EDITORIAL

This is the first issue of Tides that I have tried to edit. I would just like to pay homage to all the past (and, indeed, future) editors of this idiosyncratic little magazine. It is an awful lot of work, y’see. Unfortunately, now I’ve said that nobody’s going to be likely to want to take over from me and I’ll be stuck with the job until the Doctor regenerates into the Valeyard and we can all go home. I’d also like to thank Dave B., Al H. and Matt S. for the technical support and fried eggs.

This year’s anniversary dinner was held in The Mitre, Oxford, on Saturday 21st February. Many thanks to everyone who turned up. I had a good time, anyway, though it doesn’t pay to believe everything that was said over dinner. About the only thing worthy of inclusion here is the rumour Mr. P. Cornell was trying to sell us about future TV movies starring Paul McGann. Apparently he is contracted for a certain number of films, not for a certain period of time. So, who knows, that wig may be returning to our screens, to break the hearts of women everywhere...

Matthew Peacock
26th February, 1998

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The Fabric of Time

It had been like losing an old friend, who had been with him for all his lifetime; one lifetime at least. He straightened his hat and tried to ignore the disapproving looks he was receiving from the sales staff. A hat indoors! A hat without a jacket! Without his jacket.

It had been worth it, of course. If it was a choice between a shred of clothing, albeit a comfortable one with useful pockets, and another regeneration, there was only one option, even though he had a shrewd suspicion some of his previous incarnations might have hesitated for longer than he had. The white jacket was even now being digested by the Maglax, and he needed a replacement. It would hardly do to appear in his shirt-sleeves. He could try to find an exact replica of course; it wouldn’t be too hard, as he was reasonably sure that the TARDIS had a small seamstress’s parlour somewhere aboard, but he had decided it was time for a change.

An extensive survey of the TARDIS’s Index File had yielded the rather surprising result that Oxford Street John Lewis’s in 1974 represented the best choice of apparel for the sartorially minded time traveller. The shop was evidently undergoing renovations – the windows were all boarded up and there was a distinct lack of display dummies in the store. He had tried asking a member of staff about it but had received only a shocked and scared look in reply.

Left to his own devices he scanned the range of jackets available. Blue, brown, black, stripes, checks, tweed. How to choose? He didn’t want to change too much. When his face seemed to be changing ever more often, he felt the urge to grasp at consistency within each life that he had. Pockets were important of course. Half the universe – more than half – was contained within pockets. Seven dimensions curled up within the other four. Buttons found in the pockets of new clothes, broken things found in the pockets of old. And few beings in the universe knew more than the Doctor the sheer awesome power that could be unleashed by a common-or-garden piece of fluff.

Perhaps a blue blazer? It had always seemed to work for Ian Chesterton. No. It seemed too orthodox. Chesterton... a thread from the past reaching the future. Ripples spreading out in time. He spent so much of his time chasing the ripples, trying to predict the way they would rebound from the sides of the pool, and interfere with one another. Sometimes he ached for the days when he had only worried about the threads.

He needed to worry more now. Ever since he had picked Ace up from Iceworld, the TARDIS had been hinting at harder times, and more difficult decisions, to come.

And his hand rested on a dark jacket.

David Bickley & Alastair Harrison
In Defence of The Claws of Axos

There are good books and there are bad books. There are good films and there are bad films. And it must be said that there are good Doctor Who stories and bad Doctor Who stories. The question of which are which, though, is entirely subjective. For this reason there will undoubtedly be people who don't see what all the fuss is about over Genesis of the Daleks or The Caves of Androzani (regularly voted the fans' favourite two stories). The flipside of this is that there are also people who enjoy stories popularly considered to be turkeys, such as The Mark of the Rani and even The Horns of Nimon. Such judgements are, of course, entirely subjective. There may be an element of retro-cool here, finding a kitsch merit in the risible, as in the appreciation of Ed Wood films, but it may be that some stories are being unjustly pilloried.

One of these is The Claws of Axos. This story embodies many of the essential qualities of the Pertwee era. Set during the Doctor's exile, it features the UNIT family, the Master, the bureaucracy of Earth (and England in particular) and an alien threat to twentieth-century Earth: if not a Yeti on the loo, then a fungus in the garden shed.

From a narrative point of view, the story has a great deal of drive. Events unfold at a rapid, but not confusing pace. It is always clear to us why characters perform particular actions. There is very little purposeless running around. The first episode, in particular, unfolds at a measured pace leaving us, at the cliffhanger, wanting to know more about this mysterious craft which has appeared almost out of nowhere and its mysterious inhabitants, despite having very little action. The cliffhanger itself, featuring Jo Grant being menaced by an Axon, is unimportant: it is identical to any other "companion threatened by monster" cliffhanger in any other story and is resolved in seconds at the beginning of part two. The real draw that keeps us watching for the second episode is the mystery of what this craft is and what the various groups in the welcoming party will want to do with it.

This is essentially a story about people. In virtually all cases, the Doctor not excepted, the characters are motivated by greed. Mr Chinn wants Axonite for Britain and the status it will bring for himself. Windsor wants the glory of achieving time travel. The Doctor's alien origins are made very clear to us by his opposition to Mr Chinn. He is not a human being and barely understands the differences between human nations, let alone has patience with them. "England for the English, indeed!", he fumes. The Doctor is simply filled with contempt for the petty Chinn, who crow with pleasure when Axos is a "perfect sitting target". This sort of idealism works wonderfully if we take the point of view of the Doctor as a role model for the pre- to early-teen age range. The irony is, of course, that where at the beginning of the story the authority figure of Chinn wishes simply to destroy Axos, in later episodes it is only the Doctor who can see that the authorities of Earth are being hoodwinked by the Axon exploitation of their greed.

Axos can also appeal to the Doctor's greed, however. He is desperate for his freedom to travel again in space and time, a freedom which he seems to feel in his conversation with Windsor in episode two may be restored by Axonite, and which Axos offers to give to him by removing the block the Time Lords have placed on his memory. For this reason his apparent betrayal of his friends is all too convincing. We have had the frustration he feels harnessed home to us in episode one, when he insists to Chinn that if he could leave this world of petty bureaucracy, he would. As such, his attempted escape with the Master seems shockingly credible. A similar view of the third Doctor is given in Terrance Dicks's novel The Eight Doctors, in which the third Doctor is almost ready to steal the eighth's TARDIS. In Axos he could have abandoned Earth to its fate, just as he could have taken his later self's TARDIS, except that ultimately that is not who the Doctor is. Given the choice of "committing suicide" to save both his friends and their world, or to make his escape, he will make the sacrifice gladly (a trait shown most notably in Androzani). This is one of the most noble traits of the Doctor, whichever actor is playing him. A rightly lauded moment in Lance Parkin's The Dying Days sees the newly regenerated eighth Doctor willing to give up his life for the sake of a cat. Not a galaxy, a planet or even his companion, but a cat. There is, however, a dark side to the Doctor, as shown by the existence of the Valeyard in The Trial of a Time Lord, and while he is altruistic, he does not take this to a fault; he has his own agenda. In Axos, the Doctor still wishes to escape Earth, and is almost shamefacedly forced to admit it to Jo at the story's conclusion. Although there is more to him than greed, it is as much a part of him as Windsor or Chinn. Ultimately, of course, the third Doctor's greed for knowledge would lead him to disaster in the Barry Letts scheme of things in Planet of the Spiders.
The single greatest negative factor in considering Axos must be the effects sequences, which are appalling in comparison to some of the other stories of season eight. The cause for this is possibly that the script calls for things which were too ambitious. While the producers of The X-Files would probably not even blink at the idea of creating something "not built...but grown", the resources available to the Doctor Who team were not nearly great enough to allow anything believable. The set of Axos itself is, frankly, laughable. While this seems fair enough, since however much money was thrown at the project Axos was surely doomed to fail, it is rather more mystifying to find that in none of the driving scenes has any backdrop been spliced in, leaving our heroes driving through a rather peculiar bluish-purple world. It is a little hard to believe that the same team as caused viewers to call in because they were concerned about the church that had apparently been destroyed in The Daemons are responsible for this. In fact, the Axons in their "depersonalised" form do not look at all bad. They are suitably alien and scary, their ugliness showing the true face of Axos. In their more human "personalised" form, however, they are somewhat unconvincing, perhaps because we know all too well that these are people in body suits with gold eyepieces stuck on. Of course, it would be extremely foolish to judge a story entirely on its effects, and this is an aspect of a production which can very easily date.

"brilliant mind". The rest of the time the Master's technical skills seemed to be directed solely towards repairing his TCE. At this point, however, the Master is presented as being at least as clever as the Doctor. Furthermore, while he may be evil, he is by no means insane. He is a ruthless opportunist, giving his assistance wherever it will help him the most. Personally, I am looking forward to David McIntee's new paperback The Face of the Enemy, presenting a whole story in which the Master takes on the role of an assistant to UNIT. His only true loyalty is to himself. As in many other stories, in Axos the villain is given the best lines, such as in his disgust at the Doctor's "botch-up" attempts at repairing the TARDIS, and greatest of all is his deliciously sardonic suggestion to the Brigadier:

"I suppose you can take the usual precautions against a nuclear blast, like sticky tape on the windows and that sort of thing".

This is a story largely about the Doctor and the Master, and their respective attempts to break free of Earth and Axos. Jo and the UNIT soldiers have little to do but follow one or other of the Time Lords around and get into trouble. Axos at last sees the Doctor make some progress in his repairs to the TARDIS, with the help of Axos and the Master, even if he is still left as "some kind of a galactic yo-yo". He can successfully dematerialise the TARDIS. With this in mind, it is somewhat ironic that in the very next story the Time Lords allow him to make his first journey through time and space since his exile, and rather baffling that until the beginning of season 10 he is convinced that the problem affecting the TARDIS is in its dematerialisation circuit.

In many ways Axos might be seen as an absolutely standard Doctor Who story of the Pertwee years, having the presence of both the Master and UNIT, as well as an insidious (not to mention monstrous) threat to Earth. The third Doctor's desire to provoke acceptance between species on his temporary home planet is shown, much as in The Silurians and The Sea Devils, although this is soon pushed aside in favour of simply defeating the monster. Axos is not by any means one of the great Who stories, but it is nevertheless entertaining, particularly in any scene featuring the Master. It may not be complex, allegorical or meaningful, but it is enjoyable. With this in mind, it seems unjust to ridicule it.

Alastair Harrison
BEYOND OUR VISION

A tribute to Sydney Newman with special regard to Doctor Who

Several names in the ‘backstage’ history of Doctor Who have attracted mythological status. The first name that might spring to mind is Terrance Dicks, but I am not so much thinking of Terrance Dicks as of others. Terrance walks among us as a sort of wise uncle, at times critical of his younger relations but always regarded with respect and indulgence by them - at least until he described the TV Movie as ‘a load of crap’ at the 1996 Panopticon. I am thinking of those professionals who have become more remote figures as a result of career success, geographical distance or latterly, death. The latter has claimed several far too soon - Brian Hayles, Malcolm Hulke and especially David Whitaker, when all were barely in their fifties. Terry Nation died earlier this year but had already passed into the west, as it were, not only because of his position as a Hollywood script doctor but also thanks to his overprotective agent. Verity Lambert had established herself by the late 1970s as one of the giants of the television industry, to whom Doctor Who was a formative experience remembered with affection, but her commitments rendered her inaccessible.

