

ISSUE 8 AUGUST 2025

ENGAGE!

THE STAR TREK FAMILY MAGAZINE



REMEMBERING THE SUMMER
PICARD DIED

35th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE

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ENGAGE!

ISSUE 8 — AUGUST 2025

Editor's Log

Exploring the Final Frontier as Fans



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Consulting Editor

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Submissions Manager

Lisa Sickle

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Andrea Avrett
Melissa A. Bartell
Brian Donahue
Felicia Watkins Kimble
Marina Kravchuk
David G. LoConto
Janera Tiell Manno
Michael Martin
Carly McDonald
Stephen Mirkin
Martin Randall
Donna Runyon
Carrie Schwent
Stephanie L. Smith

Research

Reesa Lawton

I remember all too well the summer of 1990. I had just graduated 10th grade with an amazing report card... I was looking forward to this summer break with great anticipation. I had just gotten my driving learner's permit, my family had planned a great vacation, I had a girlfriend I was excited about, and my best friend had gotten me hooked on *The Next Generation*. Life was good, and the summer was about to be lit.

Then the Borg happened. Having been introduced to the crew of the Enterprise-D through a selfish and childish act by the all-powerful being Q, the Borg came looking for trouble in Sector 001. As Guinan warned, they were relentless in their quest. They were an unstoppable force, seeking out the one person who gotten away from their mindless quest for perfection—Captain Jean-Luc Picard.

What a gut punch it was to see Picard captured by the Borg. Still, you knew the crew of the Enterprise would rescue him. Who had any doubts that Data, Shelby, Worf and LaForge would be successful in retrieving Picard from the clutches of the Borg? Then came the fateful moment—the away team seeing Picard down the corridor, the captain slowly turning to face them, and the realization that Picard was now one of *them*! We all felt robbed, destroyed by the moment — so eloquently stated with anguish by Worf when he returns to the Enterprise: “*He IS a Borg!*”

The nail that sealed the coffin on my summer of '95 was Riker uttering those fateful words, “Mr. Worf, FIRE!” Then fade to black with the words “To be Continued...” We had to wait MONTHS to find out what happened. We didn't just lose a captain, we lost a friend, a father figure, and a mentor. It's been 35 years since that episode aired, but no one who lived through it will ever forget the summer Picard died!

— Mark Sickle
Founder & Host
Star Trek Family

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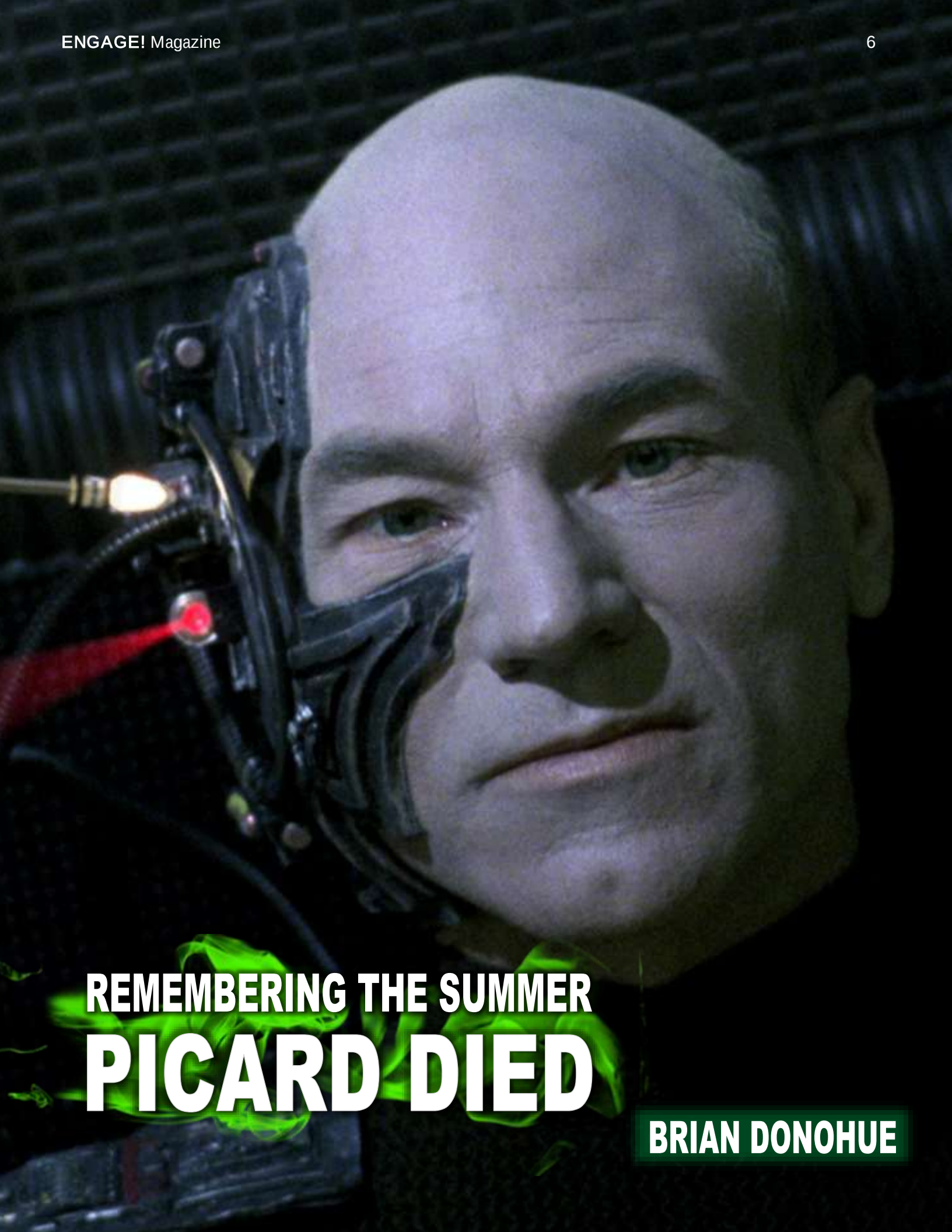
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REMEMBERING THE SUMMER
PICARD DIED

BRIAN DONOHUE

I like to say, inaccurately, that I started life out as a Trekkie. It seems that way to me sometimes, but it really started to happen in 1987 when the Enterprise-D flew across the screen of my boxy television set for the first time. *The Next Generation* instantly captured my attention and my heart. Sure, the first two seasons were not that impressive, especially looking back as an adult now, but it was building to something. It was building, episode-by-episode, a family and a show that would go on to capture the hearts of fans young and old for more than thirty years.

It all started to come together in that third season. The writers, producers, and actors all began to find a solid foundation upon which to expand the *Star Trek* universe and, finally, they had a voice of their own, unique and different from the original show.

There were few people comparing it to the original series with any amount of seriousness or validity. It was now alive and fully pushed from the 1960s nest that was its parent show. *TNG* and the new crew of the Enterprise had captured the hearts of new and old fans. It was also blazing a trail for more shows that would follow.

Fast forward to the final episode of the third season, "The Best of Both Worlds." We had



been introduced to the Borg by Q, and hints were given that they were on their way. This hive collective of beings stolen from countless worlds were ruthless, unwavering, seemingly invincible, and terrifying.

Most bad guys throughout *Trek's* history could be overcome, or at the very least, avoided. The Borg offered a new kind of nemesis: one that might be unbeatable. When they showed up in this finale, it was with a vengeance, and they came sweeping in with their massive cube-shaped ship like a tidal wave.

