]
Let's just jump right into it.
Let's talk about the
general impact of "Star Trek."
The great sense of
discovery and curiosity
on this five-year
mission to seek out new worlds.
You know, those... those...
That phraseology was kind of impactful.
"The Measure of
Man" where Data's on trial,

that's the episode that
led me to create my class.

- Oh, wow.

- Because it has references
to slavery in it, and I thought about,
"Gee, this is very interesting."

You know, there's a
whole pro-slavery argument.

It's really the Dred
Scott decision worked out there.

- Yeah.

- Is Data property or not?

I saw a couple episodes
of the original series when I was a kid
because you can't not
have seen some things.

I saw the Tribble episode, I think,
and I saw the planet of kids, "Grups."
And they were saying, "Grups,
grups," that one.

- Whatever.

- Yeah.

But I was never a sci-fi fan,
so I wasn't into it.

And I never watched any
of the other incarnations
until I was on the show.

I saw "Star Trek" as this, you know,
amazing way of bringing
humanity together, right?

You had the height of the Cold War.

You had Russian and
American people working together.

You had black people and
white people working together.

That's an incredible
thing to see as a kid
when, you know, you're from two worlds
that really also don't get along.

I first started on the original series,
my mother was a big
fan, and those were reruns
that were happening at the time.

It was right before "Next

Generation" started
and it was... I just
always was fascinated
by Dr. McCoy's grumpiness.
That relationship with
Spock I thought was amazing.
He just was, like, "I can't stand you,
- but I love you."
- Yeah.
And I was like, "Oh, that's my family."
[laughter]
I understand
everything from "Star Trek."
- Yes.
- You know, it's funny
because I wasn't allowed to watch TV
when "Star Trek" was on the air.
My parents wouldn't let me watch it.
So I snuck downstairs
and I turned on the TV.
And, uh, that was my first...
The first time I saw the show.
I think it was, um, "This
Side of Paradise"
- was the episode.
- Oh.
And you could tell that
whoever was doing the show
was a science fiction fan.

Narrator:

as the brainchild of one man,
Gene Roddenberry, a
former World War II pilot
and policeman turned screenwriter.
His first television
series premieres in 1963,
and features a few faces that
will soon become familiar
to "Trek" fans.
He was a big man, enthusiastic.
He really, really
loved producing a show,
which he had never done before.

He created "The Lieutenant."
[patriotic music]
It was "The Lieutenant." It
was his first big TV show.
And he cast me.
I had acted in an episode of
a series called "The Lieutenant"
that was produced by Gene Roddenberry.
My agent called me and
said, "He's interested in you
for a science fiction
pilot that he's gonna produce.

Narrator:

runs for just one season,
but Roddenberry's
already working on a bigger idea.
In 1964, he begins
pitching a series about a starship
with a multi-ethnic crew.
I had worked for him
directly when his secretary was ill.
And he knew that I had sold some things
that I wanted to be a
writer, a full-time writer.
And he called me into
his office and said,
"What do you think of
this?" And he showed me
about a 10-12 page piece that
was called "Star Trek."
- Well, he had done...

- both:

I went in to do a pitch on a story.
Somehow or another, he
asked if I was interested
in doing "Star Trek."
I said, "Yeah, I would
be interested in that."
And I went home, and I read it,
and I came back the
next day, and I said,
"Who plays Mr. Spock."

The script was very good, very good.
I didn't quite
understand how it was gonna work
as a television show because
it was so unique.
It was really quite special.
But it was a very intelligent script.
It had layers of ideas in it
that you didn't often get in television.
Roddenberry was very inspired
by Jonathan Swift's
"Gulliver's Travels."
And wanted to tell stories
that you couldn't normally
tell on television
through the prism of science fiction.
He was such a complex
and interesting man.
Very bright, very bright.
Hard-working.
Tough job, tough job.
Particularly getting "Star Trek" right
the first couple of seasons.
To get it... to get it what
he wanted it to be.
They didn't think there was a
big enough audience out there.
They thought it was gonna
be sci-fi kooks and kids.
And they didn't think they
could make enough money
from their sponsors to
put these on in prime-time.
Well, they had put on
"Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea"
in fall of '64, winning
its timeslot for ABC.
Fall of '65, he puts
on "Lost In Space" on CBS.
It's winning its timeslot for CBS.
That was when they made
the decision to put it on
for the fall of '66. NBC wants one.
They felt they were missing the boat.

Narrator:

issues a challenge,
to put a man on the moon before
the end of the decade.
The space race heats up as
America looks to the stars.
And one unlikely
supporter sees an opportunity.
Well, "Star Trek"
may be the first TV show
I can really remember.
"Star Trek" and "Mission: Impossible."
In fact, the both... the two
great Desilu productions.
The other player in "Star Trek"
and get it on the air was Lucille Ball
with Desilu Studios.
It was Lucille Ball who
said, "Let's make this."
That studio was built on reruns.
And when "I Love
Lucy" was in production,
they wanted to film it here in LA.
So they said, "We'll pay
the difference and film this
if we can have the rerun rights."
And the answer from
Harry Ackerman at CBS was,
"What's a rerun?"
Nobody had ever rerun anything on TV.
They shot it live, it was gone.
And "Star Trek" was brought in.
And Lucy said, "I think
that could rerun for ten years.
Well, here we are 50 years later.
"I Love Lucy" is still
on five days a week
in every city around the country.
And probably the second most rerun show
in the history of
television is "Star Trek."
Let's give her credit,
Lucy loved "Star Trek."

And we wouldn't have had
"Star Trek" without Lucy,
so we love Lucy.
You know, my father
passed away when I was 17.
He's got such a legacy and
he's touched so many people
that I've learned a great
deal about him after his passing.
You know, he was a bomber
pilot in World War II.
He flew something like,
uh, is it 79 or 89 missions.
My father had seen the best of humanity
and he'd seen the worst of humanity.
But I think that really
helped shape his view
of "Star Trek" and that better future.

Narrator:

of "Star Trek" is filmed in 1965,
introducing the
world to what would become
one of the most iconic
characters of all time,
Mr. Spock.
And he shoved a
picture of Leonard Nimoy
across the desk at me.
At that point, he was
a Martian first officer.
He said a character with pointed ears,
and that set me back a bit.
I had to think about that one.
Leonard was an
actor. He was a real actor.
And he walked me
through the various departments.
He showed me where they
were making the props.
He showed me where the
sets were being designed,
the design for the Enterprise, the ship.
And I realized that he

was selling me on this job.
And that's the way it would happen.

Narrator:

orders a new "Star Trek" pilot.
Spock stays on board,
but the Enterprise
gets an entirely new crew,
including a brash, young captain,
James T. Kirk.
William Shatner had Kirk down
from act one, scene one,
and he played that
through right till the end

in "Star Trek:

You know, Shatner, who's
totally nailing the part,
but DeForest Kelley, the
person that Gene wanted
from the beginning for Dr. McCoy.
Scotty felt like he was
a little more fully formed
as a character.
There was an empathy with
Jimmy Doohan's performance.
We just liked Scotty. You
wanted to hang out with Scotty.
You wanted to go have a drink
in the bar with Scotty, you know?
It's a very hallowed and beloved thing
that you don't want to mess up.
I feel honored to play Scotty.
I will always defer to
the greatest Scotty ever,
which was James Doohan,
but if I can do half as good
as he did, then I'll be happy.
George Takei, who plays
Mr. Sulu, sat at the helm.
An Asian man on a show like this,
you seldom saw anything like that.
And here he was, a man
with responsibilities.

He was the helmsman.
Everyone, Nichelle, just
beautiful and smart
and an incredible role model as Uhura.
I think the first memory of
"Star Trek" really was going,
"Oh, look..." [chuckles]
"There's a black lady in the future."
And this was the first time I knew
we would be in the future.
Later on, Walter Koenig as Chekov.
If the circumstances hadn't
fallen the way they did,
if things hadn't
happened the way they did,
then I probably
never been in for the role
of Chekov on "Star Trek."
I read one line. He
says, "You got the part."
And that was the part of a Russian.
Who had a Russian on the show?
We were still just reaching
out trying to make contact
with Russia in a friendly sense.
To bring these people together
created the magic that is "Star Trek."
From day one, we got along... [snaps]
Just like that.