The late 1960s after a decade shaping television drama first with the ITV company ABC, and from January 1963, the BBC. Newman radically reorganised the Drama Department, as it was called until his arrival, grouping output into ‘strands’, with recognisable titles like Theatre 625, Festival, and most famously The Wednesday Play (later, until its demise in the mid-1980s, Play for Today), dividing the roles of producer, story editor and director which previously had been combined in one person. The producer was concerned with the “financial and artistic strength” of his particular strand, the script editor with finding new writing talent and nurturing the writer and his work towards production, and to the director falls “the final welding of the talents” so that the work can attain its full value. As part of his populist agenda, Newman also increased the number of drama series that the BBC made, and one of these series was Doctor Who. This article will attempt to establish how much of the credit for Doctor Who really belongs to Newman, and also where the series was placed within his agenda for the Drama Group.

The newspaper obituaries to Sydney Newman remembered the 1960s as a glorious period for television drama, and gave Newman the credit. Similar views were expressed in the third installment of Aunty: The History of the BBC, screened by BBC 1 recently. This programme used extracts of interviews conducted for BBC archival purposes with Newman, and with the Director-General who appointed him, Sir Hugh Greene. However, to many of those who were working in drama at the BBC when Newman arrived, Newman’s agenda was nothing short of destructive, a betrayal of everything that the BBC should be protecting against the onslaught of ITV. These people could not be dismissed as

The doyen of these figures was Sydney Newman, former head of BBC Drama Group, who died on 30 October in Toronto, aged eighty. Newman had left the UK for Canada in

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middle-aged and closed-minded relics of an outdated patrician order, for their most articulate spokesman would prove to be a young director, just twenty-six when Newman was appointed. He was Don Taylor. His television memoirs were published by Methuen in 1990, under the title *Days of Vision*.

It is difficult to do justice to Taylor’s memoirs in this space. He cares deeply about television as a means of transmitting high culture to the working classes who had not been fortunate enough to share Taylor’s career. From a small flat in Chiswick, he had passed the eleven-plus, gone to a grammar school and then to Oxford, progressing to a BBC traineeship and from that to a place as a staff director. Taylor dislikes series television, particularly what he describes as “mass consumption rubbish, soap opera drama like *Coronation Street*, and the rest of it is for the most part ‘a sideline, popular audience stuff . . . not what the department was for’”. Newman’s predecessor at BBC Drama, Michael Barry, epitomises to Taylor the “liberal humanist attitude to the production of drama”, embodying the values of post-war British theatre within the television framework, the aspiration that the BBC Television Drama Department should be ‘the National Theatre of the Air’.

I hope that Sydney Newman replied to Don Taylor to say that television drama should not only be the National Theatre of the Air, but the West End too. They had many disagreements, to the extent that Newman barred Taylor from the Drama Group after his contract expired and allegedly tried to hound him out of the Arts Feature Department in which Taylor’s talents found a berth. Taylor has a low opinion of Newman, viewing him as uneducated and ignorant. Other sources portray him as an autodidact who, contrary to Taylor’s portrait, had read the classics of literature in his own time and probably saw Taylor and his allies as representatives of the ‘establishment’, seeking to use the BBC to fulfil their own elitist agenda rather than actually doing what Newman saw as their job. That job was to compete for ITV for ratings, and win; to Taylor, ratings were irrelevant. Newman’s views were those appreciated by his superiors, who were largely from a journalistic background, more aware of political currents, and needed to prove to the politicians that the BBC was still a relevant and appreciated force in 1960s Britain.

In many senses the predictions that Don Taylor made in 1990 have come true. Television drama has become more formulaic, reliant on police and medical dramas. The series drama that Sydney Newman introduced was intended to win audiences by being original, surprising viewers by breaking new ground. This commitment to innovation was probably part of the reason why Newman offered the post of producer of *Doctor Who* to Don Taylor, probably in June 1963. I think it’s worth quoting the entire paragraph in which Taylor explains why he didn’t take the job on:

“I’ve often wondered what might have happened if I’d taken him at his word: how the ubiquitous Doctor might have become a trooper in the New Model Army, and a pal of John Lilburne’s, or what kind of Orwellian political futures he might have explored, and how the dramas of European socialism and the language of poetry might have impinged upon the voyagers in the Tardis. There, as they say, was a chance missed. One thing I’m pretty sure of, he wouldn’t have become the kids’ favourite, or have had a world-wide fan club: a fact which is perhaps worth a certain amount of thoughtful hair twisting and chin scratching. But fortunately I knew roughly what my virtues and limitations were. I told him I’d never had the slightest interest in science fiction, and if I wanted to do plays about the past, I didn’t need a time traveller to take me there. I was taking his idea seriously, and so, I believe, was he. I’m sure neither of us thought of it then as the kind of national comic strip it was to become. So he told me to go and talk to Elwyn Jones.”

Elwyn Jones was the Head of Series at the time (he is best remembered by *Who*-fans as the man who should have written ‘The Highlanders’) and the ideas which Taylor recalls having following the meeting show why Newman thought Taylor the best producer for *Doctor Who*. Taylor’s new series was to be “popular, but relevant, and to be taken quite as seriously, and to be as complex in structure and ideas as anything I had been dealing with”. Sydney Newman, of course, appointed Verity Lambert to the *Doctor Who* job and the description he gives of his requirements — somebody “full of piss and vinegar, who’d be prepared to break rules in doing the show”

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2 Don Taylor, *Days of Vision*, London: Methuen, 1990, p 100

3 ibid., p 201

4 ibid., p 202

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could have applied equally to Taylor. Interestingly enough, Lambert was paired with a script editor who up until that point had been working in plays with Taylor, David Whitaker, who earlier in 1963 had script edited David Mercer’s *For Teat on Sunday*. Such was the calibre of those appointed by Newman to *Doctor Who*. In its origin it was not a kitsch piece of genre television, but in the words of Louis Marks “a good and reputable thing to be involved with, and thought of as a hugely innovative and stimulating series to work on.”

Newman’s *Doctor Who* was based on the celebration of intellectual enquiry. Memos such as that which he sent to Verity Lambert requesting that future episodes of *Doctor Who* “glamorise the title, occupation, etc. of an engineer” seem eccentric today but manifest Newman’s sincerity of purpose in nurturing *Doctor Who*. He wanted to “do the country a lot of good”. In his own way, and in a fashion that must have been incomprehensible to the likes of Don Taylor, Newman’s *Who* was positively Reithian.

Although Newman in later years would claim the lion’s share of the credit for *Doctor Who*, the series was very much the product of months of committee discussions. The credit at the front of later editions of Jean-Marc Lofficier’s *Programme Guide* ‘created by Sydney Newman and Donald Wilson’ has more to do with perceptions of the series developed later in the programme’s history, when those who mythologised the series’ early years needed a ‘creator’ figure with *Star Trek*’s Gene Roddenberry. The demands of Newman in the 1980s for an on-screen credit seem to have been those of an embittered man who had found his career over before he was ready to retire. Considering the input of other people into the format of *Doctor Who*, such as C.E. Webber, Donald Wilson, David Whitaker, Anthony Coburn and Rex Tucker, to name but a few, Newman’s wish for sole credit does him a disservice.

Another disservice that Newman did himself is the revised format for *Doctor Who* that Newman provided for Michael Grade in 1986. It reads as dated and uninspiring. It has little in common, at least in its character sketches, with the *Doctor Who* appreciated by large audiences in the 1960s and 1970s, and represents a return to the ‘educational’ series in Newman’s mind which was moderated by others into the successful first season in 1963. Newman’s supporting characters are very juvenile and it has to be remembered that he imposed the figure who became Susan alongside the Doctor when he reworked the Script Department’s contemporary SF serial format, *The Troubleshooters*, into *Doctor Who* in March 1963. For Newman, the near-senile Doctor and the young people who forced him to keep travelling in his ‘time-space machine’ were complementary, and one could not proceed without the other. It’s clear that almost everybody subsidiary to Newman who helped develop the programme in 1963 thought Newman’s insistence on a child character in error. The format submitted by the Script Department noted that “Child characters do not command the interest of children older than themselves”, and so when Newman insisted on a child character she was placed at the upper end of the age spectrum, and various attempts were made to make her unusual. Initially ‘Biddy’ was described as a ‘with-it girl of 15…eager for life, lower than middle class’, which smacks of

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7 Marcus Hearn, ‘The Urge to Live’ in *Doctor Who Magazine Summer Special*, 1994, p 7A
9 Howe, Stammers and Walker, *Handbook*, pp 166-172, and passim
established BBC staffers self-consciously pandering to Newman’s known tastes.10 The series’ success must partly have rested on that initial episode, which would have lost a great deal had Susan not been ‘An Unearthly Child’.

Some of Newman’s ideas for Doctor Who were simplistic, but other intentions he had for the series were more thoughtful. C.E. Webber, when writing an early version of the writers’ guide for the series, postulated that the Doctor is “an extension of the scientist who has opted out”, with a “hatred of scientists, inventors, improvers”. Newman’s response was “don’t like this at all. Dr. Who will become a kind of father figure - I don’t want him to become a reactionary”.11 Nevertheless in the eyes of some involved with the series this is exactly what did happen: not long after Newman left the BBC, the Doctor was heard to announce his dislike of computers in an episode of ‘The Invasion’; not the same as wishing them all destroyed, true, but certainly in the tradition of technofear amplified in the series from mid-1966 onwards. When Christopher H. Bidmead joined the series in 1980 he felt that it had become “a hippy-style fantasy… a show where you could achieve anything by waving a magic wand.”12 Science had all too often become the tool of the villains while the Doctor would circumvent it with knowledge and intuition, a far cry from the original intentions of the series to make children excited about science. Newman’s original didacticism was (thankfully) moderated, principally by David Whitaker as story editor, into character and situation-led television drama, while keeping faith with Newman’s original intentions. Even monsters such as the Daleks, and later the Cybermen, were warnings about the misuse of technology rather than condemnations of it. By the end of the 1960s viewers were being fed material such as ‘Fury from the Deep’ and ‘The Krotons’ which, in their ways, relied for their narrative drive on the evils of technology and learning rather than of those who used them. Had Sydney Newman’s guidelines still been kept in mind then both stories would have been executed more thoughtfully. By all accounts ‘Fury’ was an excellent story and even concerned itself with human relationships to a greater extent than most other Doctor Who of its time, attention to such details having been left in the background somewhat following the restructuring of the series made by Innes Lloyd and Gerry Davis in 1966. However, in that one of the pillars of its story was superstition concerning technology, in a pure sense - if we take the Who of Newman, Whitaker et al as ‘pure’ - it wasn’t Doctor Who at all.