I remember watching this episode while visiting my grandparents in Indianapolis, Indiana. The room I was in was small but reminded me of an old-fashioned study or library. It was filled with books and photos along one wall, the television was on another wall with the sofa and side table opposite. The fourth wall featuring a lazy boy style chair and foot stool, was to my left. I sat comfortably, if not still, sipping a can of Coca-Cola

throughout the entire episode on the plaid tan couch only about ten feet across from the television.

From the opening scene I was impressed and on the edge of my seat. After the opening titles and the first set of commercials ran, I was glued to the edge of my seat! There was no way they could beat this adversary. No way at all!

I hated Shelby for thinking she could do things better than Riker. Then, I hated Riker for being so afraid to take the big chair. Maybe Shelby was going to become the new Number One and Riker would have his own ship? I both loved and hated this possibility. It seemed as if my favorite show was about to get shaken up by some major plot twists!

The music was different for this episode, too. Even as a teenager I recognized that the soundtrack was different, bigger sounding, and more ominous in tones as it musically described the Borg and their hive mentality. Ron Jones's score was masterful.



This was a special episode right from the start! Even the cinematography was beautiful, bigger looking, and rich with depth. I somehow felt that I was watching something unique and different for television at the time.

Then, it happened. The Borg infiltrated the Enterprise's shields and captured Captain Picard! In an instant, he was gone! I jumped off that small couch and fell to my knees as if I was watching a sporting event and the other

team just intercepted the pass from my favorite quarterback!

This wasn't happening! This couldn't happen? Could it? They would surely rescue him after the next commercial break, right? Then we see him being transformed. A single tear fell down his face as his humanity was ripped away from him for the good of the many in the form of the Borg Collective.

The Guinan scene with Riker. Oh, my goodness. A scene

usually experienced between Picard and Guinan, now with Riker seeking counsel and advice. What a beautiful and gut-wrenching twist! It's one of my favorites in the episode because it's so true to real life. Sometimes we need to hear the truth we already know but are struggling to accept from a trusted friend or colleague. We can't move on until we wrap our mind around the reality of a hard or tragic situation. Once we do, we can make better decisions.

Riker needed this moment with Guinan just like we all have at some point in our own lives. This brilliant scene mirrored reality in a way that helped us, as fans, come to terms with the fact that the Picard we loved and respected was dead. It was as much for us as it was for Riker.

It also really helped lead us into the climactic scene that forever lives rent-free in the minds of those who saw it as it aired originally.

Then an iconic moment in television and *Trek* history happened as I watched Picard die — and Locutus walk into view — as Riker and the courageous crew of the Enterprise looked on in shock. Their rescue attempt was thwarted and they had run out of options. The Borg were threatening Earth and the Enterprise was its last hope for salvation.

The weapon Shelby had been working on was ready, and after Locutus declared the only option is unconditional surrender, the music swelled and Riker said the words that once again dropped me to my knees, "Mr. Worf, fire!"

The screen goes dark and





those damnable words appeared: *To be continued.*

I was in shock! I stared at the screen, as if there was more to the episode. But the end credits rolled and for the first time in a long while, I watched them all and listened to Jerry Goldsmith's fanfare in disbelief.

My head was now on the ground between my hands as if I was praying. I wasn't, but I was shouting, "No! No! No!" My lamenting turned to frustration as I began to realize that I would have to wait a considerable amount of time before finding out what happened next. I beat the carpet with my fists and then leaned back with my arms spread wide as I looked up at the ceiling. Again, I wasn't praying, but I might have yelled out, "Why?"

That was the summer Picard died. It was the television event and cliffhanger of my generation. For reference, I'm currently 46 years old. This episode was,

without a doubt, one of the finest hours of television that entire year. I mean, in all of television. It was that good and, in my opinion, still remains one of the top ten cliffhangers in television history.

I will never forget the feeling I had as this was the first time I ever responded to an hour of television with such an emotional reaction. It was also when I knew that I would forever be a Trekkie. I

was hooked and I was now loyal to what I believed was the best show on television. I knew I was a Trekkie before this, but this great moment in Trek history solidified it.

All summer long I waited in wonderment and impatience to learn if the shot worked, if the Borg ship and the now dead Picard would be destroyed. How could they possibly bring him back





from this? Would he return as a nemesis again? Were they writing Patrick Stewart off the show? So many questions circled and tormented my mind that summer in 1990. The tension was real!

It was probably one of the longest summers of my young life, but also one of great anticipation for the exciting conclusion. Season four of *TNG* was a masterpiece of science fiction, solidifying the show as the new king of the genre on television.

This episode continues to be rated by most fans and critics as one of the top 10 Trek episodes of all time. It's easy to understand why. When it first aired, it was an event unlike any other, and it continues to excite new and old fans alike.

I love showing this episode

to people who don't know much about *Star Trek*. One hundred percent of the time, they insist on watching the continuation and they all remark at how good the story is. Even if they are not birthed into fandom, they usually say, "Now I get it!"

This episode was so good that it spawned a hit feature film for *TNG* and, arguably, one of the best in the franchise in *Star Trek: First Contact*.

How does this episode affect me today? I still get excited for the great scenes, and to see Picard walk into view as Locutus. I love watching Jonathan Frakes, as Commander William T. Riker, give the command to fire as only Frakes can do. I still love the music, too.

This episode is a master-

piece in the *Trek* catalog of episodes and storytelling. It continues to set the bar high for what Trek can be when at its best.

This Trekkie will forever remember the summer Picard died as a launching pad into a fandom that continues to capture my imagination.



BRIAN DONAHUE: Brian is a pastor, songwriter, aspiring author and avid podcaster hosting three different podcasts, including The BIG Sci-Fi Podcast. He lives in Ohio with his wife, two kids and Data the golden-doodle.

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LILY'S FIRST CONTACT

FELICIA WATKINS KIMBLE

Watching *Star Trek: First Contact* is satisfying. The storyline is classic *TNG* and gives us a heart-warming, heroes-save-the-day ending. When mentioning *Star Trek: First Contact* it's easy to think of just Picard or Data or the Borg Queen. I'm no exception. However, when I think of *First Contact*, I also think of Lily Sloane, Zephram Cochrane's collaborator to create the Phoenix, the first warp-capable ship.

Why Lily? First, Alfre Woodard plays her powerfully and leaves an unforgettable performance. Second, Lily had the most impactful first contact. Cochrane's first alien exposure was the nice, peaceful Vulcans. In fact, he never saw the Borg or even Worf. However, Lily was transported to the Enterprise, and if that shock wasn't enough, she came across the Borg, a truly terrifying species no matter which century. Lastly, but just as important, Lily's first contact with 24th century humanity is also interacting with Picard, the survivor of a Borg assimilation.

Star Trek: First Contact begins with Picard's Borg assimilation plaguing him through disembodied voices and Borg-like dreams. It is an ever-present reminder of a time when Picard's body and mind were not his own. How disturbing for Picard to suddenly hear his abuser in his mind, which is an autonomous space. The jump scare of the Borg piece exploding out of his cheek gives just a sense of the continuing nightmare this man has gone through.

After Picard was assimilated by the Borg, he may not have known how to articulate what



happened. Troi picked up the pieces and tried to restore Picard back to being an individual. She was successful in that he was able to continue to captain the Enterprise. However, Picard is not an open or effusive man. Who knows how much he shared?

In the episode "Family" Picard sobbed as he told his brother he couldn't stop the Borg even if he wanted to. A man we've observed for three seasons, fully in control of his feelings, lost it in a shoving mud match with his brother. We witness Picard's helplessness. But that was the *only*

time we ever saw Picard break down about his time as Locutus.