Narrator:

cast and crew assembled,
the Enterprise is nearly
ready to begin its mission.
But Roddenberry
knows something is missing.
G.R. said, "I gotta do
an opening for the show."
So he said, "You take a shot at it,
I'll take a shot at it,
we'll see what happens."
It was, "Space... the final frontier,"
was yours, wasn't it?
- Yeah.

"The final frontier."
"Space...
"the final frontier.
["Star Trek" theme]
So it was some Roddenberry,
it was some Black.
We came out with...
"Boldly go where no
man has gone before."
To boldly go where
no man has gone before.

Narrator:

on a Thursday night in the fall of 1966.
Well, the first episode of
"Star Trek," "The Man Trap,"
had 47% audience share.
Lucy wrote a memo to
Gene Roddenberry saying,
"Congratulations, boys, you're a hit."
Back in the late '60s,
what "Star Trek" was doing on
television was cutting edge.
It was ahead of its time.
This was the first time we
saw a miniskirt on television.
"Star Trek"
premiered in September of '66,
the mini made its debut in London
in the summer of '66 and
had not made it to America.
He was way ahead of his time.
It was also a science fiction series
that took the subject
matter very seriously.

Narrator:

unlike anything on television
at the time, but what makes it unique
also threatens to destroy it.
Coming up, the end of "Star Trek"
is just the beginning.

Narrator:

and instantly becomes one of the most ground-breaking series in the history of television. Gene Roddenberry's vision is a sign of changing times in America. A story about a hopeful future made in a difficult time. The times were tough. The war in Vietnam, the racial issues that were happening, riots in the streets, riots at political conventions. People were angry and upset and nervous and concerned. And it was this thing that said, "Hey, "in the future we have a way of dealing with these issues. "It's gonna be okay. "Here's a group of people who are solving problems together. And they're all different, diverse people."

Narrator:

the most pressing social issues of its day. We had the one where Uhura and Kirk kissed. That, I think, was more of... I mean, I think that was great. And the people in the South, there were probably a lot of people jumping out of windows at that. The director was nervous. The front office at Paramount was nervous, which was just dumb, you know, then don't do it, which is what I said. And they went, "You don't want to do it?" I said, "I want to do it. It's written in the script."

It's a great scene."
This is the first
interracial kiss on television.
[dramatic music]
[applause and laughter]
They were writing some
pretty major stuff in those days.
I mean, very eloquent
writers. Very knowledgeable.
They did "Mark of Gideon,"
which got a lot of flack,
about birth control, overpopulation.
'Cause nobody had
talked about that on TV
up until that point.
NBC was disappointed with "Star
Trek" from the get-go,
but the ratings were not bad
and the fan mail was huge.
"Star Trek" is doing things
that a lot of the
affiliates were uncomfortable with,
so they kept moving it from
one bad slot to another
until they finally put
it in the death slot
to get rid of this show.
That is what killed "Star Trek."

Narrator:

series is canceled
after 3 seasons and 79 episodes.
But it's gained a cult following
that's become undeniable.
Within four years, "Trek"
is back on the air.
This time reaching a new
generation of young fans.

["Star Trek:

My first contact with "Star Trek"
was probably
watching the animated series
on Saturday morning

TV in the early '70s.
And, you know, I was
really struck by the, you know,
the bright colors of the uniforms.
The fans were very wary.
In fact, some of the cast was wary too.
They felt, "Hey, 'Star
Trek' is starting to get momentum.
"We think there could
be more life in this.
But if we do a
cartoon, it's gonna kill it."
And Gene Roddenberry was
very cagey and very smart.
He says, "No, this will fan the flames.
This will keep it alive rather
than let it disappear."
And he was right.
It sounds funny for saying this,
but it has never been canceled.
You know, um, we were just
off longer than we wanted to be.
So then we have the
'70s, right, '70s hit.
Everyone went to see that
"Star Wars" situation.
[laughter] I think we
can make some money.
So you had a TV script
that was being padded out
into a motion picture.
They took themselves
a little too seriously
and they were trying to be
a little more like, "2001."
Then they brought in Robert Wise
because he was known as
a big-time movie director.
There never really been a movie
years after a show was canceled.

["Star Trek:

"Star Trek" would be the beginning
of that phenomena, which... now,

you know,
well, unceasing phenomena.
When we came back to
do the first really big one
that we did after being away so long,
it was amazing.

Narrator:

The Motion Picture"
hits theaters in December of 1979.
But the cast has its doubts.
So Robert Wise was
a very good filmmaker.
He was a multiple
Academy Award-winning director,
but he did not know "Star Trek."
We sat down to watch that first movie
and the beginning was great.
Dat-dat-dat-dat-dat-dat-dat.
Bum-bum-bum-bum.
And then it suddenly
became a talking heads movie.
Where was the friction?
Where was the conflict?
Where was the passion?
It had very little
to do with "Star Trek."
You had the spaceship, the Enterprise.
You had the crew.
But the story had very little to do
with anything "Star Trek-y."
The characters were
not in shape, in place,
playing off of each
other and with each other
the way we did best.
Why are they wearing pajamas?
Why, you know, does it look like
they're in a Holiday Inn?
So a lot of what "The Wrath of Khan"
proved to be about aesthetically
and maybe even intellectually as well
was a reaction to what I saw.
And for a movie that

was so poorly received,
we had done extremely well.
To my great surprise, they
said, "Star Trek II."

Narrator:

Khan" becomes an instant classic.
It's villain is a
genetically engineered superhuman,
who first appeared
in the original series
bent on revenge against Captain Kirk.
"Wrath of Khan" is a classic.
I mean, "Wrath of Khan" just
works on every level.
You know, it just
does. It's pop entertainment.
It's a fan's dream.
It's fun. It's funny.
The visual effects are state of the art
and really hold up even to this day.
Those space battles are fantastic.
Montalban was a charismatic actor.
He really gave us this
wonderful performance.
It was theatrical, imaginative, creative
performance as Khan in "Star Trek II."
And he looked great.
And that was his
chest that people thought
had been built up with
makeup or something.
That was him, you know?
It was really Ricardo Montalban.
That's his chest. It's his chest.
Gives you an idea of
"Star Trek-ian" scholarship
that that's the most, you
know, frequently asked question.

Narrator:

the cast didn't always get along.
I had immediately had a
good rapport with Nick Meyer,

but as we went
through several rehearsals
working with the camera,
Shatner would come over to me
and start trying to redirect me.
- Is the word given, Admiral?
- The word is given.
So I finally said, "Can
I stop for a second?"
Nick said to me, "What's
the matter, Ike?"
I said, "Well, I'm getting direction
"from other people on the set,
"and it's making me very uncomfortable.
"I just want to make sure
I'm doing my job correctly,
So I'm listening to you."
And he said, "That's right.
You're listening to me. We good?"
I said, "We're good.
Thank you very much."
And I just stood back.
No one else ever said
anything to me again after that.

Narrator:

to achieve his ends,
delivered in a gruesome way.
They're young. Enter through the ears.
And wrap themselves around
the cerebral cortex.
Yeah, well, that was fun.
You know, being on
the other end of that.
What it was, it was a stunt bug.
No, it wasn't a stunt bug.
It was... it was a
little thing that had
a little rubbery plastic thing,
and they had a fine
filament thread attached to it.
It was very hard to see.
When it was going up my face,
there was actually a

guy standing above me,
and they had drilled
a hole in my helmet,
and he was pulling it up
my face on that filament.
And when they got to my ear,
and then I made all those screams,
really unbecoming an officer,
but they... that's
what they wanted.
[both screaming]

Narrator:

one scene that has become
the defining moment in
"The Wrath of Khan."
I read that script and
I saw the conflict,
and I saw the passion in it,
and when I saw the scene
where Spock tries to save the ship
and dies in the process, I said,
"This is a good, good film."
I really believed that
this was going to be
the final "Star Trek" movie.
So I thought if "Star
Trek" is coming to an end,
maybe it's fitting that Spock should die
saving the ship and the crew,
and be a hero and go
out in a blaze of glory.
During the making of the
movie, I began to be concerned
that maybe I'd made a mistake.
And on the day we went to
shoot Spock's death scene,
Harve came to me on the set.
He came to me on the set and he said,
"What can you give us
that might be a thread
for the future for
Spock or 'Star Trek'?"
And it took me a moment. I said,

"I can do a
mind-meld on DeForest Kelley
"who's laying there unconscious,
and I can say something ambiguous
like, 'Remember.'"
And that's how that moment came about.
Remember.
And then you have "Star
Trek's" finest hour
between Kirk and Spock.
That death scene through
the radiation chamber...
Cried like a baby.
I was always very
touched by what happened
in that... in that
sequence. Ahem.
I thought it was
beautifully written, the death scene.
And it really worked in the film.
I have people still
today who write me and say,
"Every time I still see that picture
"for the fifth, tenth
time, I still cry when Spock...
At that death scene," you know?
[raspy] I have been...
and always shall be...
your friend.
Live long...
and prosper.