Doctor Who survived, however, because of adulterations made to the series’ format, changes that were unavoidable as Doctor Who evolved to fit new circumstances. The constants of the Doctor’s character have not been the sensibility and self-interest clung to by Newman, but the more open story-framing qualities with which C.E. Webber was interested: “This is, as regards him, a Quest story, a Mystery story, and a Mysterious Stranger story, overall.”13 This decade, though, as the character has developed in print rather than on screen, authors have drawn on undertones dating from those early years of the programme’s production. Hints of the character’s amorality and possible malevolence placed by writers of the last few television stories were seized on by writers of the New Adventures, and developed to a greater degree than would have been thought possible. The two writers most responsible were closely associated with the McCoy Doctor’s television adventures, Andrew Cartmel and Ben Aaronovitch. The seventh Doctor became an increasingly frail figure, almost Newman’s bewildered old man by the time of ‘Lungbarrow’. Don Taylor’s vision of a Doctor exploring the landmarks of history from a socialist perspective have gained added resonance from the remarks of the author seen by many as the architect of Doctor Who original print fiction, Paul Cornell: “My ideal of the Doctor is now, and will probably always be, Kate Orman’s socialist hero, using his brains and the terrible weight of his role as an individual to preserve communities and the ordinary things of life.”14

The greatest contribution that Sydney Newman made to Doctor Who was that he secured the environment in which the programme grew up. Don Taylor might have

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10 ibid. p 174
12 Interviewed by Peter Griffiths in 1997 for Doctor Who Magazine 257, 22 October 1997, p 8
13 Hearn, ‘Nothing at the End of the Lane’, p 38
14 Writing in Matrix 54, Summer 1997, p 7
regretted the change from the free-form, theatrical, single play led television drama which Michael Barry had encouraged but without Newman’s changes there might have been much less drama of any kind broadcast on BBC 1 or the new BBC 2. The stranded drama might have been intellectually confining for the individual director such as Taylor but the consensus seems to be that Newman’s policy impressed the journalistically-trained BBC executives above him to allow the reformed Drama Group a larger share of the programme budget. True, some of this was the result of empire-building within the BBC. Some forms of drama were within the bounds of the Light Entertainment department; it was Eric Maschwitz, Head of Light Entertainment, who commissioned the initial Script Department report on science fiction on television in 1962 that started the process which led to Doctor Who. In radio, Light Entertainment still look after drama such as the recent Doctor Who and Blake’s Seven productions. Newman had also been among the BBC players in the machinations that abolished the Children’s Department, transferring children’s drama to his sphere of influence and established programmes such as Crackerjack, to Light Entertainment, and Blue Peter to Women’s Programmes (which eventually evolved into the present-day Children’s Department). Doctor Who was primarily aimed at the 11-14 age group, but not exclusively so.

Newman’s BBC Drama strove to break down barriers between social groups and make culture and learning accessible to those whose educational background had closed doors. In this his aims were similar to those of Don Taylor, but where Taylor aimed to subjugate and eventually eliminate folk or popular culture, using BBC Television to propagate work which had only been the preserve of the wealthy or highly educated to the mass population, Newman’s project was to construct routes from popular culture into high culture by making thoughtful but populist dramas which showed ‘ordinary’ people that drama could be relevant to their lives. Taking control of children’s drama, and changing its emphasis to connect traditional

subjects such as history and technology together and involve contemporary characters in costume drama, was all part of the scheme. Newman encouraged the ‘kitchen sink’ drama, increased the number of serials while maintaining, if with less enthusiasm, some of the more traditional subjects that BBC Drama had dealt with in the past. When Shaun Sutton succeeded him the costume dramas returned to parity of esteem and quantity. The barriers remained down, the same personnel, at some level, working on Doctor Who as on Play of the Month or I, Claudius.

It’s not surprising that many of the most fervent Doctor Who fans are also defenders of traditional BBC Drama, and lament the fall in studio drama production and the rise of the television film and the co-production that has taken place over the last ten years. Don Taylor laments the end of the studio play in Days of Vision, and while some of the best Doctor Who directors were those trained in film technique, such as Douglas Camfield or Christopher Barry, the programme was of course principally realised using video, and most of its best-executed scenes made using the techniques of the studio play, in confined settings with dark sets, making careful use of light when illuminating actors and props. When the techniques of the studio play began to be forgotten, Doctor Who suffered.

Doctor Who is essentially a storytelling device, but I believe it is a good one. Even though some of the stories it has told have been poorly conceived or badly executed, the Doctor and his companion still exist in their ideal form, however submerged. That ideal form evolved from the notes of Sydney Newman and others rather than having been laid down by them at the beginning, but I don’t think Newman would have dissented from the proposition that the Doctor and his assistants should represent the enquiring minds in us all. Doctor Who asks questions, and points us in directions where we can find the answers. Newman was thinking of ‘science’ and ‘history’ - unsophisticated labels for a busy television executive restructuring a department rather than a comment on the intended audience - but Doctor Who ideally points the way to all forms of learning, to moral and ethical dilemmas, to other art forms beside television, and more besides.

“In recent years they’ve screwed it up completely,” said Sydney Newman after a lecture at the National Film Theatre in 1988. “Doctor

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15 Howe, Stammers and Walker, Handbook, pp 159-161
16 For more information on the abolition of the Children’s Department, see Biddy Baxter and Edward Barnes, Blue Peter: The Inside Story, Letchworth: Ringpress, 1989, pp 54-58.
Who is just stupid with all that science fiction stuff. It's a bore! They've killed a beautiful thing.\textsuperscript{17} I suspect that when Newman talked of 'science fiction' he was thinking of the 1950s B-movies that purely set out to shock their audience rather than educate them about the potential uses of technology and inculcate a sense of wonder. In the 1980s Doctor Who was not dead, but for most of the decade it could be fairly called lazy. Its 1996 revival became a battleground for its very soul. The production of 'the TV Movie' - known by various titles, the most recent of which is 'Doctor Who and the Americans' - was operatic in style, building on the scripted reference to Puccini. There were many references to Frankenstein, not just to the Universal movie, but to Mary Shelley's novel and to a nineteenth-century illustration of the awakening of the monster. Those in the film who encountered the Doctor were better off for knowing him, their moral faith in the universe reinforced by his actions. However, most of its values were those of latter-day global entertainment which views television largely as a distribution system than an art form in its own right. It was a Doctor Who out of its context, for all the Britons working on it, it shared a little of the knowingness of its temporary stablemates at Universal, Hercules: the Legendary Journeys and Xena: Warrior Princess, and much of the visual shorthand of its fellow Fox feature, The X-Files. Doctor Who, who once travelled with his box to new places, was in danger of being trapped within it for ever.

I want there to be a new series of Doctor Who, but not at any price. A series based on the template of the TV Movie would fall far short of my expectations and of the promise the series has always had. Doctor Who should be a gateway to other worlds, of knowledge, of literature, of philosophy, of science, and part of a television service with faith in itself. The more self-promotion the BBC does, the more it shows that it had lost that faith. Restoring a culture of innovative drama plays, series and serials, which deal with as many aspects of the human experience as possible, would be the best tribute to the life and values of Sydney Newman. If those series include Doctor Who, then so much the better.

Matthew Kilburn

SYDNEY NEWMAN
A Chronology

1917: Born in Canada, 1 April

1944: Appointed to first production role at Canada Carries On, National Film Board of Canada.

1947: Joined NBC Television, New York

1952: Returned to Canada to join CBC Television

1954: Moved to Britain

1958: Appointed producer, Armchair Theatre, ABC TV (ITV franchise holder, weekend, North and Midlands). Expanded role into that of Head of Drama.

1960: Co-devised The Avengers with Leonard White

1962: Head of Drama Group, BBC TV.


1967: Joined Associated British Picture Corporation

1970: Returned to Canada, eventually becoming Director, National Film Board of Canada


1990: Returns to Canada


\textsuperscript{17} Quoted in Celestial Toyroom, September/October 1988, p.3
DOCTOR WHO - SEASON TWENTY-THREE
(A Little Exercise In Wishful Thinking)

Sit back and let your mind wander for a second. What if Twin Dilemma was never shown? Doctor Who might still be on BBC1, says a voice from the back. Yes, well maybe. Just suppose that, in some freaky alternative dimension of the quantum multiverse, Season Twenty-one ended as it should have done, with Caves of Androzani. Their season Twenty-two looked pretty much the same as it did here, though the Doctor and Peri thankfully spent less time bitching at each other and more time being in the stories. And what if Season Twenty-three (The Trial of a Time Lord) had been constructed just a little differently...?

There were fourteen 25-minute episodes in the season. This probably had a lot to do with BBC budgetary constraints. Clearly, however, the production team were never entirely happy with the forty-five minute episode. They could have worked much better if the script editing had been tighter, for instance. Ironically for the BBC, Eric Saward’s infamous encounter with that cement mixer meant that the change was a complete waste of time. It has been calculated that Terrance Dicks would have had a 77% chance of becoming the new script editor. If he hadn’t been arrested for first-degree murder. Tel: if you’re reading this, chin up, old son. We’re with you all the way.

There were two four-episode stories and two three-parters.

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First Frontier (outline)


Part One

White Sands, Nevada, October 4th, 1957. The Mission Control Bunker. Colonel Finney is overseeing the test firing of an early Atlas rocket. Less than thirty seconds into its flight, the missile explodes after a near miss with an unidentified radar trace. Two F-86 fighters are already standing by. Cut between the footage of aircraft and the scene in the bunker. Behind Finney, Major Marion Davison, the USAF press officer, is busy taking notes. The viewer sees the target as a radar image. The fighters are barely keeping up with it when it disappears from the screen.

A blond officer, wearing full uniform, enters the room. He identifies himself as Captain Stoker of AFOSI (Air Force Office of Special Investigations). He informs them that the incident is to be classified at Majestic level, looking meaningfully at Davison.

A large black van drives up to the gates of Holloman Air Force Base. The guard checks the I.D. of the people inside and waves them through. He goes into the gatehouse and picks up the telephone, “This is Gate 5. The National Security Advisor has arrived.”

Colonel Finney is working in his office. He stands up when the Doctor (in a dark suit) and Peri enter the room. “Good afternoon, sir. I’m sorry, we had thought you’d be coming by plane...”
“One can’t be too careful. And you don’t have to keep calling me ‘sir’. Most people call me the Doctor. This is my aide, Miss Brown.”

Peri asks most of the questions. She asks the Colonel about his recent reports of UFO’s. He is unwilling to rule out the possibility that they might be Russian spyplanes. He explains that attempts to pursue one of these UFO’s have always ended in failure because of the speed of the unidentified craft. The Doctor, meanwhile, has been examining a map of the sightings. He points out Corman AFB, a small installation about twenty miles away. The Colonel tells him it is just a collection of disused bunkers in the mountains.

At Corman, USAF ground support crews are busy resupplying an obviously alien scout craft that is a tribute to the British SFX industry. Good job that Ron Thornton didn’t give up working for the BBC after his contract expired, then.

The Doctor and Peri have gone to a scruffy roadside diner to talk to the locals. They hear a lot of tongue-in-cheek stories about UFO abductions. The Doctor, undaunted by this, is still interested in Corman and says as much. He decides to go up there.