Picard tried to gain normalcy. However, the truth was he *was* shattered. Yet, Picard grew up in the safety of a Federation world; nothing he ever experienced prepared him for what happened with the Borg. His entire worldview had to be glued back together. Some pieces of him, though, were left behind. Picard's tolerance shown to other worlds and species would drop sharply whenever the Borg were involved.

In *Star Trek: First Contact* Picard sees his ship, which he





views as *his home*, slowly becoming a Borg ship, and his crew slowly turning into Borg. I don't think Picard ever thought he would see his home destroyed by his abductors. It's the place he loves and it was ripped and shredded apart, deck by deck.

Not realizing the bigger stakes at play, Lily was also introduced to humanity's immediate crisis: the Borg actively assimilating ship and crew with the final goal to assimilate Earth. Meanwhile, Picard and those unassimilated are defending themselves as well as the future of humanity.

Nevertheless, Lily is lucky her guide is none other than first contact expert Captain Jean-Luc Picard. Even while walking around his quickly turning Borgified ship, he explained to Lily the human ideals in the 24th century. Essentially, acquisition isn't the goal; rather, it is to better themselves and the rest of humanity.

Though Lily quickly adapted to the situation, she still wrestled with what she knew versus the noble ideals of humanity and the Federation. Lily was witnessing the active threat of the Borg, and how their actions are like war, which Lily was very familiar with. However, in Picard's succinct overview, there's the underlying truth that individual autonomy, freedom, and respect for life guide humanity in the future. In this crisis, which will win? Lily saw the Borg destabilize everything around her. Lily saw what "resistance is futile" looked like.

However, it isn't until later that Lily found the emotional residuals of what happens when you resist.

Picard bluntly says that no one else understands the Borg as his sole justification for the suicide mission to continue to fight the Borg on the Enterprise. Lily, after

asking for context, can just as succinctly summarize, "They hurt you, so you hurt them." Picard couldn't handle such an observation because it would mean that he succumbed to revenge. Even in his anger, Picard wouldn't allow himself to even consider that.

Before his abduction, he was the poster child for Starfleet and Federation principles. He valued autonomy, tolerance, and freedom and spread this throughout the galaxy and to his crew. The Borg said all of this was irrelevant and took away his freedom and his individuality by making him a drone and their mouthpiece.

However, Lily's observation was correct. Lily's experience after the war led her to make astute observations about Picard. She doesn't know all of what the Borg does to a person, but she recognized Picard's pain. She also saw Picard's hypocrisy of his cher-



ished human ideals.

The scene in the observation deck is the chrysalis of change for Picard as Lily asked him the questions no one was willing to ask. It also shows the depth of Picard's pain and just-under-the-surface rage.

Lily accused Picard of enjoying killing the Borg, which was even worse since it was a Borgified crewmember. Lily continued to have Picard face his compromised principles and asked him where his evolved sensibilities as a human were. Lily had a point, but by not fully knowing his experience as a Borg and afterwards, her challenge forced his rage to the surface.

Lily heard Picard's whispered fury, "Not again! The line must be drawn here! This far, no further! And I will make them pay for what they have done!" He's not going to have the Borg take away his home, his crew, or himself. He will make his final stand, no matter what.

Picard's "no matter what" was unreasonable. Lily must reason with someone who can't see

how his own hate will destroy everything around him. It must be Lily as his voice of reason. She is an example of where humanity used to be and helps bring Picard back to the 24th century.

Lily's example of Captain Ahab was apt and was able to snap Picard out of it. His love of literature and literary interpretation paused his hunt. Through the lifetime of bettering himself, he was the embodiment of 24th century humanity: look at yourself in the mirror and if it's not bettering you or humanity, take several steps back and ask yourself why.

When Lily said she never read the book *Moby-Dick*, Picard quickly shifted into his mentorship role explaining the plot. Lily seized on this to make her final point: Ahab didn't know when to quit.

Here Picard finally surveys the consequences of his rage. The conference table with different tools for the next assault on the Borg. The destroyed display case of the different models of the Enterprise, wrecked ships in a sea of shattered glass next to his assault rifle. Lily's earlier comment, "You

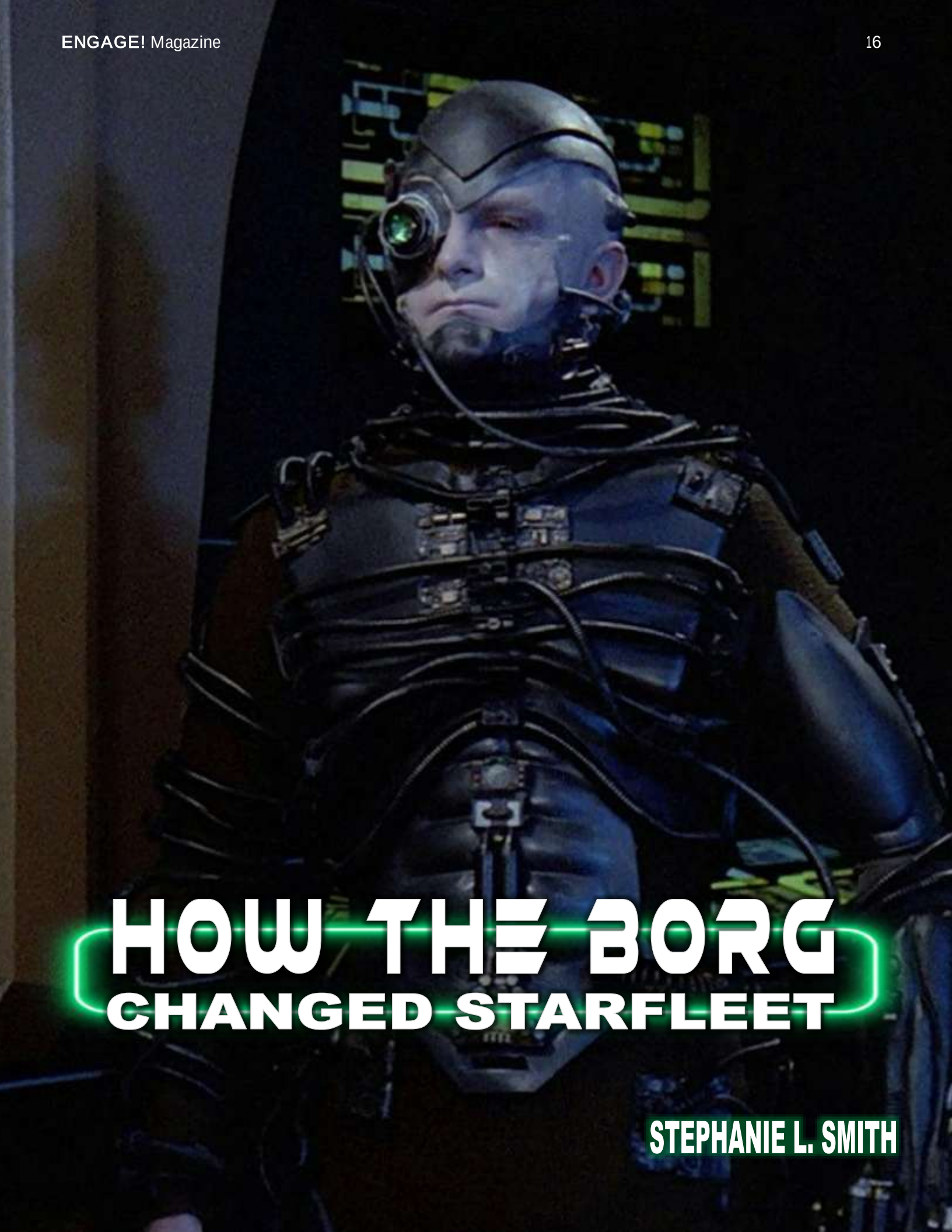
broke your little ships" all comes to a head. The Borg did hurt him and the Federation, and the encounters decimated the fleet. All he could see was the brokenness.