Narrator:

the success of "Khan,"
"Trek" returns to the big screen,
and the franchise is truly reborn.
"Star Trek III" was the
first movie that Nimoy directed,
and it was also his way to
come back to "Star Trek"
to bring Spock back.
Nicholas Meyer, a very talented
guy, was directing.
I thought, "I-I can do what he does.

I know what he's
doing and I can do that."
So I went in the next morning,
and I put it to them very simply.
I said, "Michael, you have two problems.
"You want me to play
Spock in 'Star Trek III, '
"and you need a director.
I solved both of your
problems with one stroke."
And that's the way it went,
and he said, "Okay, let's make a deal."
And we immediately made
a deal and went to work.
You Klingon bastard.
There are two more prisoners, Admiral.
Do you want them killed too?
It's just such a delicious badass
son of a bitch, you know?
He's just... he's just a
bad guy with no remorse.
[both grunting]
I killed Kirk's son
and I blew up the original Enterprise.
Just freaking wiped it out.
And I could do it again. [chuckles]
I was asked to do "III,"
I didn't know how to do it.
So I said I wasn't
interested in doing it.
I was not part of "IV" either.
They had had a script written
tailor-made to star Eddie Murphy,
who was Paramount's other
big star at the time.
And Paramount didn't like the idea
of putting all their
golden eggs in one basket,
Eddie Murphy and the Star Trek people.
So I went to see Harve and Leonard,
and they told me the
story about the whales.
And Harve said, "I'll
write the outer space parts

if you do the on Earth
parts, you know, the bookend.
And I said, "Okay."
"Star Trek V" is hurt by it's budget
more than anything else. It's
not a badly directed film.
In fact, Bill did a nice
job directing for the most part,
but they just didn't have
enough money to recognize the vision,
so it looks very cheap, and as a result,
it feels like a bad movie.
We watched the movie, we were like,
"Yeah, that was great."
And I remember my brother,
he was the one who
had not been drinking.
He was looking at, like,
"I don't think it really was great."
We were like, "No, it was
great. Let's watch it again."
And we did, so we watched it again.
That's probably the last
time I saw "Star Trek V."
Then "Star Trek V" came
out and didn't perform well.
And then Leonard came,
and he had this genesis,
you should pardon the
pun, of an idea for "VI,"
which was all about the
wall coming down in outer space.
It was about the Klingons
have been their substitute
for the Russians. I went, "They were?"
And we wrote it.
His idea was that,
you know, time's change.
You know, you can't be,
you know, mad at a group
for 100 years and you don't
know anything about them.
Michael Dorn was my idea.
He could play his own grandfather.

I thought that would be funny.

Narrator:

Enterprise returns to TV
with a new mission and a new crew.
When I heard that they
were doing a next generation,
I went, "Oh, afraid I
got to do this," you know?
So "Star Trek IV" does gangbusters
at the box office.
They're like, "Hang on,
this is a hot property."
Gene's like, "Guess what, fellas?
I want to do I on TV again."
- And then Paramount's like...
- "Yes, please."
- "I might as well."
- Yeah.
"Well, it's sitting here doing nothing."
- "How soon will you start?"
- So then we have

"Star Trek:

Generation" comes out.

Narrator:

21 years after the
original series hits the air,
"Star Trek" returns to television
with the premiere
of "The Next Generation."
Gene Roddenberry called
me and he was talking about
a new version of "Star Trek"
bouncing off the movies, of course.
He came up with the
basics for the older captain,
for the characters that we
see in "Star Trek: Next Gen."

Narrator:

skeptical of the reboot.
We got a bald, English

captain with a French name
and you got a Klingon on the bridge?
Really? You got a blind
guy driving the ship?
Gene was there during
the first couple of years
and all the spinoffs carried
on the tradition of "Star Trek."
When that cast was
first assembled and the show
first went into production,
"The Next Generation,"
I invited them here to this house,
the whole bunch of them, all of them.
"Come to my house. Let's
get to know each other.
And good luck, and bon
voyage. I think... I hope it works."
When I first auditioned for "Next Gen,"
I was one of the few people in the world
who was not quite
aware of the phenomenon
that we were about to get involved with.
When I heard that they
were doing a next generation,
I went, "Oh, afraid I
gotta do this," you know?
I got a call from my agent
who said, "You know what?
They're casting 'Star
Trek.' Oh, my God."
And she was a huge "Star Trek" fan.
I had no clue it was
going to be a big show.
So LeVar Burton and I go to eat.
I say, "What are you doing?"
He said, "Oh, you'll love
this. I'm doing 'Star Trek.'"
I said, "Well, I want to be on that."
And he was like,
"What?" I was like, "No, no.
You gotta tell them I
want to be on the show."
And I made an

appointment to go see Gene.
And Gene says, "You want
to be on 'Star Trek'?"
I said, "Yes. Yes."
And he asked me would I
please write the pilot script,
"Encounter At Farpoint." And
I said, "Fine," did that.
The question had been whether
Gene Roddenberry would do,
you know, like a retrospective
back to the original "Star Trek"
to lead into this or would
he add to my pilot script.
He added all the
stuff that had to do with Q.
Three days into shooting, uh, you know,
somebody came up behind me and
put his hand on my shoulder
and said, "You have no idea
what you've gotten yourself into."
And it was... it
was Roddenberry.
And I didn't have any
idea. I mean, you know.
Riker's relationship with Picard,
which was filled with respect.
With Data, the curiosity that Data had
about being a human being.
And I worked with Worf and Geordi,
the three of us were sort of, you know,
we made the... we kept the
[bleep] together on the ship.
And it was... it all got more natural.
And as it got more natural,
I think it got more
appealing to the audience.
I decided to write a spec script,
so I wrote a script
called "The Bonding."
Michael Piller came
aboard to be the new head writer,
and he found my script.
And I get this call one day

that he wants to buy it and produce it,
which literally changed my life.
We used to do 26 episodes
a year, and it was great.
So we'd work for ten months,
and then the first
Monday after the 4th of July,
we'd come back to work.
And that lasted for seven
years and could have lasted,
in all fairness, for ten years probably.
The humans of the 24th
century on "Next Generation"
didn't have the kinds of
problems and squabbles
and petty jealousies that we have today.
Chief O'Brien talks to me.
Keiko talks to you.
Why do they not talk to each other?
[chuckles] That's
a good question, Data.
I wish I had a good answer for you.
Perhaps when they're ready, they will.
Hmm. Many aspects of this
situation are puzzling to me.
Roddenberry somehow
magically made us... made me
believe in his vision of
the 24th century, right?
He said to me, "In the 24th century,
there will be no hunger, and
there will be no greed.
And all of the
children will know how to read.
Gene Roddenberry.
He was given the right to do "Star Trek"
the way he wanted to do it.
Unfortunately his
health was failing by the time
they even got "Star

Trek:

So he didn't really get the chance to do
all of the things he wanted to do.