The Colonel is speaking to an unidentified senior officer on the telephone. The conversation is short, he says “Yes, sir” and “Yes, General” a few times. At one point he protests at something, but the person on the other end of the line interrupts him. Finney seems to be having difficulty controlling himself.

Meanwhile, the Doctor and Peri have driven as far as the home of a local farmer whom the owner of the diner told them about. His land runs as far as the boundary fence of Corman, still about ten miles away. He tells them that the small base in the hills was built during the war to carry out radar experiments. The Doctor asks him if he has noticed any activity up there recently, such as aircraft landing. The farmer pokes fun at him and Washington for believing “all that flying saucer crap.” Then the military policemen arrive. The lieutenant in charge asks the Doctor and Peri to accompany him back to Holloman. The jeeps form up and escort their van back to the air base

They are brought before the Colonel. He is speaking on the phone with someone (whom we don’t see, nor do we hear his voice). Scene breaks off mid-way.

Establishing shot: the alien craft at Corman. Camera elevates to look over the craft, then zooms in on a prefab office against a rock wall. Cut to: two men in the office, watching Finney, Peri and the Doctor, on a black-and-white monitor screen. General Nyby puts the phone down. “He’s on his way.”

“What about his assistant?” says the other man.

“He says she’s unavailable.”

“It doesn’t matter. She’s very unimportant. Excuse me.” When the second man turns round to leave, we see it is the Master, wearing a military uniform...
Part Two

The Doctor demands to know what is going on. "I have my orders," says the Colonel. "My superiors would like to talk to you about your involvement here."

"And what superiors are those, pray?"

"Naturally," the Colonel goes on, loudly, "I can't make you speak to anyone. But I think it would benefit your investigation greatly if you did do as they ask. After all, if the President knew everything that was going on, he wouldn't need people like you."

The Doctor accepts this, but wants to know the full story about Corman. The Colonel tells him that that is where he'll be taken - "And Miss Brown, too." But the Doctor insists that Peri remains and in the end the Colonel gives up trying to persuade him otherwise.

The next Atlas test is about to start. Finney tells them he is worried there might be another 'incident'. The Doctor mentions something about an experimental new radar array, and suggests now would be a good time to use it. He scribbles something down on a scrap of paper, telling Finney it will help him calibrate the array so that he might stand some chance of tracking a UFO.

Peri watches the Doctor leave in a helicopter. But she turns away before the helicopter has disappeared from sight and heads off into the White Sands complex. She makes for the officers’ quarters. Cut to: Peri knocks on the door of the quarters of Major Marion Davison (the Major’s name is visible). Davison opens the door and Peri introduces herself. Davison immediately says she’s just come off duty and she’s going into town. She suggests Peri come with her.

The Doctor’s helicopter sets down at Corman. The Master is waiting for him (wearing some dead cool shades).

Davison explains that her reason for leaving White Sands is that the base is wired for sound – she suspects there may even be hidden cameras. Naturally, she doesn’t tell Peri this until they have driven several miles down the road. Even then, she makes Peri leave the car before she will say anything. She begins to explain how through her position as chief press liaison officer for the southern sector of Air Defence Command she has seen some pretty strange stuff.

At White Sands, the next missile test begins.

The Master has taken the Doctor into the main hangar, where the scout ship is being kept. He lets him examine the ship. The Doctor runs his hand over the pictographs on its casing, then turns to speak to the Master. "The Tzun."

"Yes."

"At least you’re consistent. I should have known you’d be behind this."

"You did know. How else do you think you were able to pinpoint this location so quickly? We’re close, remember."

"We are not close," says the Doctor. "Not any more. I don’t go around stealing other people’s bodies to prolong my life." The Master stiffens.
“That’s it, isn’t it. You think they can reconstitute your Gallifreyan DNA.”

The Master smiles. “Their expertise in genetics is legendary.”

“And in return you’re going to help them assimilate the Earth into the Confederacy.”

“I doubt that they’ll need much help from me to conquer these primitives. Just look at this! Corman is the private fief of one General Nyby. He’s a military imbecile – you’d probably like him. Nyby thinks the Tzun are going to give him weapons and ships to fight the communists.

“But if it’ll stop you from interfering,” he sighs, “then I’ll dispose of them for you. I really don’t care what happens to the Earth once I’ve got what I want. In fact, it would be a pleasure.” An alarm sounds. Stoker runs up and whispers something to him.

“Well, scramble the recovery unit. At once!” He turns to the Doctor. “All this” (he waves vaguely around) “simply doesn’t concern you, friend. I’m not here to destroy your precious Earth. I’m not here after you. Believe it or not, I’ve grown out of that kind of foolishness. So take the delightful Miss Brown and go away and leave me alone, Captain!” He strides off after his subordinate, leaving the Doctor standing alone and unguarded, and totally lost for words.

Peri and Davison are still talking when one of the alien spacecraft passes overhead, knocking them to the ground. It hits the ground at a fairly shallow angle and skids along, carving a massive furrow in the sandy ground. It takes a very long time to come to a halt.

Finney’s radar operator is convinced the UFO has crashed near the base. The Colonel is about to send out search aircraft, when the telephone rings. He listens for a few seconds. “Very well, sir,” he says, and slams the phone down.

The two women head out towards the crash site, picking their way through the scrub. Long shot of them crossing the desert shows it takes them some time to reach the ship. They have only a few seconds before the transport helicopter from Corman arrives. The Doctor is on board. He disembarks and joins Peri. They watch the retrieval team skilfully separate the ship into several sections and load them on board. The helicopter leaves: the whole operation has taken only a few minutes.

“How the hell did they do that?” asks Davison, in true companion style.

“Software-definable hull,” says Peri, who obviously comes from a more enlightened era.

“Oh.”

“The Master’s here, Peri” says the Doctor. She nods.

“Who?” says Davison.

“I thought at first he might be planning to interfere with your planet’s early space research,” he says.

“My what? Look, who is this Master guy?”

“He’s a… It’s a code-name used by a known agent of a foreign power. I’ve just seen him too, dressed as a Major in Air Force Intelligence.”

At the air base, the Master hypnotises his way past the guards on the circuit room next to the radar tower. He inspects the settings and chuckles. Then he starts wiring a small control device into the circuitry.

“He’s got a beard,” says Davison, and then: “Why did I just say that? I’ve seen him around the base, I’m sure of it. I just can’t seem to remember when…” She changes the subject. “So this guy’s after the rocketry programme then? Or the sub-orbital aircraft?”

“Sabotage was his specialty in the old days. Now? No. He’s after something else.”

“What about the UFO’s?” says Peri. “It’d be a pretty big coincidence if they aren’t something to do with the Master.”

“Oh, I agree. Corman field is their forward base, where the Master is. They call themselves the Tzun.”

“Never heard of them,” says Peri brightly.

“I can’t say I’ve ever had the privilege either. I think I read about them once. A long time ago.”

The Doctor wanders away, lost in thought.
There are now two intact Tzun ships in the hangar. The Master joins Nyby, who has been watching the ground crews finish reassembling the second skiff. "Well done," says the General. "Tell them the crisis is over. And while you're at it, ask them when we're going to get the promised weapons." The Master nods and walks across to a heavy steel door in the rock. The Master has to show his ID to the USAF men on guard before he is let through into the bare room beyond. He then has to pass a retinal scan and enter a complex numerical code to get through the next door, beyond which is a lift. Cut to: the lift doors opening at the lowest level. The Master walks along the corridor, holding a handrail because of the artificial low gravity. Doors open and close in front of him, guiding his way. He goes into another bare room, where three of the Tzun are waiting for him.

"Well, I've cleaned up your mess," he sighs. "Yet again. I've kept my side of the bargain but you've been fobbing me off with excuses for months. When are you going to do what I ask?"

"Your problem is a unique one, Time Lord. It has taken us a long time to do as you ask."

"Then... it is ready?"

"Yes."

"Then give it to me."

"No. We do not trust you, Time Lord. You say you have kept your side of the bargain but our forces have barely begun to arrive. We would be extremely foolish to give you back your life until the Earth has been assimilated."

---

**Part Three**

The Master ponders theatrically for a second. "I suppose you're aware the President has sent an investigator to White Sands."

"We know all about him."

"Then you aren't worried that he's a Time Lord? I would be, in your position."

"You contacted the Time Lords?"

He sighs. "Of course not. I have far more reason to fear them than you do. This one is an interfering jackanapes, a renegade like myself. He likes to think he is doing good. But I doubt he'll cause you any serious problems... as long as no one gives him the details of your plan. Telepathically, for instance..."

"The plan is too far advanced for anyone to stop it now. Even you."

"Then you've already requisitioned the nuclear weapons you need? I didn't think Captain Stoker had the clearance -- and somehow I don't think Nyby's going to want to help you. And how are you going to get them into position without my hypnotised agents?"

The Tzun look at each other. "Leave us. We will confer."

The Doctor, Peri and Davison are making their way back to the car. The Doctor produces a small device from his pocket and checks it for bugs. He finds none.

"But you were right to be careful," he tells Davison.

"I think they've infiltrated the base," she says.

"Well," says Peri, "that's not too difficult to fix. We can check the personnel files. Then we could call in all the guys who've started there since the UFO reports began."

"It's not as easy as that," says Davison. "The problem isn't with new people. People don't disappear, they just change. It's quite subtle. Only a close friend would recognise it."

They drive back to White Sands. On the way, the Doctor tells them that the Tzun add other
worlds to their dominion genetically. “Think of it as grafting one plant onto another,” he says. “The Tzun are brilliant genetic engineers. Once they conquer a planet, they turn the surviving population into partial clones of themselves. Their term for them is Ph’Sor. The Ph’Sor become a Tzun garrison perfectly adapted to the conquered planet.”

“So why are they hiding?” says Davison. “Why haven’t they just invaded in full force?”

“The Tzun come from a low-gravity planet. There are probably only a few of them on Earth, plus a group of human and alien Ph’Sor as guards. Now they’ve set up a bridgehead, they’ll test the local life-forms to see whether they are genetically compatible. They won’t begin the full invasion until they’re sure.”

He tells Peri and Davison to check the personnel records to find out who has taken a sudden “holiday” in the past few months.

The Master has rejoined Nyby in the main hangar.

“Well?”

The Master indicates Captain Stoker, who is talking to a group of remarkably similar USAF technical personnel over by the skiff. He takes Nyby to one side.

“They’re still deliberating.”

“Get back down there and tell them that the Russians have got an SS-6 rocket in go-condition at Nykortyn.”

“Surely it isn’t carrying a warhead. The Sputnik satellite project?”

“We think so. They promised to stop it –”

On arrival on White Sands the two women head off to do just that while the Doctor confronts the Colonel. Without too much trouble, the Doctor is able to persuade the Colonel to admit he is aware of the Most Secret research facility at Cormor, which has been working with a crashed alien spacecraft. But he is adamant that the Air Force has so far been unable to make it fly. Ergo, whatever his planes have been chasing was not an American ship. “Maybe the others are trying to retrieve the lost one. My superiors didn’t want to inform the President or Congress about it ‘cos the Russians have people all over Capitol Hill. How did you find out, anyway? Project Blue Book?” The Doctor ducks the question.