Lily saw Picard process this. Then we saw him change his plans from fighting the Borg to surrendering the ship while still saving humanity. I can't help but think Lily was gratified that the ideals Picard told her were the truth. He listened to her and his rage was gone. This was probably the first time Lily saw someone process a situation so nuanced and so painful, yet able to change their mind without further violence. I also think she felt she had the same potential.

By the time Lily sees the Vulcans for the first time, she's no longer shocked. After seeing the Borg, nothing should faze her. But because she encountered other aliens, she was the steady and encouraging hand Zephram Cochrane needed to make the first step for Human-Vulcan contact. Lily knew by this point humanity was on the brink of permanent change. A time where the greater good is the goal. Her first contact guide overcoming his pain and rage was a guiding light for her that anyone can change, but also better themselves on behalf of the greater whole.



FELICIA WATKINS KIMBLE: Felicia Kimble is a wife and mom of three, and works for an environmental nonprofit in her Ready Room at home. An avid Trek fan, she's a crew member of the USS Monocacy, part of *Star Trek: The Fleet*.



HOW THE BORG CHANGED STARFLEET

STEPHANIE L. SMITH

Starfleet has long been the exploration, scientific, and security arm of the Federation since day one of *Star Trek: The Original Series*. In *TOS*, the original Enterprise crew encountered Gorn, Klingons, Organians, Romulans and other godlike species. However, these adversaries were always able to be handled with diplomacy or a show of strength. In *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, despite meeting an omnipotent Q off the bat, it appeared that the crew of the Enterprise-D would follow suit. However, in the middle of the second season of *TNG*, this all changed in the blink of an eye (or in the snap of a Q.) This change was the introduction of the Borg, which changed not only our beloved crew, but all of Starfleet. We will cover how this affected Starfleet from the Enterprise-D's first interaction with the Borg to Enterprise-E's following them back in time to save history.

In the episode "Q Who," the omnipotent Q asks Captain Picard to join his crew on the Enterprise-D. Q tells Picard that they need him because they are unprepared for what lies ahead of them. Picard denies Q's request, stating that Starfleet is ready to confront the unknown. Guinan, who has been revealed to be Q's adversary, adds salt to the wound by telling Q that the humans have a great advantage because they are adaptable to new situations. Q's response is to toss the Enterprise-D 7,000 light years in the future and then disappear. He tells them this is a preview of things to come. Instead of immediately heading back to Federation space as Guinan strongly recom-



mends, the captain chooses to explore the nearby system.

While the Enterprise is surveying an M-Class planet in the system, they discover the planet has had a civilization ripped away from its surface, much as the mysterious disasters found at the Neutral Zone outposts earlier. When a foreboding cube-shaped ship shows up, Guinan advises that this is the Borg, a species that nearly wiped out her people a hundred years ago. The Borg waste no time in infiltrating Main Engineering by transporting directly through the shields. Q pops in and advises Captain Picard that the Borg are only interested in technology, not in lifeforms and suggests preventing them from interacting with the Enterprise operations. Worf stops the first Borg with deadly force, but the second one has a personal shield and beams back to the Borg cube while the dead Borg disappears.

What happens next is the first change. Despite Q and Guinan's warnings, Captain Picard and

the senior staff chose to address the Borg threat as they would any other sentient race in a similar situation. This choice causes the loss of a section of the ship and 18 crewmembers. They then engage the Borg and cause damage. Instead of heading for home and leaving well enough alone, the captain sends over a small away team. During that time, the Borg fixed their damage. When the Enterprise-D warps away, the Borg pursues and catches up, nearly annihilating the ship and crew. Captain Picard recognizes that they are outmatched and implores Q to remove them from danger and put them back where they started.

Q recognizes the maturity shown in asking for help, as opposed to sacrificing the ship and crew for pride, and snaps them back to their original heading. Q refuses to apologize, stating that humanity must accept facing dangers never encountered as a cost of exploring the galaxy further. He leaves the ship then and



Captain Picard orders them to set course for the nearest starbase. Guinan tells Picard the Borg will be coming for the Federation next. When Captain Picard debriefs at Starbase 83, Starfleet learns they have an adversary coming for them like none they have seen before.

We will not see for ourselves how Starfleet has been affected until the episode "The Best of Both Worlds, Part 1." We find out that even though Starfleet has taken the Borg threat seriously, they are completely unprepared for a Borg invasion. The Enterprise-D responds to a distress call from one of the outermost Federation colonies, only to find that the entire colony has been destroyed. Admiral Hansen and Commander Shelby meet up with the Enterprise-D to address this attack, as it appears to be a Borg incursion. They bring what countermeasures and de-

fenses that have been developed with them. Commander Shelby is assigned to the Enterprise-D, where she ends up with a field promotion to first officer after the Borg kidnap Captain Picard.

With this series of events, Starfleet is now forever changed. Captain Picard has been assimilated and renamed Locutus. The Borg heads to Sector 001: Earth with Locutus to strike at the heart of the Federation. The Enterprise-D valiantly pulls out all their stops

to prevent this but finds out the hard way that the Borg has all of Picard's memories and abilities after the Borg block the deflector dish attack. This attack leaves the Enterprise-D temporarily unable to fight. Starfleet now knows the Borg can turn their own people against them.

The Enterprise-D's protracted struggle with the Borg bought Starfleet valuable time but would lead to the next way the Borg changed Starfleet. The Battle





of Wolf-359 left emotional and physical scars across Starfleet due to the Borg's devastating destruction of the over 40 starships and the thousands of people inhabiting the starships. The survivors would be forever haunted and the fleet severely diminished in the aftermath.

Starfleet found out that assimilated crew can be recovered as Captain Picard was removed from the Borg cube and assisted the Enterprise crew with addressing the Borg crew by putting them to sleep. The captain is left with permanent emotional trauma due to this whole Borg engagement.

Starfleet is left with permanent scars as they rebuild the fleet.

Starfleet learned that there are some enemies you cannot reason with and those enemies must be met with decisive force to protect the civilian population. We will find out later what that looks like.

So far, most of the Borg effect on Starfleet has been death, destruction, and learning. The Enterprise-E's crew are to find out a little more of how Starfleet handles the Borg threat in the movie *Star Trek: First Contact*. We will also see some of the scars left on Captain Picard.

The movie opens six years from the time Captain Picard was captured and assimilated into Locutus. The Borg are back for a second attempt to overtake the Federation. However, the Enterprise-E has been ordered to stay away from the fracas. The reasoning behind this order — Starfleet





considers Captain Picard an unstable element for a critical situation involving the Borg.

However, upon finding out that the fight is shifting in favor of the Borg, Captain Picard and crew disobey orders and head to Earth at maximum warp. They rescue Worf from a badly damaged Defiant. Captain Picard can use his history with the Borg and direct the fleet where to attack the Borg cube. The cube is successfully destroyed, but not without launching a spherical object into Earth's orbit and generating a vortex that it disappears into.

The crew is shocked to see that immediately after the sphere disappears that Earth has transitioned into a fully assimilated Borg planet. Captain Picard orders them to enter the vortex and follow that sphere. When they do, they find the sphere firing on Zephram Cochrane's installation, just days before first contact — the day when Cochrane flies his warp-capable ship into space, attracting the attention of a Vulcan scout ship who then makes first contact with Earth.