Narrator:

Roddenberry dies in 1991,
"The Next Generation" is
more popular than ever.
Carrying on his legacy, week after week,
for the next three years.
There were those of
us, myself included,
who thought it could
go on for ten years.
That we weren't done yet.
Knowing that there was
another series waiting in the wings
where we could continue to tell stories
that we hadn't told yet made that okay.
And it seemed smart to
take "Next Gen" off
at the peak of its popularity.
'Cause it was a very popular show.
There is a part of me that wished,
that wishes "Next Gen" had continued.
I was asked to direct the first
"Next Generation" movie.
I just... I wasn't
attracted to it.
I read it,
and it didn't feel like something
that I was gonna have a good time doing.
Ron Moore and I were asked to write
the first "Next Generation" movie.
We were very excited.
It was the first movie either
of us had written.
We loved these
characters. We knew these characters.
And we set about
conceiving the first "Next Gen" movie.
Kind of hand-off from
the original series,
Kirk to Picard.
There was sort of a list of things
that the movie had to have,
so when Bran and I stepped in,

here's the list of things it has to be.
"It's gonna be the next
first "Next Gen" movie.
"It can have the original cast in it.
"We want a transition
film, but the original cast
"can only be in the first ten minutes
"or 15 minutes of the movie tops.
"It has to be a Picard story.
"There has to be a Data
humorous runner in it.
"We want to have a big
villain, sort of like Khan.
"We also want to
have the Klingons in it.
And it should probably
have some time travel involved."
And you're just going, "Okay.
By the time "Generations," the
first movie, is coming out,
you have Kirk and Picard on
the cover of "Time" magazine.
That's the apex, it's
the zenith of the show.
"Generations" was still in the theaters
when the said, "Hey,
let's do another one.
And we want you guys
to do the second one."
And we said, "Okay."
"First Contact" was the
film that they should have made
every time after that.
Then the second movie, "First Contact,"
is, you know, a roller coaster ride
and wonderful and really sort
of redeems that franchise.
That movie was a huge
success. It made a lot of money.
And everybody liked it.
And Alfre Woodard was great in it.
And Cromwell was great in it.
I'm not a drinker, so
I got a fifth of Jamesons.

And I took one before when we rehearsed.
And then between every shot,
I would go back up to my tr...
[laughing]
So by the time I did the
thing we're at the bar,
when I take the drink... [retching]
Ahh!
- [gagging]
- Oh!
- [coughing]

Narrator:

debuts in 1996 with
Commander Riker himself,
Jonathan Frakes in the director's chair.
It was great to work
with Jonathan, you know?
We'd worked with him
before as a director on the show,
so we knew his working
methods, he knew us, you know.
There was a great shorthand, obviously,
between him and the
entire cast and the crew.
This was our first
movie that was just "Next Gen."
So that... that was a
life-changer, you know.
I think "Star Trek's" a TV show.
The movies are fun, but, you know,
it's... it's a TV show.
It needs to tell the stories each week.
"First Contact" is fanta... it's like...
It's the best of the
"Next Generation" movies.
I'm sorry, everyone, that's how I feel.
- Probably.
- I see some grunting happening
over on the corners here.
Bobak, you grunted particularly hard.
I'm just a big "Insurrection"
fan because...
What? What?

It's the most like a "TNG" episode.
The movies really,
like, diverge from my thought
what made the show great.
And I like that it was a
little bit more of that
"TNG" -style episode than I
felt the rest of the movies were.
So we go from "Insurrection."
"Voyager's" still running at this point.
And then we end up
with, I hate to say it,

"Star Trek:

They asked me to be in
that. Did you know that?
Really? What were
you gonna do in that?
Were you gonna be on the Enterprise?
- Evidently.
- Why would you say no?
What is wrong with you?
'Cause I had just
gotten off of "Voyager."
- Oh, my God, Jeri.
- My biggest fear is in signing
on to "Star Trek" to begin
with, not having been a fan,
and not really knowing
much about it other than that
- the actors get pigeonholed.
- Yeah.
And it was sort of known for that.
- Yeah.
- That was one of my big fears
in accepting the role is ever
breaking out of that character.
- I don't know if that's even...
- No, please.
- Known by anybody, but
apparently they were
replacing a character.
They were gonna yank and character out
and stick Seven of Nine in there.

It's a popular character, get her in the movie. And that's what it felt like. And it didn't feel like it would be anything other than that story-wise. Yeah.

Narrator:

Trek" takes a dark turn. "Deep Space Nine" is the most meaningful to me.

- Mm-hmm.

- Because it gets into the darker side.

I mean, it's after Gene Roddenberry's death.

They're kinda free to kind of get away from this, you know,

- everything ends happily.

- Yeah.

You know, you look at war in a variety of different ways.

I mean, there's a great episode on PTSD, where Nog has to deal with the loss of his leg.

- Nobody does that kind of stuff.

- Right.

On science fiction in particular.

And so I think that show in terms of its depth, in terms of the issues it would address, I thought made it the best.

And, you know, arguably there are some of the best episodes of all 700-plus hours.

"The Next Generation" had become such a success in first-run syndication for the studio that they wanted more, so you had "Deep Space Nine," which was about a space station and it was a little darker.

"Next Gen" was my

undergraduate studies
in TV writing and production,
and "Deep Space Nine" was graduate.
"DS9" had such a different feel
while still being "Star Trek."
It took things even deeper.
We were attracted to
doing darker stories.
We were attracted to doing stories
that had much more conflict in them,
that were more morally ambiguous,
that were tackling difficult
subject matter
with our characters.
And we all felt that
we were pushing "Trek,"
but none of us felt
like we were breaking it.
That was the first time that you see
what television is now, which
is dark and foreboding.
And I really wanted to do the show.
Really wanted to do the show.
I-I was like...
I just... not only as an actor who
would get a steady paycheck,
but more importantly,
as a fan of the show
I wanted to be part of the
ethos that was "Star Trek."
It's really nice to see that
people could stick with the show
when it became darker and
more demanding of its audience.
But no victory can make this
moment any easier for me.
And I promise I will not
rest until I stand with you again.
Somebody had the brilliant idea
of bringing Worf onto our show.
Unfortunately, I will be
away from the station at that time.
What they hoped
would happen did happen.

Thousands, if not millions, of people watched because Worf was on the show. And so our fan base got resurrected because of Michael Dorn. And I had my concerns about that 'cause I didn't want Worf to be standing around, just to be a, you know, some guy that just... They throw in there. I really want him to open up as a character. Worf was, like, really the only choice from that cast that made any sense and that would actually add something to the puzzle. Here's the war-like character coming into a situation that's a war-torn environment. So that made a certain amount of sense. What is that smell? Is there a pile of rotting forshak in here. I loved my time on "Next Generation," but the work I did on "Deep Space" was much better. Over my tenure on "Deep Space," that was the mantra was, "How far can we push this franchise? Or what are the places we can go that none of the other shows can go? What can't they do in 'Star Trek, ' and is there a way we can do it?" Every "Star Trek" show broke grounds in some way, you know? "Deep Space Nine," Sisko, he was a black captain. And then you have Janeway in "Voyager," a woman. I mean, they were always thinking ahead.

Narrator:

"Voyager" launches in 1995,

"Star Trek" has been pushing the envelope for nearly 30 years. The new series pushes further. A lot of women of a certain age who that show meant a lot to because of Kate. You know, they look at it, you know, the same way that guys of my generation look at Kirk as a role model, they look at Kate's Janeway and say, "You know, she proved that, you know, "I could be thoughtful and smart and commanding, and not necessarily use my sexuality to get what I want." Then you leave me no choice. You are hereby relieved of duty until further notice. As a writer, writing Captain Janeway, I didn't think of her as a woman. I thought of her as the captain. And I think it's great that she ended up being a role model to a lot of people, men or women. I was very happy and proud of what the producers had done with this cast in "Voyager." First of all, starting off with a female captain 'cause we had not seen that before. My friend, Rene, got cast in "Deep Space." And he told me how cool it was, and I envied him. I said, "What a great show to be on," you know. And then a couple of years later, boom, I was in "Voyager." And I-I had no idea what the character was makeup-wise, you know? But I flew out and I-I went into the room,

and there was UPN, and
there was Paramount,
and there were the
creators of "Star Trek."
And, um, I read
and I guess I was exactly
what what they were looking for.

"Star Trek:

my first acting job.
And I was so
excited, and I was so nervous.
It was a two-part special and
I was playing a scientist.
What do you do here?
- We watch the skies.
- For what?
Signs of extraterrestrial life.
Nice meeting you.
I remembered going to my acting coach,
and he read through the script.
And I was looking to him for guidance.
And he just went, uh,
"You know, sometimes when
you're running from lasers,
you just... you just gotta
pretend you're running from lasers."
- Get down!
- [laser fire]
I was like, "Oh.' Ahem.
It gave me so much freedom.
I was like, "Oh, yeah, I
just... I pretend," you know?
You don't really draw from
your childhood or something.
You just pretend you're
running from lasers.
[laser fire]
What the hell?
What I wanted to do
was bring the Borg in.
It was my feeling that the Borg
could always be "Voyager's" Klingons.
They needed a recurring villain.