Davison and Peri burst into the office.

Davison pulls a gun on the Colonel.

“What the hell is going on?” he demands.

“Last month you gave yourself a weekend’s leave. We have to assume you could be working for the aliens,” says Davison.

The Doctor produces a stethoscope and gives the Colonel a cursory examination, being careful not to get between him and Davison’s gun. He shakes his head. “He’s human.”

“Well, thank you.” He holds out his hand. “Stethoscope.”

“What?”

“Your turn.”

The Master is kicking his heels in the corridor outside the conference room. Then the door opens. He goes in. In front of the Tzun is a simple table, on which there is a tiny vial of dark liquid.

“That’s it?”

“Yes. This serum will purge your host body and restore your Time Lord physiology. A whole new cycle of regenerations….”

The Master is staring at the vial.

“Take it and go. And do not betray us. The Doctor is attempting to capture the Ph’Sor at White Sands. Deal with him!”
The Master leaves at once. He does not even mention Nyby.

The Colonel has been calling in people he thinks he can trust, one by one. Each is checked by the Doctor before being issued with a weapon. So far, no Tzun have been found.

“Right, we’ve got twenty guys now, Doc. That’s gotta be enough to be going on with.” The Doctor agrees. They all leave the office.

They come round the corner of one of the buildings and come face to face with the Master. He makes a break for it. The soldiers, in a few large groups, chase him through the administration complex. He manages to lose them and makes for a four-tonner parked by one of the mess huts. In front of it is a group of Ph’Sor soldiers. But there is a lot of open ground for the Master to cover. He is climbing into the cab when Davison challenges him. He turns: she and half-a-dozen soldiers are covering him from about thirty yards away. They tell him to climb down and lie on the ground. He shrugs, and for a brief instant he looks as if he is going to obey. Then he swings himself up into the cab and the Ph’Sor open fire to cover his escape. Davison fires a single shot at the Master’s back. Seconds later, the lorry dematerialises.

The Doctor and the rest now arrive. He starts to explain what has just happened.

On the far side of the Moon, a Tzun Stormblade-class carrier drops out of warp (very nice SFX, too). Makes you wonder just how much of the budget’s left for Part Four though...

**Part Four**

The Doctor has gone back to Finney’s office. Outside, the Ph’Sor and the human soldiers are still fighting. A substantial number of base personnel have been converted and most of them have disruptors as well as conventional human weapons. No expense spared.

“At least we’ve got a straight fight on our hands at last,” says Finney unconvincingly.

“Straight fight indeed,” says the Doctor. He pulls a small box from his pocket. “This is connected into the scanner system on my TARDIS.”

“Hey, that’s what you called the Master’s…”

The box projects a 3D holographic image of the Tzun Stormblade.

“It’s probably come from the fleet at Zeta Reticuli. It turned up a few minutes ago.”

“What? Where is it now?”

“Just behind the Moon. Thankfully their technology’s not very good. It’ll take them at least forty minutes to decelerate from warp speed.”

“Then it’ll be able to open fire,” explained Peri.
“Our rockets won’t have a chance against that thing. We’ve seen what those ships can do.”
“Yes, you have, haven’t you. I wonder.”
“What?”
“Why they let themselves be seen. Wait — yes, I remember now. Twelve hundred years ago — or was it thirteen? I never was very good with calendars.”
“Never mind the date” says Peri. “What happened?”
“There was a planet the Tzun were trying to take over. They started out just by buzzing the place in their ships. That let the population accept the idea that alien life could exist. Then they started a war between the various religious empires by planting cobalt bombs in some of the capitals. When the factions fired off all their missiles there was a Stormblade waiting in orbit. It shot all the missiles down and the Tzun were hailed as saviours. Do you keep nuclear weapons here?”
Finney was already reaching for the telephone.

Some of the unconverted personnel have pinned down a group of Ph’Sor by the nuclear storage bunker. He talks to Finney on a field telephone. The Doctor tells the Colonel that it is vital they find out how many bombs have been removed. This leads into a good-old fashioned shootout (action not by HAVOC, thank heavens).

The Colonel puts down the phone. “Two one-fifty kiloton warheads are gone.”
“What do we do, Doctor?” says Peri — oh well, maybe she’s not from such an enlightened era after all.
“Can you get hold of one of the Tzun weapons for me, Colonel?”
“Sure, we’ve already captured some. But what good’s one gun going to do us?”
“Questions later, Colonel. Two bombs. That must mean Washington and Moscow. The nuclear weapons of this era aren’t very well shielded. The TARDIS might be able to pick them up from close range.”
“TARDIS?” says Finney.
“Like the Master’s. It’s parked outside. Can you let us get to it?”

Peri and the Doctor have to run the gauntlet to get to the van. One of the soldiers in their escort is killed protecting them. They clamber into the back of the van. Inside is the TARDIS, lying on its side.

Nyby, Stoker and the Master are standing before the three Tzun. Behind them is a large wall-screen, showing a basic outline drawing of the Stormblade.
“Our ship is still decelerating. In twenty minutes it will be in a geostationary orbit above the mid-Atlantic.” Nyby is looking at the ship.
“So you’re going to use that to shoot down the Sputnik?”
“No. That crude satellite is irrelevant. The Stormblade R’Shal will destroy the missiles which you and the other power-bloc will launch.”
“Both the Washington and Moscow bombs are now in position,” says Stoker.
“Good. We calculate a mere zero point zero zero two five percent of planetary population will be lost. That is acceptable casualty rate.”

Nyby tries to go for his gun. But Stoker grabs him from behind and presses something against his neck. “Good. Now order additional troops from the R’Shal to proceed to Holloman. If any humans survive the battle there they must be processed at once.”

The Doctor’s TARDIS is now over Washington. He starts to scan for the radiation signature of the first warhead. “If we can stop the bombs, the Tzun might just give up and leave,” says the Doctor.
“What? When they’ve got that Stormblade thing overhead?”
“They think they’re doing the Earth a favour by bringing it into their Confederacy. One of their oldest laws is ‘No base conquest for its own sake.’ Besides, they want the Earth intact.” On the scanner screen, the aerial view of the city zooms in on the Lincoln Memorial. “Got it!” says the Doctor. “Now for the CIA.”

He goes to another part of the console, where the communications equipment is situated. He presses several buttons in sequence, as if he is dialling a telephone. “Er, hello? This is the Doctor. Put me through to Allen Dulles.”

In the Tzun control room, a low note is heard and alien script begins to rush across the screen. “What is it?” asks the Master.

“The Washington bomb has been discovered by the authorities. It has been defused. The Ph’ Sor at ground zero have been killed.”

“There’s still the Moscow bomb,” says the Master calmly. “The war will start a few seconds later, that’s all.”

The Tzun look at each other.

“The war will not start at all,” says the first Tzun. “The humans will never believe that we come in peace. Tell your men at Moscow to deactivate the second warhead. The assimilation cannot proceed.”

“You can conquer them easily!”

“We do not indulge in base conquest for its own sake. This mission is over.” The first Tzun turns to the others. “Order our forces to withdraw.”

“How can they have discovered the bomb?” asks one of the other Tzun. All three are looking straight at the Master.

“I…”

“The Doctor found it for them. You told him where to look.”

Stoker draws his sidearm. The Master shoves Nyby into him, ripping off the control device on his neck as he does so. Nyby begins to recover and lashes out. In the struggle Stoker drops the gun and the Master scoops it up.

“You won’t reconsider your decision?” he says softly.

“We do not indulge in base conquest for its own sake.”

“You know, part of me is rather glad you said that.” He raises the gun.

The Doctor and Peri have taken the TARDIS to Moscow. The scan is taking longer than before.

“I thought you said the Tzun would give up once enough people knew what they were really up to,” said Peri.

“If they still follow the Founder’s Precepts, they will. What worries me is the Master. He won’t give up without a fight.”

Nyby and the Master are hurrying back to the surface. “We haven’t got long before the Stormblade can start receiving transmissions from the ground,” the Master is explaining. “We have to retake Corman first.”

“How do we tell which ones have been converted?” the General is asking.

“I’ve got a list somewhere. But we’re not going to have time to use it. I know where we can get hold of a couple of platoons of unconverted troops. Then – well, we’ll see.”

“OK. What about that thing over the Atlantic?”

“First we have to capture one of the skiffs.”
The TARDIS materialises inside a small cellar. The Doctor and Peri rush out. The bomb is there, in a corrugated metal case. Two hypnotised Russian soldiers are standing in front of it. They raise their rifles.

Nyby's men manage to get control of Corman (by shooting everything that moves, basically). However, one of the skiffs manages to launch. The Master produces a device from his pocket (these Time Lords seem to carry a heck of a lot of these things) and presses the switch thereon. At Holloman, the servomechanism attached to the radar array switches it to the setting used by the Doctor...

"Doctor" calls a voice from within the TARDIS. The soldiers gesture for him to go inside. The Master is looking down at him from the scanner screen. "I decided I couldn't let you try and tamper with my bomb without telling you what I've done to it. There's a proximity detector inside, you see, and if you go within fifty centimetres of the bomb you're going to set it off. The trouble is, it'll set itself off in, oh, two minutes or so. Now you could materialise the TARDIS around the bomb and dump it in space, but unfortunately if it comes within the field of a relative dimensional stabiliser then, oh, well, I'll let you work it out for yourself! The irony is that you'll materialise around it anyway to save your precious Earth. You'll leave Miss Brown behind to save her life, I suppose. Marooned in 1950's Russia with a beautiful American accent and no papers." He laughs. "C'est la guerre, my dear. And I've won it."

"What about the Tzun?" says the Doctor.

"Oh, I can't let them leave with a record of my DNA. And they had the cheek to accuse me of betraying them. To think they thought they could beat a Time Lord of the first rank... Goodbye Doctor! You could leave humanity to be destroyed, and come after me. But somehow I don't think you will."

The satanic image on the screen dissolves in a white haze as his laughter fades into static (McIntee wrote that bit, by the way).

A lone skiff approaches the Tzun Stormblade. The hull of the carrier ship parts to let it enter. The Master is watching a pilot's eye view on the scanner screen in his TARDIS. He is holding a small joystick. Coldly, he depresses the fire button. The containment field around the skiff's reactor is switched off. The explosion engulfs the entire Stormblade (wowee).

The two hypnotised guards are standing motionless, their rifles lying on the floor. The bomb has a lovely big ticking clock on the lid.

The Doctor is working on the circuitry of the Tzun disruptor Finney gave him. "What are you doing?" says Peri (good for her).

"Modifying the molecular debonding regulator of this disruptor into a phase transmuter with a five-foot radius spherical area of effect."

"Oh."

"It's like a transmat beam, Peri" says the Doctor witheringly. "It's just once we've broken the bomb down, we're not going to reassemble it anywhere else. Right, I think that's it. Wish me luck!" He fires at the bomb and it, and a large chunk of the floor glows red and vanishes.

The TARDIS materialises at Corman AFB, where Davison's men have just arrested Nyby and the other survivors.

"Tying your luck at command, Major?" says the Doctor.

"The Colonel's still busy mopping up at Holloman," says Davison. "But he gave me a message to give to you."