The Enterprise successfully

destroys the Borg sphere and Captain Picard leads an away team to Earth to verify the status of Cochrane's mission. It is while the away team is down on the planet that the Borg start assimilating Engineering, as there were some Borg who escaped destruction of the sphere by beaming aboard. The Borg start assimilating the ship at an appalling rate, causing Captain Picard to return and address the problem.

It is during this time that the internal scars the Borg left on Jean-Luc begin show up. He euthanizes a crew member undergoing assimilation during a retreat. A little later, he sets an ambush on the holodeck for the Borg pursuing him. The brutality that he displays in machine gunning down the Borg almost makes you sympathize with them. Almost. However, when he brutalizes one of the dead Borg to recover a data chip, to our shock he was an ensign aboard the Enterprise prior to assimilation and death.

When we see Captain Picard's aggressive pursuit of the Borg and refusal to abandon the ship, it is shocking and heart-

breaking. Captain Picard has always shown us the best of Starfleet, but during this engagement with the Borg, we see the worst of Starfleet. By showing this character change in the captain, it shows us how Starfleet is being changed from keeping the peace to forcing the peace. It doesn't mean the Borg are right in what they are doing across the galaxy, it just means that in fighting them it brings out aggression in Starfleet officers. To quote a character from a *Star Trek* novel, "...there's nothing more dangerous than a decent man convinced he's doing the right thing." (*Star Trek: The Great Starship Race*, pg. 220, Diane Carey)

Captain Picard's response to the Borg incursion on his ship reflects Starfleet's reaction to the Borg incursion. Not only did the Borg leave physical and emotional reminders of their presence, but the Borg also left ethical and philosophical dilemmas for the Federation which would last for a long time.



STEPHANIE L. SMITH:

Stephanie hails from the Kansas City metro area with her sibling Jordan and 2 cats. Her day job is working from home as a staff accountant.

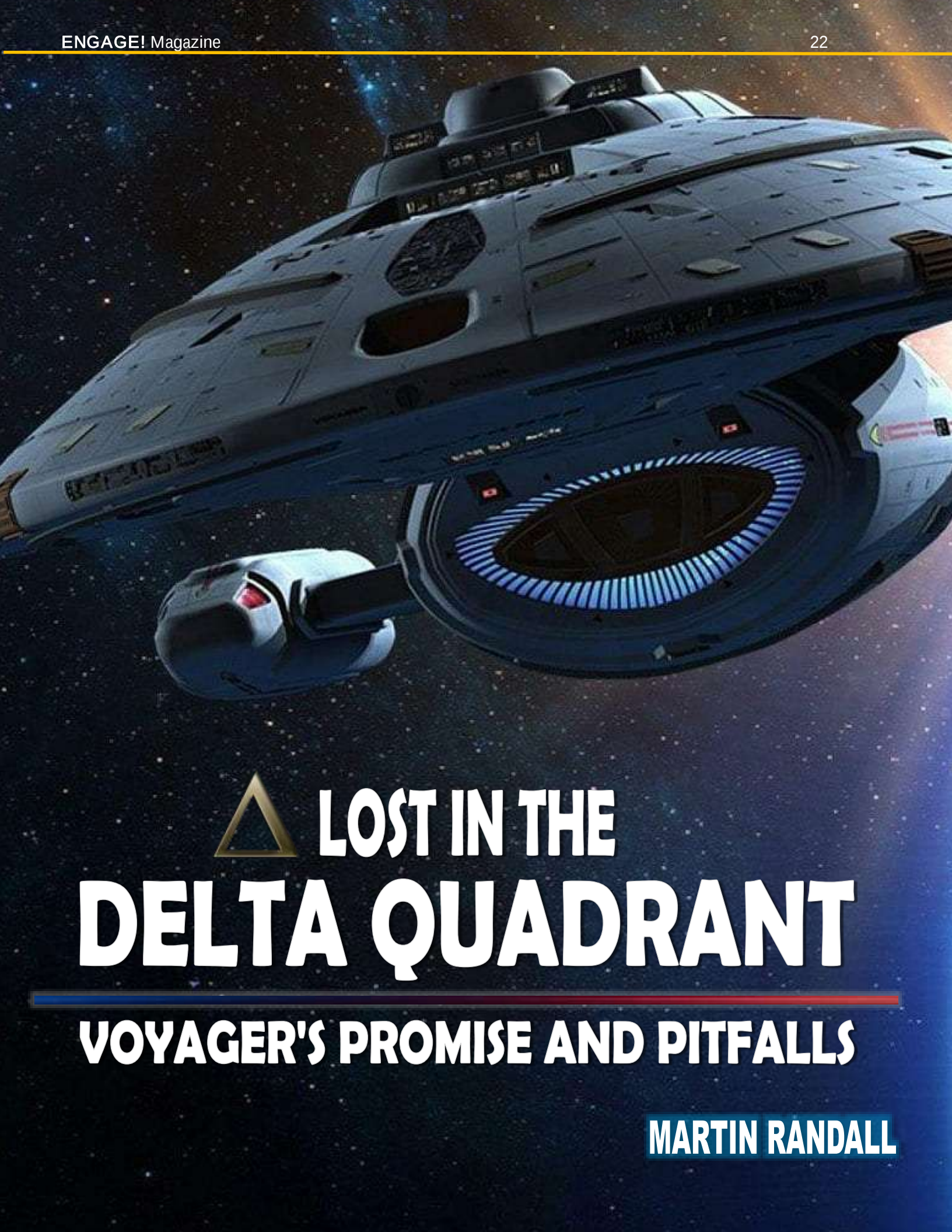
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LOST IN THE DELTA QUADRANT

VOYAGER'S PROMISE AND PITFALLS

MARTIN RANDALL

Star Trek: Voyager blasted off in 1995 with a thrilling premise that set it apart from its predecessors: a Starfleet ship hurled to the unexplored Delta Quadrant, 70,000 light years from home, and a crew made up of both Starfleet officers and Maquis rebels. On paper, it sounded like a recipe for high-stakes adventure – limited resources, no backup from Starfleet, and two clashing crews forced to cooperate. *Voyager* was poised to be a gritty survival saga that pushed *Star Trek* into uncharted territory. The question is: how well did the series use this “lost in space” premise over its seven-year journey? The answer, as any devoted Trekkie will tell you, is a mixed bag of narrative strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities both seized and squandered.

From the outset, *Voyager*’s creators seemed to recognize the rich storytelling potential of the premise. By stranding the USS *Voyager* on the far side of the galaxy, the show could introduce brand-new aliens, phenomena, and worlds untouched by previous *Star Trek* lore. Captain Kathryn Janeway’s mission wasn’t just another diplomatic or exploratory cruise; it was a desperate trek home through unknown space. This set-up promised continual tension: would the crew hold together under strain? How would they handle being cut off from the Federation’s support and rules? Early episodes did introduce these questions. The pilot, “Caretaker,” dramatically flings *Voyager* to the Delta Quadrant and immediately forces Janeway to merge her crew with the Maquis – former enemies



now stranded together. The stage was set for a show that could have been *Star Trek* meets “Gilligan’s Island” (in a good way), with constant hurdles and creative problem-solving needed to inch closer to Earth.