And for better or worse,
that's what we ended up doing.
And it's one of the
things that defined "Voyager"
was the introduction of
the Seven of Nine character.
You had a very sexy
woman in a very sexy outfit.
You know, it was supposed to lure in
a certain male demographic.
But, in reality, she
was the Spock character.
She was the Data character.
Report.
I've applied 10,053 algorithms
to the energy signatures
produced by chaotic space.
The Roddenberry influence
was always respected.
We didn't want to do something
totally, outrageously anti-Roddenberry.
It's almost like you
have to keep pinching yourself.
You show up on these sets and
you have to remind yourself,
"I'm in the middle of
something that when we do it right,
is really important, can
really affect people."
Now it's hard to do
that on every single episode.
I don't know who has
ever succeeded in that,
but I think that we
all could feel as a cast
when we were telling a good
story and doing it well.
There was a lot of
discussion what "Enterprise"
would look like and feel like.

Narrator:

is a prequel to the entire franchise.
Set in the 22nd century,

as Starfleet's first
explorers venture into space.
You know, we were trying to, I think,
deconstruct "Star Trek"
and figure out, you know,
how it all came together.
You know, we'd certainly seen the future
of where it was all going.
And it was a real
challenge to kind of back that up
and imagine, you
know, what was this...
What was this like 150
years before Captain Kirk.
I called my mother and said,
"Ma, I'm not gonna
have to stress about work.
I got a job."
I had to audition
with a slight alien accent
for the character of
Dr. Phlox, which puzzled me.
I didn't really know what to do, so I...
I sort of tried out a
variety of funny voices
with my wife before
I settled on the voice
I eventually arrived at.
Sounds sort of vaguely East Indian.
I don't believe you'll
be needing my services.
You know, I thought
that we were gonna make it
and that we were gonna do seven years
like all the rest of these shows.
I was just trying to tell good stories
and do Gene's vision proud.
Tell the best "Star Trek" stories
that I could, you know?
And now that I'm no
longer involved with the show,
I'm the fan eagerly
awaiting the next television show.

Narrator:

is on the cutting edge.
I had just been offered
a major role in a Broadway musical.

Narrator:

look at "Star Trek's"
most beloved villain.
I ended up doing six
episodes of "Next Generation."
So in the 60', I mean, it a
period of racial discord.
We got the Vietnam
War, youth rebellions,
emerging feminism,
and, you know, TV...
- Dirty hippies.
- Dirty hi... exactly.
There's no series or television show
really addressing these things.
You know, Roddenberry's
able to do is kind of explore
these things, but
again, in a way which is...
Not only avoids the censors,
which he had a lot of problems with,
but also allows the audience
to kind of look at it from
a different perspective.
And if they were
looking at race in America
on a documentary, that's
just not gonna have
the kind of impact, whereas in
"Let That Be Your Last Battlefield,"
we have the black and white faces.
You know, and you can
imagine what the American public
was looking at this going, "You know,
yeah, this is right. This
is kinda strange."
And again, this is an episode that
was done right after Mart...
It was produced right after

Martin Luther King's assassination.
That's the beauty of sci-fi.
You can sort of
have these allegories without
people knowing they're
being taught a lesson.
- Yeah.
- Big two on the nose.
Yeah, they just
think they're watching
a fun space adventure with a Canadian.
[laughter]
"Star Trek" very much
at a time when, you know,
race, in particular, in the
'60s was such a big thing.
It broke down those
barriers in terms of talking...
Talking about color, multi-culturalism,
other people.
And instead of making
walls, and instead of trying to
villainize others,
it was all about embracing the other.
Because, you know, when you
look at the "Star Trek" world,
you know, Gene really
wanted to create a world
where everybody could be, you know?
And if we were
having some kind of trouble,
we could talk it out.
We had one of the
most wonderful icons
in Nichelle Nichols, who
was not only African American,
she was a woman.
And, you know, she was
there on the bridge all the time.
She was important.
Sometimes she would just
say, "Channels open, sir,"
but the thing was that she was there.
She speaks perfect English.

She's the communications officer
and she takes that very seriously.
She is not only gorgeous,
but she is the communications officer.
She's the one you have to talk to
if you want to talk to
anybody out in space.
And she's fly, okay?
And they all want to
bone her, and you know it.
And there were some
stations in the South that said,
"Oh, you're having," what was then,
"a black woman on the bridge.
We're not gonna show your show."
And Roddenberry said, "[bleep]
you," you know.
[chuckles]
And, you know, "Too bad. You lose."
A woman of color in the late '60s
while the civil rights
riots were going on.
Her presence there was a big deal.
I had just been offered
a major role in a Broadway musical.
And I met Dr. Martin Luther King.
And I was so excited to tell him.
And he said, "You can't do that."
He said, "Don't you
understand what you're doing?
"This is television and there's
nobody like you on TV.
You can't... you
can't abdicate."
And I couldn't.
The main thing that has struck me
about Gene's series at the
time was how he mirrored
the things that were
going on in our society
by using the aliens and the humans
to carry out those storylines.
He was very clever in doing that.
I liked the idea.

I'm not sure it was always executed
as well as it might have.
I think we used the bludgeon
when we did the story of
the half black and half white.
You know, but we did it you know?
And good for us for taking on the issue.
I am black on the right side.
[dramatic music]
I fail to see the significant difference.
Lokai is white on the right...
All of his people are
white on the right side.
Frank Gorshin was
a wonderful performer,
and he and Lou
Antonio were the two actors
who played these opposing roles.
People who were actually mirror
images of each other
should hate each
other they way they did.
And there was that great
moment where Kirk says,
"Why do you people hate
each other so much?
You're... you're the same."
"Don't you get it?
He's black on the right
side, I'm black on the left."
You know, "Oh." [laughing]
Science fiction is at its best
when it challenges you.
It presents a message
while disguising itself
as entertainment.
In an episode called "Symbiosis,"
there's a planet where
they're all addicted.
And there's another species
that always supplies
them with their drug.
And we know
that... that this is

this horrible enabling situation.
And we could easily cure the addicts.
- Please, help us.
- I'm not sure that I can.
But do we get involved
or do we let them figure it out?
The moment that I
felt was so haunting to me
was the one where B'Elanna is pregnant
and can see that her
child will have Klingon DNA
and be born with the
forehead and she has developed a way
to possibly alter that so her daughter
doesn't have to go through
what she went through.
And I wept when I read the episode.
But then to be responsible for a child
and to have the technology to change
the future of this child.
And it was, um...
It was a difficult and
wonderful episode.
When you look at Data, you know,
at one point he is on trial, you know.
And it's, like, is he on
trial because he's different?
Is he on trial because he
should be not be thinking
the way that he's
thinking because he's, after all,
a machine and should
not be moving...
I mean, they're all the questions
that we deal with.
And whether it's race because
it's skin color,
or race because you're an android,
or, you know, race because you're
only this big and fuzzy.
You're a Tribble, you know?
It's all of these
stories go into saying,
"Hey, we actually all have

to try to do this together."

The cultural makeup of the bridge,
that was science fiction...

- Absolutely.

In the mid '60s.

People who watch it today have no idea
how startling that was.

You had this multi-cultural crew,
not just multi-cultural,
but it was male and female as well.

I mean, I know that when Roddenberry
did the first pilot
and Majel Barrett was Number One,
the studio was like...

- Yeah.

Who's gonna believe a
woman in charge of a starship?

Narrator:

"Star Trek" invents the cell phone.
The tech that predicts our future.
The thing that's really
amazing about "Star Trek"
is that it definitely
has inspired people
to sort of, you know, proceed
down that path, right?

- Yeah.

- A lot of technologists,
of course talk about the StarTAC
Motorola phone, right?

The flip phone coming
from the communicator.

But it gives people a
vision to sort of think about,
"Well, why isn't that possible?
Well, the PADD is an obvious thing,
which the iPad, I think, was
designed after specifically.

- Didn't they say...

- Yes.

- He took the design from iPad...

- Yes.