"Yes?"

"Firstly, thanks for setting things right."

"And secondly?"

"Don't you ever dare come here again."
MJP: I thought this was a really good story, all in all. It's just a pity Colin's American accent was so bad. Many people have said that Doctor Who isn't about whizz-bang effects. This is probably true - if they dominate the story. But the SFX in First Frontier aren't like that. What they do do is to support the script and the performances of the actors. If they're going to look afraid or worried or whatever, you might as well have something scary or impressive enough to be worth worrying about. (9/10).

AMH: A (nearly) realistic representation of fifties America. Ainley is at his best since Castrovalva, making it almost a shame that this is his swan-song. Jayston has a hard act to follow, and we must wait to see if he can make of a complete story as the Master. (7/10)

DJB: It's a shame the writing team felt it necessary to reintroduce the character of the Master which had been done to death, quite frankly, over the preceding four seasons. It's also a shame that Ainley's performance is far more accomplished in this his final story than in his previous appearances. Nevertheless the story, with intelligent Saward-less script-editing, makes a refreshing contrast to Season 22 – a solid start to the season. (8/10).

* * * *

I must just point out that we all admire David A. McIntee's original novel. This story is not meant to be anything more than a tribute to it. Nor is it a plagiarism of the X-Files, The Invaders or the atom bomb scene in Goldfinger... There'll be more of the alternative season next time. Ravolox (aka the Mysterious Planet) and Mindwarp are going to get pared down a little (mainly at the loss of some of the courtroom scenes). In the new Trial, Mindwarp is the case for the prosecution and Ravolox the Doctor's defence. This is on the basis that the Time Lords would be very stupid to reveal to the Doctor the real reason for his trial, by pointing out the crucial evidence to him, wouldn't they? After that, we'll go on to the totally original script for the Season finale.

But is new, decent Doctor Who wishful thinking? Well, we now know there's only going to be one more season of BUGS... This means that the BBC will have an established slot that needs filling, not much competition, a ready-made production team, and a (fairly) loyal audience for science fiction on a Saturday night. Who knows?

Aaah.
"SOME OF US COULD STILL READ. IT'S FORBIDDEN, BUT THE KNOWLEDGE WAS PASSED ON IN SECRET."

The Bodleian Library as a Doctor Who Resource

The Bodleian Library has an international reputation as a research library, and as a copyright library should receive a copy of every book published in the United Kingdom. As a result it holds a large mass of Doctor Who and other telefantasy-related material. These include mentions in general publications, such as newspapers and critical periodicals such as The Listener, The Times Literary Supplement, The Spectator and the New Statesman, some of which have indices and are on open shelves. Much more has passed into the stacks, but even this is accessible to OU Who members.

Obviously, the Bodleian has a copy of almost every Doctor Who book published by a major publisher. The novelisations are there, sometimes in several editions, including a Frederick Muller version of Doctor Who in an Exciting Adventure with the Daleks from 1964. With the progress in OLIS cataloguing most of Terrance Dicks's 1970s output seems to be there, though one might wonder if the Bodleian needs four copies of Doctor Who and the Giant Robot. Cataloguing Virgin's recent output is less of a priority although one expects that it will all be there eventually. The novelisations are stored at Nuneham Courtenay so their progress from the store to the reading room will take longer than usual. OLIS can also reveal other branches of a Who author's career, such as Malcolm Hulke's editorship of Cassell's Parliamentary Directory, or Bob Baker's involvement with language textbooks for Oxford University Press.

Another substantial Who-related collection at the Bodleian is that of Radio Times. The magazine has been published in several regional editions since the 1920s and the Bodleian has collected most of them. I recently ordered up the BBC Radio Durham edition for late 1969 and 1970, and found that the magazines didn't seem to have been touched since they first arrived in the Bodleian. Again, Radio Times is stored at Nuneham, and is kept in cardboard storage boxes that take about six months' worth of magazines, at least for the late 1960s and early 1970s which are the only periods I've looked at.

Perhaps of greater interest are the Doctor Who fanzines that have reached the Bodleian. These include The Tomb, edited by Allan Toombs in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which consisted entirely of comic strips; The Third Doctor's Fiction Special, an unremarkable fan-fiction zine from the early 1980s, TARDIS and Celestial Toyroom, the magazines of the Doctor Who Appreciation Society (but only from 1985, sadly) and a few issues of Frontier
tidesoftime.wordpress.com

Worlds, the Doctor Who and Blake's 7 zine from the early 1980s. The Bodleian only seems to have issues 16 and 18, though it did once have issues 9 and 10&11 (a 'double issue') as well. Ordering unbound publications from the stacks clearly has its hazards... Frontier Worlds includes some very well-written articles. Among them is Justin Richards's fascinating 'Tragedy of Traken', interpreting 'The Keeper of Traken' in terms of its frequent Shakespearean references, and one of the first articles of the backlash against the John Nathan-Turner interpretation of Doctor Who, 'Ham and Eggs' by Allan Peters (possibly a pseudonym for editor Peter Anghelides) which denounces 'Arc of Infinity' as "a story of annoying continuity references which invited only unfavourable comparison with its derivatives", reducing Omega to a stock villain. Both of these appear in issue 16, published in January 1983, as does Val Douglas's 'Song of Liberator', a spoof of Hawaii Five Zero using Blake's 7 characters. Frontier Worlds was strong in fiction as well as in analysis and humour: issue 18 (February 1984) sees Paul Cornell's 'And if I Close My Eyes...?', an excellent story about a small boy whose dreams intersect with the Doctor's reality, as well as Val Douglas and Jackie Marshall's chillingly satirical 'Fifty Years of a Producer', a look forward to a convention celebrating fifty years of the producership of John Nathan-Turner in 2030. The letters in FW 18 refer back to the missing issue 17 which included an exposé of the fan video network, 'Get it Taped', which appalled many, particularly the foreign readers, as it detailed the way in which money changed hands in Britain for old episodes, and the secrecy which surrounded the video circuit as favours were traded and betrayed. Recently, Peter Anghelides proposed that 'Get It Taped' should be included in the Paul Cornell-edited License Denied, but unfortunately the article didn't reach the completed book.

There are some items that one might expect the Bodleian to have, but which seem never to have reached its catalogue. One such is the Radio Times Tenth Anniversary Special, although some other specials published by Radio Times in the 1970s are there. TV Publications and its successor Polystyle seem to have been remiss in their attention to copyright regulations, as neither TV Comic (home of the Doctor Who comic strip from 1964 to 1971, and again from 1973 to 1979) nor Countdown or TV Action (who published the strip in the intervening years) are included. Doctor Who Weekly/Monthly is not in the catalogue either, although some of Marvel's specials are. Even if they have a magazine, with any long-running periodical there may be gaps in the library's holdings. When former OUWS secretary Paul Dumont was researching the Sapphire and Steel comic strip in Look-In, he found that the Bodleian's run of the magazine ended suddenly during 1980 and didn't resume until some years later, so that a full account of the strip was impossible to compile from Oxford resources.

Fans of The Daleks, which ran for two years in the Gerry Anderson-based publication TV Century 21, will be pleased to know that according to the guardbook catalogue the Bodleian holds the full run of the comic from 1965 to 1971. At some stage the 'Century' has been scored out of the title, to mark the change late in its history, probably by the same hand that added the '71 when the comic, in the old tradition of British comics, ended by merging with another, in this case Valiant.

Fans of other telefantasy series can find plenty of interest in the Bodleian as well. Look-In included not only a Sapphire and Steel strip in the late 1970s but also a Tomorrow People one in the middle years of the decade. In the 1980s it also featured Into the Labyrinth, although Look-In discovered the series only by the time of its third run by which time its original lead, Ron Moody as Rothgo, had been replaced by Chris Harris. The founding editor of Look-In was Alan Fennell, collaborator with Gerry Anderson on TV Century 21 and writer of episodes for certain of the Anderson TV series as well as of some of The Daleks in the latter title and instalments of Doctor Who in TV Comic. A search on OLIS will reveal a plethora of Star Trek items, the SF novelist James Blish lived in England in the last years of his life and some of his correspondence made its way to the Bodleian manuscripts division, including that with Trek writer and story editor D.C. Fontana. Blake's 7 material is more sparse but includes Tariat Cell One, a reference guide to the first season of B7 by the Frontier Worlds team of Peter Anghelides, Peter Lovelady and Anthony Murray, and at least the first of Trevor Hoyle's novelisations from the programme. Terry Nation's novel of Survivors is in the Bodleian too, notable as (according to Paul Dumont) it diverges dramatically from the storyline of the first series as it goes along.
There is a small amount of material relating to the Oxford University Doctor Who Society in the John Johnson Collection of printed ephemera, which contains a section devoted to Oxford University societies. The holdings of OUDWS material consist of Freshers' Fair handouts, posters and some other circulars. The index to the John Johnson Collection is in Room 132 in the New Bodleian, where the material must also be read.

So: next time you have to order a book or periodical from the stacks, whether you are a user of the old or new Bodleians or the RSL, have a look on OLIS or on the old catalogue and see if you find anything of interest. You may receive an odd look from one or two librarians but it might be worth it to have a glimpse into the telefantasy and general media of the past.

Matthew Kilburn
AN ANALYSIS OF THE 1965 DOCTOR WHO ANNUAL – PART I

1. THE LAIR OF ZARBI SUPREMO
The Doctor returns to the planet Vortis in this thrilling intrigue, referring vaguely to the events of ‘The Web Planet’ as ‘his last visit’; and there is even a veiled reference to ‘The Chase’, concerning the missing crew of the Marie Celeste. This Doctor is recognisably William Hartnell, as he slips the occasional ‘hm?’ at the end of a sentence. And true to the early ruthlessness of his television counterpart, he is seen advocating widespread use of gunfire, in this case on the Zarbi. Interestingly, with the hindsight afforded by the US-Telemovie, the Doctor is assumed through this story, and in fact throughout the whole annual, to be 100% human - he describes himself as ‘one feeble, weaponless Earthman, alone amongst these hordes of malevolent giant insects’, and is described memorably by the Menoptera as a ‘strange immortal human who can flit in and out of all the ages’. The story anticipates ‘The Trial Of A Time Lord’ (‘The Mysterious Planet’) by describing the paradox of a planet whose entire constellation has shifted. And in a beautiful piece of description, it is said that the Zarbi’s mandibles could tear the limbs from a man, just as a man might tear apart a roasted chicken.

2. WHO IS DR. WHO?
A masterpiece. ‘After Sir Isaac Newton came Dr. Albert Einstein. After Einstein came Dr. Who.’ What better way to introduce our hero? Perhaps Andrew Cartmel’s vision of Doctor Who was inspired by this sublime passage: ‘Where is he going? What is his objective? What goal draws him on through the endless spheres, the millions of ages? No one knows. Perhaps he himself has long forgotten, so distant, in our years, is the time when he first set out on his odyssey. Are his voyages haphazard and merely satisfying the urge to travel everywhere and see everything, or is he seeking something definite? Again, no-one knows.’