In some ways, *Voyager* delivered on this promise. Throughout the series, the ship encounters a parade of new alien species unique to the Delta Quadrant, from the organ-harvesting Vidiians to the nomadic Hirogen hunters, and even the cybernetic might of the Borg (appearing far from their usual territory). The sense of being far from the Federation allows for fresh world-building. We see societies and dangers that the crew must figure out on their own, without Starfleet Command’s guidance. Now and then, the show reminds us of the core predicament – for instance, Janeway’s crew occasionally struggles with scarce resources like in the episode “The Cloud” where replicator rations are limited, or “Night” where the ship drifts powerless in a starless

void, testing the crew’s morale. These moments illustrate the *potential* of the premise: forcing characters into new and tough situations that Federation folks aren’t used to. *Voyager* also maintained the optimistic ethos of *Star Trek* even in dire straits, emphasizing hope, ingenuity, and unity. In an era when darker, serialized sci-fi like “Babylon 5” or *DS9* were exploring heavy themes, *Voyager* stuck to a spirit of adventure and exploration — a quality that, in hindsight, feels refreshing compared to some of the grim, dark turns modern *Trek* would take.

Yet for all its promise, many fans and critics feel *Voyager* pulled its punches and *mishandled* the very gifts it was given. The premise that made the show unique also created constraints that the writers often struggled with or outright ignored. A primary example is the merging of the Starfleet and Maquis crews. Initially, this offered a ripe source of conflict: how do disciplined Federation officers work with former rebels and outlaws? In practice,



Voyager resolved this conflict almost as soon as it began. By the second episode, most Maquis characters were wearing Starfleet uniforms and taking orders with little more than a shrug. Aside from the occasional grumble, the promised “clash of ideologies” never materialized — everyone became one big happy Starfleet family. As one analysis put it, *Voyager* decided everyone would just become best friends by Episode 2, squandering the drama of power struggles and culture clash. A *Trek BBS* veteran even quipped that the Maquis plot “went nowhere,” as the writers abandoned it after a token resolution in the first season. The result was a crew dynamic that remained relatively static and harmonious — heartwarming, perhaps, but arguably less realistic and engaging than it could have been given the circumstances.

Resource scarcity was another big opportunity that *Voyager* only sporadically addressed. The ship is supposed to be alone

with no easy way to resupply: no Federation starbases to repair damage, no friendly planets to stock up on food and torpedoes. You’d expect *Voyager* to start looking battered over the years, with the crew rationing energy and making hard choices. Instead, the ship usually looked as pristine as ever, week after week. Dilitium crystals, shuttlecraft, and even Captain Janeway’s beloved coffee never truly ran out on screen.

When *Voyager* took heavy damage in one episode, by the next it would often be shiny and new, as if magically restored. This undercut the feeling of a years-long, gruelling voyage. Critics have argued that this made the “we’re alone out here” premise feel hollow — the stakes of isolation were dampened because the crew rarely faced lasting consequences of wear-and-tear. Episodes like “Year of Hell” finally showed what a





continuous struggle would look like — *Voyager* turned into a scarred wreck, the crew injured and exhausted, forced to innovate just to survive each day. Fans loved this two-parter as a glimpse of *Voyager's* untapped potential. Frustratingly, it ended with a giant reset (time travel undoes the entire year-long ordeal), meaning none of the character growth or damage stuck around. Behind the scenes, the writers initially imagined “Year of Hell” as a season-long arc to truly explore *Voyager's* perseverance, but the plan was vetoed by the producers who refused to serialize the story. Instead, it was condensed into two episodes and then erased from continuity — emblematic of the show’s habit of hitting the brakes on any long-term consequences.

In fact, *Voyager* became infamous for its “reset button” storytelling. Time and again, episodes would put the crew through the wringer — the ship nearly destroyed, crew members killed or

irrevocably changed — only to tidy everything up by the end as if nothing happened. Whether it was a temporal anomaly, a holodeck simulation, or some high-tech deus ex machina, the show found ways to undo any truly game-changing developments to return to the familiar status quo.

One reviewer joked that *Voyager* sometimes felt like *Gilligan's Island* in space: no matter what wild scheme or hope ap-

peared during the episode, we knew the crew would still be stranded at the end, back to square one. This approach kept individual episodes self-contained and accessible, but it also drained away suspense. Viewers learned that nothing permanent would happen. As an example, consider episodes that dangled the possibility of getting home early — we always knew some twist would snatch it away (poor Harry Kim,





even alternate timelines couldn't get him back to Earth). The show even destroyed *Voyager* outright on a few occasions (in episodes like "Timeless" or "Deadlock"), only to undo it with time travel or technobabble by the closing credits. It became routine to expect a miraculous reversal. Critics argue that this reliance on undoing consequences robbed *Voyager* of emotional weight — why invest in the crew's peril if you *know* it'll be fine 42 minutes later? The "reset button" made the Delta Quadrant feel less like a dangerous unknown and more like a holodeck ride where everything can be reset to normal. Even pivotal events, such as finally contacting Starfleet after years of silence, were sometimes treated as minor, one-episode happenings without the follow-through one would expect. (In one Season 4 episode, "Message in a Bottle," the crew succeeds in

sending word back to the Alpha Quadrant — a huge milestone — but the show quickly pivots to a light comedic romp instead of deeply exploring the crew's reactions, a choice one reviewer called a "wasted potential" for drama.)

Being lost in the Delta Quadrant did give *Voyager* a blank canvas for inventing new alien races and recurring adversaries. Here, too, the results were hit-or-miss. Early on, the main foes were the Kazon, a combative species vying for power (and water) across several sectors. While it was encouraging that *Voyager* tried to develop its own signature villains, the Kazon are often cited as a weak point — one-dimensional "space thugs" with bad hairdos, seen as lacking the sophistication of Klingons or Romulans. They hung around for two seasons, perhaps longer than many fans' patience. Other Delta Quadrant spe-

cies fared better: the Vidiian, suffering from a gruesome disease called the Phage, were genuinely scary and tragic antagonists who will literally steal your organs to survive. The Hirogen provided some tense episodes with their predator/prey ethos, essentially turning the *Voyager* crew into big-game quarry. And of course, *Voyager* upped the ante by bringing in the Borg as major antagonists in later seasons. The Borg had been a known threat in earlier series, but here we delved into their home turf. This decision gave us one of *Voyager's* greatest gifts — the former Borg drone Seven of Nine — but it also had downsides. The more the crew tangled with the Borg, the less fearsome the Borg became; repeated close escapes and victories made the once-unstoppable collective feel almost routine. By overusing them, *Voyager* arguably turned the Borg



into that “annoying neighbour who keeps popping by uninvited”, as one witty critique put it. Even the wildly original Species 8472 (an other-dimensional species immune to Borg assimilation) went from nearly wiping out the Borg to signing a peace treaty with Janeway in the span of a two-parter, curtailing their long-term impact.

In short, the Delta Quadrant provided quantity in terms of new encounters, but quality varied. The show sometimes leaned on familiar *Star Trek* formulas — omnipotent beings, temporal rifts, holodeck malfunctions — instead of truly unique survival scenarios that only this premise could offer. This isn’t to say *Voyager* lacked creativity; episodes like “Blink of an Eye” (with a planet experiencing time dilation) or “Living Witness” (an alternate history scenario) showed brilliant sci-fi concepts. However, few of the new societies

Voyager met left a lasting mark comparable to, say, the political intrigue of Bajor/Cardassia in *DS9*.

The journey through the Delta Quadrant often felt like a string of disconnected pit stops rather than a cohesive odyssey where each leg of the trip builds on the last.