Well, they wanted to call it a PADD,

Personal Access Display Device,
which is what we called it on the show,
but Paramount wouldn't allow it.
And what's really neat, I mean,
the computer
interaction is things like we get
- with Siri and Alexa.
- Well, yes, exactly.
I mean, you literally
talk to a computer,
and it, you know, responds
to your queries.
Wow, you don't even think about that.
- Yeah.
- I mean, I think this is
a really... kind of a neat dynamic
of science sort of
influencing science fiction
and in return, getting
some sort of inspiration back.
The only thing they got
really, really wrong for me
is the fact that they plugged Data in.
I feel like he'd have Bluetooth.
[laughter]
They got to put him in
his charger every night.
[laughter]
When I see someone in a restaurant
and they have the Bluetooth in their ear
while dining with someone else,
I usually shout out, "Let it go, Uhura."
[laughter]
And you know what?
They know what I'm talking about.
- Oh, there you go.
- And they feel horrible.
Gene was clearly a visionary.
He went and studied, though,
the technologies that would be involved
in order to make his show credible.
Believability was a
huge thing for my father.
If you go back and read some of

the original writers' guides
and bibles for the original series,
He says in there, you know,
"Believability is essential."
He brought Harvey Lynn, his cousin
who worked with the
RAND company, to advise.
And that's where a lot of
the technology came from.
I think because I
loved the space program,
"Star Trek" to me at
that point felt real.
It felt like they all
took it kinda seriously.
There was a real ship like that.
I do remember when I was a kid
I thought that was a real ship.
I thought, you know, "There's a big ship
that flies around in
space. I see it every week."
The technology absolutely
captured my imagination.
I mean, especially the
idea of being able to
live in this giant spaceship.
He wanted to do adult
stories, adult science fiction,
so he knew that in order to
make that kind of a show work,
he had a very credible
design for his starship.
But there's a reason
the Enterprise hangs
in the Smithsonian Institute.
It is such... not
just an iconic ship,
but such a beautiful ship.
It's a magnificent aesthetic
achievement.
Roddenberry said, "We
want our audience to believe
that for the hour
they're watching 'Star Trek, '

they're really on a
spaceship out exploring the galaxy.
So we have to design the bridge.
We have to think about navigation.
We have to think about
what powers the ship."
And then he thought, "You know,
why don't we set up a system
in the sick bay called the biobed?
A crewman comes in, lays
down on the biobed,
and on a computer screen above the bed,
it instantly displays all
of their vital signs."

Narrator:

designed and engineered
gadgets for the crew
that are decades ahead of their time.
And inspire the devices that
are second nature to us today.
But also the smaller
things like the tricorder
or the communicator, which, I mean,
you know I have one in
my pocket right now
that's not dissimilar.
Leonard Nimoy, years ago,
he told me the flip
phone was purposely designed
to look like a communicator.
That the inventor of the flip phone
wanted it to be a
pastiche of "Star Trek."
A guy named Martin
Cooper in the 1970s
was tasked by Motorola and Bell Labs
to create a, you know, one
of the first cell phones.
A portable telephone that, you know,
you could carry and walk around with,
and it would ultimately be small enough
to fit in a pocket.
And Cooper explicitly

said, "When I was designing that first handheld phone, I thought, You know, this thing is kinda big. It's a little bulky, but if I fold it in half, that'll save... that'll save space. It'll make it smaller and easier to carry. Plus, it'll be really cool to flip open Like the communicators on "Star Trek.""

You have these PADDs that are now iPads and everything. Well, we didn't have iPads then, so it was... it was like we were doing it, we'd be making things up. But if you set it down too hard, you gotta do... It would make a clunk. You'd have to take the whole shot over. The PADDs that they used, which had nothing on them, we'd use them in the stories to somehow advance the plot, or they're looking at a report. Never in a million years did any of us think this would be a thing. It was total science fiction to us. It was 20 years after

"Star Trek:

Generation" premiered that Apple introduced the iPad. And that's, you know, that's a dead ringer, really, for the PADDs that we had on "Star

Trek:

20 years earlier. People forget this. They look at it now, they say, "Oh, 'Star Trek's' so dated. It's so primitive."

They have no idea.
Supermarkets didn't
have sliding doors yet.
That's how prescient "Star Trek" was.
It was Roddenberry's
idea for the holodeck,
which I always thought was
revolutionary, you know?
Virtual reality was being explored
in science fiction novels,
but he was really the
first to kind of put
true, thorough virtual reality,
certainly onto a television show.
The holodeck, which
was a wonderful invention
taken to imaginative creative
extremes in "Next Generation,"
has its origins in the "Star
Trek" animated series
that most people don't know.
The holodeck was in an episode
of the "Star Trek"
cartoon, "Practical Joker."
That was the first time we saw that.
If you look at "Star
Trek," the original "Star Trek,"
you will see Spock holding little cards
and data cards that he would slip
into a slot on the computer.
They look exactly like
the 3 1/2" floppy disks
that were created 20 years later.
It's remarkable to think, you know,
Siri's getting pretty close
to the computer on the Enterprise.
"Star Trek," I think,
on the technology side,
partly it's the
extraordinary vision of Gene and the people
that he worked with in
creating that original show
and thinking about how
things can be better in the future,

and then people growing
up watching "Star Trek"
making those things happen
because they were
inspired by "Star Trek."
So it's a really
fascinating kind of feedback loop
between art and science.
I can't think of another
show that had nearly the impact
for people who really, you
know, work in the aerospace industry
that "Star Trek" did, right.
Or even for a lot of cases,
physics and things like that.
Because it did take a
realistic approach to science
and using science to solve problems.
But you try to solve
them with a rational approach.

Narrator:

Enterprise lifts off.
"Star Trek" begins as a prime-time
television series,
but over the next half century,
it reaches far beyond the airwaves
to help shape our world.
"Star Trek" inspired people.
"Star Trek," like, people
became scientists.
They became physicists.
They became doctors and astronauts
because of "Star Trek."
When you see someone who
says, "You were such a role model.
You know, I went to med
school because of you."
Or, "I got into nursing because of you."
It made it richer for me. It
made it a richer experience.
One of the reasons I
wanted to become an engineer
was because of "Star Trek."

Because there was something different about it in that the world felt more thought through and real than other things that you had seen. I mean, there's a picture of NASA and Mission Control and people were wearing Spock ears. People who went to college to study physics or engineering or medicine because they grew up and were inspired by "Star Trek." And wanted to be the next Scotty or the next Dr. McCoy. Jimmy Doohan, who played Scotty, and DeForest Kelley, who played McCoy, were always relating stories of people who had written to them and would become engineers and doctors because of "Star Trek." I think that was great. But how does that apply to me? And it didn't. And for the longest time, it didn't. Until I met a young lady, who after "Star Trek" had gone to school to learn Russian and went to work for the State Department. Her mission was so important that she couldn't tell me what it was about. But it had to do with the Russians, so I actually helped inspire a spy. [laughing] I was so fascinated by "Star Trek" that maybe the first filmmaking book I can remember reading was "The Making of Star Trek" by Stephen Whitfield. And I remember being so fascinated by looking at the behind-the-scenes pictures,

the layout of how the sets were put together at Desilu and Paramount Studios. The idea of using a colored light to create different planets. Just all the imagination that went into it, it just really excited me, and it really became a doorway into the idea of filmmaking and into television, which obviously, you know, I've spent my whole life on. Probably one of the most influential books in my life was discovering "The Making of Star Trek" by Stephen Whitfield, which I found at a school book fair in the sixth grade. And I read that thing cover to cover over and over again 'cause that really was about the making of a television series, about selling a pilot, you know, show bibles and production questions and issues and fighting with networks. And I was completely enthralled with it. And it sort of... it imprinted itself in me in a profound way. You know, I didn't really think about becoming a television writer at that age, and wouldn't for many, many years. 'Cause that wasn't a real job. But reading that book gave me a hunger to do that. I wanted, on some basic level, to do that, too, to make a television series and to do those things like Gene had done. We were invited to the

rollout of the Enterprise shuttle.
I didn't have an
understanding of how significant it was
until we got there.
And there were several
hundred people there.
And they had the Air Force Band.
The conductor raised the
baton and waved his hand
and the band started playing up.
The Enterprise rolled
out from behind the building,
and it was amazing to see.
As it came out, the band started playing
the theme music from "Star Trek."
And we jumped up as one, and
were cheering and screaming.
It was just the most remarkable moment.
And, you know, across
the nose of the shuttle
was the word "Enterprise."
For the first time, I
realized that there was a significance
beyond the fact that we
were a television show
that went on once a week.
That we really had an
influence in the culture.
And I guess it was the first time
that I really felt
that I could take a bow.
Up until then, my sense
was, "I'm a supporting character
"with very little to do.
I'm riding the coattails of
this television project,
and I haven't really
contributed very much.
Well, that was all
true, but I realized then
that I was part of a
group that, as a group,
we had an influence.
That we had an influence in society

Because of "Star Trek," I
am all the things I just said.
Engineer, physicist,
doctor, psychiatrist.
I've joined the military.
I became a policeman.
But the most potent, I think,
are the stories where someone comes up
and looks you in the eye and says,
"Star Trek was the only time in my house
where there was peace.
Where my dad or my mother or
the abuse or the alcohol,"
or whatever it was, "the
only time where we sat together
and it was peaceful and trouble-free."
And... and it's heartbreaking.
And it's true.
You can see it in their
eyes how true it is
and how important it is.
There are people who have
gone to nine foster homes,
and the only steady thing in
all of those foster homes
was that the family watched "Star Trek."
"Star Trek" over the
years has inspired people.
And whether it's inspired
them to follow their dreams
or believe in themselves,
I mean, that's the... one
of the key messages
in "Star Trek" is,
"You're a great person.
You have valid thoughts, valid ideas.
Never think of yourself
as less than anyone else.
Now go out there and
follow your dreams."
We were talking earlier, Doug,
before we started shooting
here and I just found out,
somehow, just found out

about a book right here.