3. THE SONS OF THE CRAB
A chilling piece of early anti-genetic experimentation paranoia, especially so in the wake of Dolly the sheep. The Doctor describes test-tube babies as a failed experiment, a ‘dream of some of our scientists’. The downbeat ending has the Doctor attempt to save an entire race by transporting their embryos, only to find them dead - ‘Grey and shrivelled and lifeless’. The Doctor also learns what it feels like to be a lab rat, narrowly avoiding undergoing a dissection (the thought of which completely terrifies him). He is even accused of being a drug user. And this was a spin-off from what was still considered to be a children’s show!

4. THE LOST ONES
Another Zarbi and Menoptera story - and in a terrible piece of internal discontinuity, one which makes no reference to either ‘The Web Planet’ on television or ‘The Lair Of Zarbi Supremo’ earlier in the same annual, or in fact to the Doctor ever having been to Vortis before. It also introduces us to the Master Scientists of Lost Atlantis, giving us yet another contradictory account of that mythical city within the apocryphal fringes of the Whoniverse. Again, the story has a downbeat ending - the Doctor is unwilling to commit genocide for a ‘good’ cause, anticipating the opposite extremes of the attitudes that he later expresses in ‘Genesis Of The Daleks’ and in ‘The Trial Of A Time Lord’ (‘Terror Of The Vervoids’). In fact, he refuses to interfere at all, and leaves the Master Scientists of Lost Atlantis to die because they have interfered, holding up what is effectively a primitive version of Star Trek’s Prime Directive. And as in ‘The Sons Of The Crab’, the Doctor expresses terror at a possible dissection.

5. JOURNEY BACK TO EARTH
The first of the many Doctor Who board games that World Publishing would later come up with in their annuals. The first of two players to steer the TARDIS back to Earth, playing with ‘counters or buttons’, is the winner. Still good fun to play, actually (if you can lay the pages flat without ruining the spine of a collectible 1965 annual).

6. THE EQUATIONS OF DR. WHO
A marriage of very good science and total sci-fi nonsense, perfectly calculated to stir the youthful imagination. We are told how the TARDIS travels by becoming ‘resolved into a looser pattern of atoms and electrons’. We are told that the Doctor can perceive higher dimensional planes, much in the manner of the protagonist of Edwin Abbot’s 19th century sci-fi classic Flatland. We are given a lucid account of the concept of relativity: ‘Unless there is a control of comparison, there is nothing really small or vast in the Universe. Everything in existence must be related to all others.’ And again, the Doctor’s character is beautifully described: ‘He is human curiosity personified. He must see for himself; he must go there; he must learn all there is to know.’

Finally, and most reassuringly for the budding fan: ‘Are we not all a little possessed of the spirit of Dr. Who?’

S. Starr
FLIPPANT PICTURES PAGE

Matthew Peacock

A Fix With Sontarans

The Sontaran invasion of Earth in the year 1999 is narrowly averted by the Doctor. Realising that Sontarans look like big potatoes he builds a machine out of spare Dalek parts and a Mr. Pickwick mobile oven. Those Sontarans who do not escape Earth in time are baked by the Doctor’s deadly device.

Here we see Group Commander Bronx. The machine (out of picture to the left) has just coated him in a mixture of iceberg lettuce and chili sauce.

The Doctor (as usual) negligently left the machine behind on Earth. It was then stolen and mass produced by the Rutans. Within weeks, the Sontarans were wiped out.

Revenge of the Cybermen

“If your name’s not down, you’re not comin’ in.”
THE TRIAL OF GIARN RAYDEN

This story takes place at some time between Vengeance On Peladon and Legacy Of The Cybermen.

After an extremely long chase, the Seedle Warriors had finally got their man. Giarn Rayden was finally put on trial for his crimes. A hush fell over the courtroom as the Judge began to speak.

‘Giarn Rayden, the charges against you are as follows: the slaughter of many Kalfadorians and the destruction of Kalmed one, resulting in the deaths of many innocent patients.’

‘Not guilty,’ said Rayden in a harsh voice. ‘The charges against me are all lies. Lies, I tell you!’

The Judge, Lord Travaarnas, continued: ‘You are also charged with the murder of your daughter, the lovely Ria.’

‘Lies!’ screamed Rayden. It’s all lies, lies, lies!’

The Judge turned to face Commander Tryasalyan, and said: ‘May we now have the evidence for the prosecution?’

‘Yes, my Lord,’ said Tryasalyan. ‘Ladies and gentlemen and members of the jury, my evidence is set on the planet Kalfadoria.’

Tryasalyan pressed a button, and instantly an image appeared on screen.

It showed Rayden holding his other daughter, Cassandra, by the throat in a vice-like grip. He then pulled her head back, and her mouth fell open in sheer terror. In his other hand, he held a canister of Sargal 17 and held it over Cassandra’s open mouth, poised to empty the entire canister down her throat.

‘Take one step closer, Doctor, just one step, and Cassandra gets it.’

Cassandra, in a terrified tone of voice, replied: ‘D-d-doctor, help!’

‘Don’t worry Cassandra,’ said the Doctor, ‘I’ll get you out of this.’

Professor Ernest Demgoss turned to face the Doctor, a worried, concentrated look showing on his face.

‘What can we do, Doctor?’ he asked.

The Doctor thought for a moment, as if assessing the situation. He turned to face Rayden, and said: ‘Would you really do it, Rayden? Would you really end your daughter’s life?’

‘What are you talking about, Doctor?’ said Ria. ‘Of course he’d do it.’

‘Shh, Ria, and listen,’ said the Doctor.

After a moment’s pause, Rayden gave his reply: ‘If I had to, Doctor, then yes, I would.’

The Doctor turned to face Demgoss, Cyberleader Tharn, Izlyre and the Seedle Warriors.

‘Listen, and listen carefully,’ said the Doctor. ‘What I’m about to do is extremely dangerous.’

‘What are you going to do?’ asked Demgoss.

‘I’m going to call Rayden’s bluff,’ said the Doctor.

‘But Doctor, he isn’t bluffing,’ said Ria.

‘Well, have you got a better idea?’ asked the Doctor.

Ria shook her head. The Doctor turned to face Rayden and said: ‘Okay, Rayden. Go ahead and do it. End Cassandra’s life.’
Slowly, Rayden began to tip the canister forwards. Then, with lightening speed, the Doctor pushed Rayden off-balance. Demgoss rushed forward and pulled Cassandra to safety.

***

Inside the courtroom, the image onscreen faded.

The Judge turned to face Rayden, and said: ‘So, Rayden. You’ve seen the evidence against you. How do you plead?’

‘Not guilty.’

Tryasalyan turned to face the Judge: ‘I have one more piece of evidence for you, which proves the prisoner’s guilt.’

‘This I’ve got to see, said Rayden.’

Once more, an image appeared onscreen.

‘This piece of evidence,’ said Tryasalyan, ‘is set on the planet Peladon.’

***

The image onscreen showed Cassandra confronting her wicked father.

‘I don’t believe you, father. The Cybermen can’t have killed Ria, because she would have been reborn.’

With that, Rayden roared with laughter: ‘You’re quite right, my dear. The Cybermen didn’t kill Ria. I did. You see, when I created you and Ria, I kept one small detail from you both.’

‘And that is?’ asked Cassandra.

Rayden replied: ‘If you both should get involved in the affairs of other planets, in a permanent way, you will forfeit your right to be reborn.’

For a moment, Cassandra was speechless. She looked at Rayden, with hatred and rage burning inside her. Finally, she spat out the words: ‘You bastard.’

***

In the courtroom, the screen went blank. The Judge turned to face the jury.

‘Members of the jury, you have seen the evidence against Giarn Rayden. It is time for you to decide upon the verdict. Do you find the prisoner guilty of the charges against him, or do you find him innocent?’

Rayden leapt up from where he was sitting. ‘Hang on. What about the evidence in my defence?’ he stormed.

The Judge was silent for a moment.

‘Giarn Rayden,’ said the Judge. ‘Since the list of charges against you is as long as my arm, we have decided that there was no available evidence in your defence. I shall leave the summing-up to your only surviving daughter, Cassandra.’

Cassandra rose from where she was sitting with the Doctor, and then stepped forward.

‘Father. It is clear from the evidence shown against you that you are an evil, scheming psychopath, with no thought or compassion for anyone.’ Cassandra turned to face the jury. ‘Members of the jury, have you reached a verdict?’

The spokesman for the jury nodded.

‘So,’ said Cassandra, ‘do you find him guilty or innocent?’

A deathly silence fell over the courtroom. After what seemed like a long time, the spokesman for the jury said: ‘We find the prisoner guilty on all counts.’

Cassandra sat down as the Judge began to speak: ‘Giarn Rayden. You have been found guilty of all the charges against you. You are to be taken from here and placed on board a prison ship, where you will be transported to your place of execution.’

By Alan Whitten, OUP
PRESIDENTS I HAVE KNOWN

Matthew Peacock

This extremely rare archive photograph shows Kevin Donnelly, President of the Oxford Doctor Who Society 1997-1998. In this ceremony, he is receiving the Presidential Force from his predecessor, the thickly-bearded John Wilson. Notice that Kevin is wearing the purple robes of the president-elect. He is also wearing the ritual bearded Mask of Rassilon, to channel the cosmic powers of the presidency into his facial area. It is part of the Doctor Who Society constitution that incoming presidents have to eat their predecessors.

Just to prove that not all of our presidents have beards, here is a shot of John Wilson's predecessor, Corinne Berg. Somehow she has managed to sneak onto the set of the fifth Doctor story Snakedance.

This very clichéd archive photograph shows Alastair Harrison, whose regnal year is 1998-1999, entertaining the masses with his presentational skills. Pay particular attention to the way crucial jacket, one of the thousands he has collected over the years. Al has a particularly large beard but manages to conceal it effectively underneath a skin-coloured latex mask that needs replacing every four to eight hours.

But who is this?
THE MILLENNIUM NIGHTMARE

Carole Fletcher, the managing director of Computer Systems International, entered the computer room. She was a tallish girl of about 32, with long, curly blonde hair and brown eyes.

‘Well, Brian. How are things this morning?’ she asked.

Brian Stanwick, their chief systems controller, was tall, with brown hair and wore spectacles.

‘Quiet as a morgue, love,’ he replied.

‘Then let’s keep it that way,’ said Carole.

***

Out in the space/time vortex, that strange continuum where space and time are one, sped a small blue box with a light flashing on top. Inside the police box, which in reality was a multi-dimensional space/time craft known as the TARDIS - Time And Relative Dimensions In Space - for the TARDIS was dimensionally transcendental. The Doctor - now in his Tenth incarnation - stood at the controls, a young girl with short, brown hair standing beside him. The Doctor was a small man with short, brown hair and was going bald on top.

‘Doctor,’ said Cassandra. ‘Where are we going?’

The Doctor replied: ‘I thought that after that nasty business with Rayden and the Ice Warriors, that you and I could do with a rest.’

‘Wonderful,’ said Cassandra. ‘Where?’

The Doctor was silent for a moment, as he made rapid calculations.

‘Earth, of course,’ said the Doctor. ‘December 31st, twenty ninety nine.’