How did being stranded far from home affect *Voyager*’s crew on a personal level? This is one area where the show did find some success, though not consistently. Captain Janeway herself carried the burden of responsibility for stranding her crew (since she destroyed the device that could have sent them back, for ethical reasons in the pilot). Throughout the series, we see glimpses of how this wears on her: in “Night” she grapples with guilt and isolation, and in “Equinox” we see her driven to a vengeful extreme by another crew’s betrayal. Janeway

was a groundbreaking character — *Trek*’s first female captain lead — and when written well, she’s inspiring, resourceful and tough as nails. However, fans often note that Janeway’s characterization could swing wildly depending on the episode. One week she’s the principled, never-say-die leader; the next she might make an out-of-character emotional decision or vice versa, leaving some viewers scratching their heads. This inconsistency may have been a byproduct of rotating writers and the episodic format. Even so, Janeway’s determination to hold onto Federation ideals in the wilderness of the Delta Quadrant is a defining trait — sometimes to a fault. Notably, in the episode “Alliances,” Janeway initially tries to bend the Starfleet rulebook by negotiating with local alien factions for mutual protection (a very sensible survival move), but the story ultimately



doubles back to reaffirm that Starfleet principles can't be compromised, portraying her moment of pragmatism as misguided. This highlights a core tension in *Voyager*: the crew almost always chooses the moral high ground of the Federation, even when lost and alone. Admirable as that is, it often meant the show avoided exploring morally grey areas that being stranded might realistically force upon them.

Other characters had arcs tied to the premise as well. Chakotay, the former Maquis captain, transitioned from potential rebel leader to Janeway's loyal XO with hardly a hiccup — a disappointment to those who expected more fireworks from that arrangement. Still, Chakotay became a calm voice of reason and spiritual wisdom on the ship, even if he rarely challenged Janeway after Season 1. B'Elanna Torres, the half-Klingon engineer, struggled with her temper and dual heritage, but

also went through poignant growth — at one point, news that her Maquis friends back home were wiped out drove her into a depression ("Extreme Risk"), an example of *Voyager* acknowledging the distant consequences of their plight. Tom Paris, introduced as a disgraced Starfleet pilot, found redemption and family aboard *Voyager*, eventually settling down with B'Elanna and maturing from a cocky flyboy to a de-

pendable officer. Harry Kim... well, Harry stayed *Ensign* Kim for seven years, which became an inside joke among fans. Despite facing death, alternate timelines, and alien temptations, poor Harry never got a promotion or a bold character arc; as one commentator joked, his development "peaked in Season 1 and then plateaued forever." On the flip side, *Voyager* gave us The Doctor, the Emergency Medical Hologram who, due to





the ship's unique situation, had to evolve far beyond his original programming. Unrestrained by typical Starfleet protocols (and with no human doctor available), the Doctor explores his individuality, hobbies, and even rights as a form of life — a standout aspect of the show that fans and critics alike praise. His growth into a full-fledged member of the crew, with wit and personality, exemplifies how the premise enabled certain characters to shine. And of course,

the introduction of Seven of Nine in Season 4 brought a jolt of energy. As a former Borg drone rescued by Janeway, Seven's journey to rediscover her humanity paralleled Voyager's journey home — both seeking to reconnect with society and self. Seven's arc, aided by Jeri Ryan's performance, became a centerpiece of the later seasons, often delving into what it means to be human when you've been isolated from humanity. Her presence also spurred develop-

ment in others (Janeway as a mentor, the Doctor as a Pygmalion figure teaching her social cues, etc.). Some fans felt Seven's prominence came at the expense of other characters' screen time (indeed, *Voyager* did sometimes struggle to service its large ensemble). Still, it's hard to deny that she added intrigue and tied into the Delta Quadrant setting via the Borg connection.

One could argue that *Voyager*'s most significant character development was *collective*: over time, the crew forged a tight-knit family. Isolated from their former lives, the officers, Maquis and alien strays like Neelix and Kes formed bonds that might never have happened in a regular Starfleet posting. The show often leaned into the idea that Voyager itself was a small community that had to celebrate its own holidays, honour its dead alone, and create its own traditions. We see touching moments like the crew ex-





changing personal letters from home when finally contacted or throwing together impromptu leisure activities on the holodeck to keep spirits up. That sense of camaraderie is a strength in *Voyager*. It may not have the dramatic interpersonal conflicts some expected, but there's a warmth in how this rag-tag group becomes a

family. By the final episode, when (spoiler alert) *Voyager* at last makes it back to Earth, the achievement feels earned largely because of the unity and determination we've seen along the way — even if the journey itself often reset to status quo, the people within it grew closer with each challenge.

In the final tally, *Star Trek: Voyager* took a daring premise — a lone starship lost on the other side of the galaxy — and delivered a show that's both beloved and bedeviled in *Trek* fandom. It effectively used the "lost in space" concept to tell uplifting stories of resilience and cooperation; the crew never lost their Federation ideals, providing a hopeful through-line even in dark times. The series also gave us some truly memorable episodes and characters that wouldn't have existed without this unique setup. On the other hand, *Voyager* was often ineffective at capitalizing on the full dramatic potential of its situation. Recurring plot patterns (otherworldly phenomena of the week, last-minute escapes, conflict-lite resolutions) made the Delta Quadrant feel safer and more familiar than it should have. The narrative frequently hit the reset button, shying away from serial continuity or long-term character ramifications, which could leave the epic journey feeling strangely frictionless. The show's insistence on maintaining a classic *Trek* formula sometimes clashed with what the premise logically demanded in terms of risk and change.

Yet, despite these critiques, *Voyager* has an enduring charm. In retrospect, its relatively

standalone adventures and optimistic tone stand out amid later, darker entries in the franchise. It's a series that says: even if you're lost in the great unknown, you can hold onto your principles, build a family, and find wonder in every new star system. The Delta Quadrant tested *Voyager's* crew in many ways, but it never broke them. For many fans, that is a powerful takeaway. *Voyager* may not have perfectly fulfilled all the ambitions of its premise — indeed, many would agree it "failed to follow through" on some of its most intriguing setup — but it still took us on a seven-year journey home that was filled with the essence of *Star Trek*: exploration, hope, and the steadfast belief that tomorrow can be brighter. In the grand *Star Trek* pantheon, *Voyager* remains a fascinating chapter — one of brilliant ideas, uneven execution, and a lot of heart. It reminds us that getting lost can lead to great adventures, even if the course home isn't quite as perilous as promised. After all, not every Starfleet tale has to rewrite the rules; sometimes it's enough to reaffirm that even 75,000 light years away, a determined crew can make their own Federation wherever they are — and eventually, find their way back to where they belong.



MARTIN RANDALL: Martin is a freelance software developer, a serial technophile, and prides himself on his encyclopedic knowledge of *Star Trek*. He lives in Wakefield, UK with his wife Hazel, their two children, and three cats.



(click graphic to assimilate yours!)

REVIEW

— STAR TREK —
ENTERPRISE

"REGENERATION"

STEPHEN MIRKIN

It opens with a research team dispatched to the Arctic to investigate a possible UFO. The team arrives and finds a downed spacecraft. And, near the remains of the downed UFO, a body is found in the ice. It is removed and thawed. The alien, after regaining consciousness, begins a rampage, attacking the research team.

What I have just describe is the 1951 Howard Hawks produced film, “The Thing From Another World,” one of my favorite sci-fi films. However, what I have also described is the opening sequence of *Enterprise*, season two, episode twenty-three entitled, “Regeneration.” This episode was written by Mike Sussman and Phyllis Strong and was directed by David Livingston. All three were veterans of prior *Star Trek* series with Mike and Phyllis having written for both *Voyager* and many of the episodes for three seasons of *Enterprise*. David had been involved with *Star Trek*, from *TNG* to *Enterprise*, directing many episodes, including my all-time favorite *Trek* episode, “Shuttlepod One.”