How could you have missed this book?

Here it is, "The Making of Star Trek."

That's the book.

- The book.

- The book.

That book changed my life completely.

That book came out, I guess, like,
the second season of "Star Trek."

- Uh-huh.

- I was crazy about the show.

That book was, I mean for me,
it was like Popeye downing
a can of spinach.

- Can I see it?

- I mean, look at this.

This is the diagram of the bridge.

Honestly, I mean, it
totally gave me a direction.

I knew what I wanted to
do after I read that book.

And I could say that "Star
Trek" and that book

made me who I am today, and
that kinda sounds a little sad.

But, you know, it led
me to a couple of Emmys.

Led me to an Academy Award, you know.

And that's all because of "Star Trek."

Narrator:

battle of the episodes.

The cast reveal their favorites.

This episode is brilliant.

My favorite episodes
were always the ones...

Personally, 'cause, you
know, I was doing 'em.

- Mm-hmm.

- Were the ones where Seven
was really exploring her humanity.

So I think it was "Someone
To Watch Over Me"

where the doctor's

teaching Seven how to date.

- Oh, that's a great one.

- And I just...

I thought that was so
lovely and so touching,
and it just broke my heart at the end
when he's kinda falling
in love with Seven
and she's like, "Yeah, there's
nobody here for me."

I hated that moment.

That's where you break the
exoskeleton if I'm not mistaken.

- Yes!

- The lobster.

The creature has an exoskeleton, yes.

[laughter]

So that was one of my
favorites, definitely.

Well, a truly great "Star Trek" episode,
in my opinion, has a
list of ingredients.

It's an equation.

And that equation includes:

a great high concept
that provides cool character dynamics
and conflict, but also is a parable.

It has some deeper theme.

"Devil in the Dark"

I thought was a wonderful episode
about... about fear of the unknown.

How we fear... and even hate
something that we don't
know anything about.

Learn who your enemy
is and maybe then...

Maybe then it's no longer your enemy.

Interesting episode.

You know, I remember the
"Devil in the Dark" episode
with the Horta. That really left
a big impression on me as a kid,
that he didn't kill the monster
and that the monster was a mother

and had all these eggs.
They're eggs, aren't they?
Yes, Captain. Eggs.
And about to hatch.
"A City on the Edge of Forever"
which is, of course, the
episode of "Star Trek"
that is the one that everybody
knows is a great one.
It's a little bit... it's
an eccentric episode.
I love also the two-parter.
The repurposing of the original pilot
into "The Ca..."
What is it, "The Cage:
Part one and two"?
And that's brilliant... we
refer to these shows all the time
on "Breaking Bad" in the writer's room.
We prefer to, you know, Tranya.
We refer to Captain Pike
with his... with the light.
I mean, which, you
know, couldn't even think of
as being a little bit
like a Hector Salamanca
when he's in the
wheelchair and he's got the bell.
I really loved "Yesterday's Enterprise."
It was a spec script that I had
that had gone through a
couple of drafts already.
Then I took a pass at it
and reconceiving the
story and kinda making it
a much more darker
universe on the other side
and emphasizing the war aspect of it.
And the tragedy of it.
My favorite is my
favorite because it's just brilliant.
Brilliant writing. Brilliant directing.
Brilliant acting.
And it's called "Far Beyond the Stars."

It's where all the series regulars
appear as humans,
and the episode has to deal with racism.
It's not just good "Star Trek."
It's not just good science fiction.
It's great literature.

[Star Trek:

Generation theme music]

Well, you know, I think I'm the last
character Gene created.
I think I'm the last
one that he actually created
based on Texas Guinan.
Guinan her name
was. After Texas Guinan
who was a famous card
player and gambler,
or whatever she was.
And Whoopi showed up in
the show and brought in
this... this aura.
And the wild... remember
the shovelhead hats
she used to wear? That beautiful face
with those big eyes and
that gorgeous skin
and the voice. And she
played it so straight.
Guinan was great, again,
'cause Whoopi's playing it.
Guinan was a
strange, misterioso character
that no... none of us really understood
what the hell she was.
When we started really
getting into "Next Gen"
in the later years, what we said was,
"It's really about her
relationship with Picard.
Yes, she's the bartender
and, yes, she listens
to all their problems and
gives insight to people

be something really intense,
and he was seemingly unstoppable.
And so it was always really
fascinating to watch.
Jonathan Frakes used to say to me,
"You're the litmus test.
You come back once a year."
I always looked forward to
come back, but I never asked.
It's a little bit like asking
whether you're gonna
be invited to somebody's dinner party.
The character of Q... that omnipotent,
Machiavellian,
cunning, bitter,
nasty, mean-spirited,
controlling character...
I can't even fathom anybody else
doing as much with it.
Painting that canvas as completely
as de Lancie did and
does with all his characters.
Have you any idea how far we'll advance?
Perhaps in a future that
you cannot yet conceive,
even beyond us.
The character on the page
is just not as entertaining.
You give it to John de Lancie,
and it becomes this other thing, right?
And everyone enjoyed writing for him.
It really... people would just write
scene after scene after
scene for Q in any of those shows,
and many of them were too
silly or too over-the-top,
but you just really enjoyed it.
You really couldn't
wait to dig your...
Dig into a Q episode.
Internally, what we
said all the time was,
"Q is in love with Picard."
That was the

fundamental of the relationship.
He's in love with him. He just is.
He loves Picard.
It's a particular
relationship with this one human
and this omnipotent
being that's bizarre,
but that's really what's
at the heart of it.

Narrator:

Who will win the battle of the captains?
"Star Trek" is so character-oriented,
and there were so many great characters.
So many people got a chance to shine.
But I think that my favorite character

- is "Mcskirk."

- "Mcskirk"?

"Mcskirk."

Which is McCoy, Scotty, and Kirk.

- Oh...

- 'Cause they're really one guy.

- I was like, "What did I miss?"

- [laughter]

- Mcskirk?

- I didn't see that episode.

It's a transporter malfunction.

You take that... those three...

Those three, it's like one guy
split up three ways.

You know, ordinarily,

if you have one person,

if you want to know what's

going on in their head,

you gotta have a

voice-over or something.

But with those three

guys, split up that way,

they could have a conversation...

- Yeah.

- And it's really like one guy.

I gotta go with Kirk.

- You gotta go with Kirk.

- I mean, the original series.