‘Wow!’ exclaimed Cassandra, jumping up and down. ‘What a marvellous idea - joining in the celebrations, and seeing in the twenty-second century.’

***

At Oxford University Press, Gavin Mitchell was showing the new receptionist her duties. He was a tall man in his late fifties, with curly grey hair.

‘Now, Ms. McKenzie, your duties are as follows: welcoming visitors to the press and booking out conference rooms.’

‘That looks straightforward,’ said Jody.

‘Although I must point out, said Gavin, ‘that Richard Parker, the office requirements manager, was going to get the post-room, to book the conference rooms. But they didn’t want anything to do with it.’

‘Fine,’ said Jody in her broad Scottish accent. ‘Suits me.’

***

At Computer Systems International, Brian stared intently at the screen. Printed across the screen in big computerised letters was a strange message:

FIND THE LOCUS.

Brian instantly picked up the phone:
‘Carole, I want you down here fast.’

‘What’s all the fuss?’ asked Carole.

‘It’s the computers, all of them,’ said Brian. ‘They’ve gone haywire.’

***

The TARDIS materialised outside the CSI building. The door opened, and Cassandra and the Doctor emerged.


Carole Fletcher ran over to them. ‘Who the devil are you?’ she asked.

The Doctor replied, ‘Well, I’m the Doctor, and this is my young companion, Cassandra Rayden.’

‘Are you familiar with computers?’ asked Carole.

‘Why?’ asked the Doctor.
’Well, first thing this morning, everything was fine.’

’Go on,’ said Cassandra, whose curiosity was beginning to go into overdrive.

’I’ve just had a call from our systems controller. He informs me that the computers are giving out the oddest message.’

The Doctor smiled: ’You’re in luck. As it happens, Cassandra is a genius when it comes to computers. Lead the way.’

***

They rushed inside the computer room. Cassandra went over to a computer terminal and gazed at the message onscreen:

FIND THE LOCOUS.
THE LOCOUS MUST BE FOUND.

Carole turned to the Doctor: ’What can it mean?’

The Doctor scratched his chin thoughtfully: ’The Locous. Now, where have I heard that before?’

’It doesn’t make sense,’ said Brian. ’What the hell is the Locous?’

Cassandra sat up straight, then turned to face the Doctor: ’Doctor, it could have something to do with the Intelligence.’

The Doctor was silent for a moment. ’You could be right.’

Carole stared at the Doctor. ’Who, or what, is the Intelligence?’

’It’s an alien entity, and is capable of taking over computers. And it uses robot Yetis as its servants.’

’You’re joking, aren’t you?’ said Brian.

’I only wish I was,’ said the Doctor. ’It’s an Intelligence of pure evil, and it has immense powers to take over this entire planet.’

***

All around Oxford, the traffic was at a standstill. Shirley Winters glanced at her watch. It was four minutes past ten in the morning.

’Come on, come on,’ said Shirley to herself. ’I’ve got to be at a meeting in half an hour.’

by Alan Whitten, OUP
Too much too soon?

Babylon 5 Season Four

The fourth season of Babylon 5 was, by now famously, substantially condensed as a result of uncertainty over whether the show would be renewed for a fifth (and probably final) year. The intention was to bring the arc-story of the series to a worthy conclusion in case it could not be completed in the planned five years. The decision on a renewal was pushed later and later into the year, with the result that as filming on the final episode of that season was concluded, there was still no guarantee of a further season (although funding was eventually found from TNT, a cable company). This forced compression has been used to excuse several significant flaws in the fourth season as it stands, the generosity of which view might not be entirely valid.

In the first place, it should be noted that the writer/executive producer of Babylon 5, J. Michael Straczynski, has gone on record confirming that what stands as episode seventeen of the season, The Face of the Enemy, was originally supposed to be the cliff-hanger. As such there must have been stories ready for a fifth year (even if expended) than the five seen at the end of the fourth. The alternative point of view, however, is that the fourth season must be very little changed from the version in JMS's "bible". The rather clumsy device in the first few episodes of giving a "Captain's log" detailing the number of days since the previous season's cliffhanger cannot be blamed on the compression of the story. Nor can the appalling structural gaffe of the Minbari civil war.

This conflict spreads, inter alia, over episodes nine to thirteen. Unlike almost any other such dispute in the series, we see it almost exclusively from one point of view, that of Delenn. This is not entirely fair: Rumors, Bargains and Lies presents the perspective of the crew of Delenn's ship. These people, however, are not very convincing, not least because of their crushing stupidity. The Narn-Centauri war presented the points of view of Londo, G'Kar and Vir, not to mention Lord Refa and the many other recurring and incidental characters. Furthermore, it changed the political map of the galaxy. The Minbari war had no such consequences, seeming only to give a bizarre form of Proportional Representation to the Grey Council, in keeping with the motif of ambassadors to Babylon 5 being revolutionaries on their home worlds. Aside from continuing this pattern, the only purpose of the war, in terms of the arc, appears to have been to leave a reasonable time between Garibaldi's resignation and his betrayal of Sheridan.

What makes this all the more galling is the realisation in episodes fifteen to seventeen that JMS can still operate on a grand scale, with the stunning shift from Sheridan's gung-ho space opera in No Surrender, No Retreat, to Garibaldi's covert tactics involving Edgars in the following episodes. The two schemes have the same end; liberating Earth from President Clark. They are, however, radically different, and indeed opposed.

Arguably, the somehow too neat conclusion to the season, in which the civilisations of the galaxy form a new alliance (cue the new Star Wars films), was indeed forced by the compression of the story. The final episode opened things up for new betrayals in the fifth year. We can only hope for a return of the epic scope and multiple angles on each dispute seen in seasons two and three.
BURSTING THE BUBBLE

It is now more than ten years since Star Trek: The Next Generation launched onto American television. As we all know by now, after a mediocre two years or so, the show suddenly became rather good, going on to make seven series and a grand total of 178 episodes, and two movies to date. Even William Shatner has jumped onto the wagon-train to solvency, with not only an appearance in Generations but also a series of “Kirk meets Picard” novels written entirely by his own hand. Honest.

The fact that anyone would publish such items is proof enough that Trek, and TNG in particular, is worth money. Indeed, it almost single-handedly started the phenomenal range of S-F television programmes and films that have pervaded the nineties. You don’t mess with the number one syndicated show on American television. As a direct result of the success of a bald Yorkshireman and a Spurs supporter, shows have been financed that might otherwise never have got off the ground, such as 3rd Rock from the Sun and even The X-Files. There have been, of course, a fair number of casualties fallen by the wayside, such as Dark Skies and even a little-known pilot by the name of Doctor Who. Nevertheless, the Trek and X franchises roll on, each of them with both television programmes and cinema films simultaneously on the boil. The S-F fan’s pound (or dollar) has not been so hungrily sought since the Star Wars clones of the late seventies flooded the market.

Obviously, though, nobody (particularly not studio executives, who are strangely canny with their cash) is going to spend millions on a production targeted exclusively at fans. Popular appeal is required, hence a science-fiction movie is still seen as a dead-end project (hence the alleged reason for Stanley Kubrick shooting Eyes Wide Shut when he could be using the time to build a 1:1 matchstick model of St. Paul’s is to raise money for AI, which Paramount were not otherwise sanguine about financing). As a result, we are earnestly told that TNG is a drama series which happens to be set aboard a spaceship in the same way that ER is a drama series set in a hospital. Which would be fine if it weren’t for the fact that many of the ER stories do rather rely on that hospital thing, and Star Trek has always been partial to phasers. Of course, what is meant is that there’s still a cuddly, soap opera feel about the whole thing. We don’t need to bend our brains around complex Asimov-esque notions of upheaval changing entire civilizations. We know very well that Picard will sort everything out in the end, Xena will use her huge equipment on anyone who doesn’t fall into line and Dick will take his pratfalls like a man. And we can all coo at Mulder and Scully and imagine what it would be like if they set up home together.

Essentially, after ten years of this sort of thing it’s all starting to seem a little stale on the basis that it’s too safe. Ah, but, you say, they’re spicing it up. Voyager’s meeting the Borg. But this is precisely the problem. The point of the Borg is that they are the ultimate enemy. Any defense against them is useless because they’ve already thought of it. Ideally, we would only ever have seen them once, since in that first appearance the only way the Enterprise could escape was by the intervention of Q. In return appearances they’ve had to be defeated by other means. Hence they have to have weaknesses. Hence they are no longer the ultimate enemy. QED.
Indeed, the latest Voyager encounter with the Borg introduces a race even more deadly. Yes, it’s the Vorlons (or that’s what the ships look like, anyway)! There is, of course, a limit to how far this can go. It’s a little unimaginative to keep hammering away at galaxy-threatening situations. As Paul Cornell said when he visited Docsoc, it takes a writer of talent to recognize that small, well-told stories can be just as satisfying as grandstanding. Of course, it is not the case that every episode of Star Trek introduces an all powerful villain any more than that The X-Files features conspiracies every week. It is a little irritating, though, to find that the Trek producers seem to think that the way to keep their franchise alive is to have these huge (and ultimately unbelievable) episodes when some of their best work is on a much smaller scale, for instance the comedy of DS9: Our Man Bashir or the sheer S-F brilliance of TNG: The Inner Light. It must also be said that effects-based episodes can be extremely satisfying, as the return of the Borg in The Best of Both Worlds proved. However, dramatic tension is always required in a long-running show, and a war is a very efficient means of providing this. The decline of Babylon 5 since the conclusion of the Shadow War does make one regret its absence. Still, there’s another war brewing on Deep Space Nine, so that’s something to look forward to.

B5 has made “arc” the buzz-word of nineties S-F television, which is fine as far as it goes. The danger is, of course, that arc becomes soap, and an excuse for characters to gaze at one another, dewy-eyed, week after week. When an arc is done well, it can be wonderful, as the first series of The X-Files and the second and third of Babylon 5 proved. When done badly, however, it merely has the feel of scenes from one episode having been dropped into another (as in the Tom Paris arc in Voyager’s second series).

What is to be hoped for, essentially, is originality. The attitude that since The X-Files is successful Millenium should be just like it is, frankly, detestable. Of course, these programmes are made with an emphasis on commercial viability, but in a series of about 25 episodes, it might be nice to see some more adventurous stories. A reliance on cosy romances and monster episodes will soon begin to grate. One of the most encouraging pieces of recent news from the Cornell grapevine was that Russell T Davies’s New Adventure, Damaged Goods, is to be made into a film for Granada television, albeit without the Doctor. Books, now as ever, are the source of the most original ideas in all genres, not only S-F, for the obvious reason that they are only bound by the imagination, not considerations of what can be realized on screen. Nevertheless, such imagination must be harnessed to television and film if we are to see productions of originality, quality and excellence, such as the Quatermass stories, and not merely computer enhanced rehashes of The War of the Worlds.

Alastair Harrison
THE COMMITTEE WELCOMES YOUR OPINIONS!

No, seriously we do. If there's anything in the magazine which you love or loathe, come and talk to us about it. Or write to the mailing list (drwho@maillist.ox.ac.uk) and see what happens!

From Trinity Term 1998, your committee (and remember, it is your committee) will be:

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