You just... the way he
just kinda, you know,
- sauntered around.
- Yes.
You gotta love him.
The Shat was the guy I grew up on.
I admire Picard.
I love them all equally, but...
uh... I think there is no substitute
for Bill Shatner.
Shatner's putting
on such a great persona
of a trustworthy captain
with just enough sense of humor.
You know? And calm under pressure.
And good with the ladies.
Shatner had it all.
The way he presented that character
was just so awesome
and believable and
theatrical at the same time.
He's not a subtle guy.
But I just thought it was great.
He fought... I think it was, like,
a Gorgan or
whatever. It's where he had...
Captain Kirk is stranded in the desert
and he's got, like, this lizard creature
he's gotta fight and he's gotta learn
how to make, like, gunpowder
and projectiles and stuff like that.
Certainly the iconic, classic scene
in which Spock... or Kirk
confronts "God" and says,
"What does God need with a starship?"
What other character in
the history of cinema
would come up to God? Not
even Charlton Heston
would say to God, "What do
you need with a starship?"
Absolutely, without question,
my favorite captain is James T. Kirk.
I mean, he just... Kirk

did the right thing.
He said the right
thing. People looked up to him.
He was a man of action.
He was a man of romance.
And, like, I mean, as
performed by William Shatner?
I mean, there was a
reason why as a little kid
I wanted to be Captain Kirk.
There's a reason why as an
almost 50-year-old grown-up
that I still watch the original series
and I still wanna be James T. Kirk.
He is the best captain.
The way he would stare down
100-foot tall Apollo, and with great...
sort of indignation.
"What gives you the right..." you know,
- to a 100-foot tall god...
- [laughter]
He shouted, "What gives you the right?"
- When Apollo just could have...
- [laughter]
Done that.
Yeah, the sort of
leadership and the fearlessness
and also... my first understanding
of what a...
- you lead by example.
- Yeah.
The captain's setting,
the fish stinks from the head down,
all of those leadership qualities
that hadn't been shown
to me by a family member
or by anyone at school, a teacher.
Really, it oddly was that
leadership necessary
as put forth by Captain
James Tiberius Kirk.
I mean, I love Captain Kirk. However...
I have...[stammers]
you know, I have to say

that I think my favorite
captain is Picard...

- Uh-huh.

- Because the thing is
Kirk is really only 1/3rd of a guy.

- Oh...

- He's only 1/3rd of a guy!

- Interesting.

- Picard is a nice,
well-rounded guy.

And he doesn't have to punch
anybody in the face
to get his point across, right?

- But if he has to, he can.

- Well, he can,
but he usually has Riker do it or Worf.

Yeah, he, uh...

You know, for me, in a lot of ways,
"Next Generation" was a...

- "Star Trek" kind of grown up.

- Yeah.

You know? And
that started with Picard.

Yeah. My answer's actually Picard too.
Just because I find him to be...

I don't think he's the
most realistic of a captain.

I think that Picard has so few flaws,
and he only really finally becomes human
after he's a Borg and
then turned into a human.

You know, he really just starts like...

They give him a love
story once in a while...

But it just... I don't know.

I just love... I found

Picard to be virtuous
and I found Picard to be like, oh...

if humans could one
day turn into that guy,
maybe "Star Trek's" plausible.

But it's not gonna happen.

Yeah, he's a great representation
of kind of Rodenberry's vision.

- Yeah, a vision of what
- humanity can be.
- A captain needs to be.
- What a captain is.
- Exactly.

Yeah. Just putting every...

He just... I don't

know. I just always...

And that accent. I

mean, you can't really...

- Well, the accent, yeah.
- Top that voice.

Narrator:

legacy of "Star Trek"
and beyond.

The show is about what
it is to be human,
and that never goes out of style.

And it's the type of
stories that they tell
that you don't generally
get in other television shows.

- Yeah.
- The introspective...

And the basis of it is who are we...
who are we as human beings?

I think it's because
it's an optimistic view of the future.

- Hope.
- Yeah. It's hope.
- Yeah.

- I think that's exactly
what it is... it's an
optimistic portrayal
of what we could hopefully achieve
and what our society could be like
and that we finally accept each other
and we finally learn to
look past differences
and things like that.

And I think that we so desperately hope
that we can achieve that.

And it evolves, you

know, from series to series,
over the 50 years.
It may have some core values and ideas
and the optimism and the hope,
but it evolves with the times, too.
So it, you know, it... hopefully
the next reiteration
will fit our times
today much like, you know,
"The Next Gen" did in
the late '80s, early '90s
or "Deep Space Nine" and
"Voyager" in the '90s,
and, of course, the
original series back in the '60s.
But it's been able to evolve.
It hasn't been a static
kind of franchise.
That is what's great about it, for sure.
There's that Martin Luther King line...
"The arc of history bends
toward justice."
I think for fans of this show,
the arc of history bends
towards "Star Trek,"
that we have this hope, this belief,
that... things are getting better.
And that, yeah, we're
probably not gonna, you know,
run into guys with
pointed ears out there.
But we will find a way
to fix our problems
and move out into the universe
and believe in, you know, the...
you know, the better
angels of our nature
and... and make the world a better place.
One thing about "Star
Trek" that I've said before
and I really believe it
is it was the Beatles of 1960s TV.
And if you had to describe the Beatles,
you would say it's magic.

And take any one of
them out of that band,
and it's not the Beatles.
Well, "Star Trek's" the same way
from the same period.
I mean, take William Shatner out.
Take Leonard Nimoy out.
Take Rodenberry or Coon or Fontana out
or Deforest Kelley, and
you don't have it.
It's still gonna be good,
but it's not gonna be what it is,
and we wouldn't have what
we have now 15 years later.
I think there's a lot of reasons
why it endures so long.
You know, I think, um...
I think the biggest thing to me,
in terms of its longevity and success,
is that it is unique in
that its portrayal of the future,
the optimistic portrayal of the future,
does kind of stand alone in pop culture.
The vast majority of
science fiction pieces
that take place in the future, you know,
show us a dystopian
future, a terrible future.
Here's the only real science
fiction construct
that I wanna go live in, you know,
that I want to be part of.
I want to join that
crew. I want to live that life.
I want to have those
adventures with those people.
"Star Trek" has something to
say about who we are as people,
who we aspire to be,
and it says that we will endure.
We will overcome all obstacles.
I think "Star Trek" will be around
for a long, long time
because it's a unique piece

of science fiction
in that it's optimistic.
"Star Trek" is optimistic.
It holds out the hope
not that humans are gonna be
somehow perfect in the future
but things can get better.
I think "Star Trek" succeeded
because a number of
elements fell into place.
They had a great overall story.
They're modern-day pioneers
where no man has gone before.
So it could be the Wild West.
It's the Wild West in space,
really, led by a great captain
and an incredible team.
And I think it's gone
on for 50 years so far
because it is a show
about human interest
and adventure and how far we will go
to try to learn more and
to expand our own worlds
and our own minds.
And I think that's
something that resonates
with people 50 years ago,
and it'll resonate with
people 50 years from now.
And now, of course, J.J. has
taken it to a whole other place.
Why "Star Trek" is still relevant
is because of the paradigm
that Gene Rodenberry came up with,
the idea of unity, of humanity...
And other species,
actually... working together.
There's an optimism to it
that I think we've never
needed more than now.
Well, it starts with the
characters, you know.
I love the ensemble.

I love the idea that, you know,
this group of people came together
and through the shared
journey, they become a family.
The sense of family that
goes beyond blood.
And I also love every night
there's a sense of discovery
and exploration, you know,
and that, to me, is
the DNA of "Star Trek."
You know, I think "Star
Trek's" enduring appeal
is really because it
presents a vision of humanity
that is united and,
particularly in this day and age,
it's wonderful to have kind
of a beacon of morality
to see that, you know, maybe
the dystopian future
that you see in a lot of movies
like the "Mad Max" movies
and the "Blade Runner"
movies is not gonna be our future.
Collectivism versus separatism,
which is a big thing in
today's society, you know.
About how we're better together.
And that was something that
we felt obligated to do.
This is "Star Trek."
"Star Trek" has always
spoken about who we are now.
And now it's, I guess, coming
back on another network.
You know I'ma try to get on
there, you know, just to see.
Because I try... You know,
Guinan is everywhere all the time.
A majority of the "Star
Trek" fans that I've met
are proactive
in making that vision of

a better future a reality.
The "Star Trek" fans are
the most unique people
you've ever met.
They know your character.
They know every
episode and what it meant
and how it affected them.
If I were given the choice
of any character ever
portrayed on television...
That I could play any
character I wanted...
I would choose Spock.
Well, people identified with us.
They identified with "Star Trek,"
they identified with the characters.
They were dressing in their own uniforms
and their own costumes.
It resonated with that group of people
that were kids, you know,
and now they're young adults.
"Star Trek" created an umbrella
for everybody else.
And then once we got in under the shade,
we then said, "Oh,
come. Come and join us."
That's what "Star Trek" did.
And that tent will continue to grow.
And it's now 30 years
later for our show,
when I'm talking to you,
50 years for the original
show, and, I mean,
it goes in waves, but people are still
attached to, committed to,
affected by, interested in
this thing that Gene invented,
and I was blessed enough to be part of.