(The members of Big Sci-fi Podcast [Adeena, Brian, Cris, and myself] had the pleasure of interviewing both Phyllis and David to discuss their work on *Trek* and these are available to enjoy on Spotify or whichever platform you use to listen to our podcasts.)

When I saw this episode for the first time on May 7th, 2003, I was intrigued by the similarities between it and *The Thing* (from 1951, not the 1982 remake). Yet what intrigued me the most was that this episode harkened back to my favorite *Star Trek* film, “*First*



Contact.” Written by Brannon Braga and Ronald D. Moore (who has also been a guest on The Big Sci-fi Podcast) and was the directing debut of Jonathan Frakes. In the film, the Borg sphere is destroyed by the *Enterprise* (a review of this film is elsewhere in this issue), but what happened to it? Was it gone and forgotten? It was until it’s remains were found in the Arctic, 100 years after it was destroyed.

There is a symbiotic relationship between “*First Contact*” and “*Regeneration.*” The *Enterprise* episode cannot exist without the existence of the movie. I think that is the beauty of it. This is a theme that *Enterprise* followed in many of it’s episodes: harking

back to a *TOS* or a *TNG* episode or movie for inspiration or clarification of one or the other.

In this episode, the aliens are not named or their actual name is never mentioned. Archer and his crew have no idea who the Borg are or where they came from. The only mentioning of their existence from “*First Contact*” has Archer reading from a future version of Wikipedia (?) about a commencement at Princeton. Cochrane spoke about cybernetic aliens from the future who appeared around the time of the Phoenix’s first warp flight. (I like how you can read this on the screen in Archer’s quarters. Nice touch.)



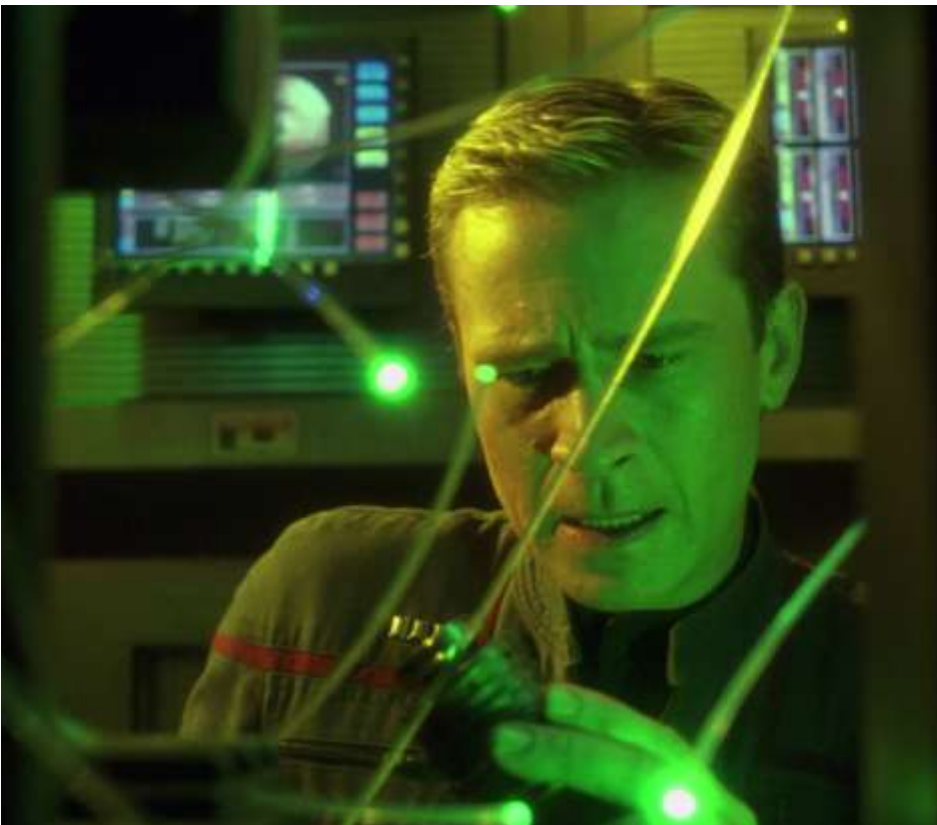


In addition, we see how Archer and the Enterprise (for once, truly the only starship available) are dispatched to intersect a transport, taken by the infected humans from the Artic (one being

the real life wife of actor John Billingsley, Bonnie Friedericy). The now highly modified ship attacks a Tarkalean vessel, also infecting that crew and taking them away, yet leaving two behind. Archer,

always one to assist, “saves” the two of the Tarkalean’s that were left behind. On board, they are there to sabotage the Enterprise. In their actions, they infect Dr. Phlox who must come up with a cure or he too will become a Borg. In a rare moment for Archer, to prevent further damage to the Enterprise, he ejected the two from Enterprise, causing their deaths. It will not be until season three where Archer must, once again, compromise his humanity to continue the mission to stop the Xindi.

Back to the action. Once the Enterprise catches up to the modified transport, it is now more than a match. Reed modifies hand weapons to deal with the Borg and he, with Archer, beam aboard the transport to plant explosives to disable it. A fire fight happens and in it, Archer and Reed kill two of the transformed Artic scientists, one being the afore mention wife





of John Billingsley (John likes to remind people of this at conventions). Once back on board the Enterprise, the explosives do their charm, disabling the transport, but not for long. Those annoying Borg begin to restore systems and Archer, knowing that nothing more can be done to save those infected, uses all of Enterprise's resources to destroy it.

Once the Enterprise is safe and Phlox has saved himself by using "Omicron Radiation," he reveals that when under the influence of the nanoprobes, he was

connected to the aliens consciousness and heard a "message." As Archer explains to T'Pol at the end, it was a message to reveal where Earth could be found. Directed to the Delta quadrant, T'Pol states it will take 200 years to arrive. And then the ominous ending, where Archer states that they might have only delayed the invasion.

I love all that this episode has to offer. My only question was, if Phlox used the treatment to save his life, it should have been in the Starfleet databanks

for Picard's time to know about? I can dismiss it and still be happy.

In closing, there is a valuable lesson to be learned from this episode of Enterprise and the afore mentioned film "*The Thing*." If you find a downed spacecraft and a frozen alien next to it, **DO NOT THAW IT OUT!** But they never learn...



STEPHEN MIRKIN: I first learned about science fiction the moment I was able to reach the on/off knob on my parents' black-and-white TV set. Being born in 1956, I was there on Sept. 8, 1966 to watch the first episode of *Star Trek*. Since then, I have watched every TV series and every movie and I only look forward to the next great *Star Trek* moment.

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BOBBY LINN

FAN ART



FUTILE

REVIEW

STAR TREK FIRST CONTACT

STEPHEN MIRKIN

Perfection.

What is perfection? The Webster dictionary states it as: the quality or state of being perfect.

Is this the correct word to define the 1996 film *Star Trek: First Contact*? That is always, as I have stated in my top five articles, a matter of opinion. Online, it lists the top three as *Star Trek: Wrath Of Khan*, *First Contact* and *The Voyage Home*. I agree with this assessment, *Wrath Of Khan* was my favorite, that is, until I saw *First Contact*.

I will not get into a comparison of these three films. Each has so many positives to make it your personal favorite. This is a discussion of *First Contact* and I will make the case for why I feel it is the best of all the *Trek* films.

Let's begin with the written word, which being the script. Penned by long time *Trek* veterans Brannon Braga and Ronald D. Moore, this film hark-



ened back to one of the best two-part episodes in *TNG*, "The Best Of Both Worlds." And it brings back a character not seen since the second season of *TOS*, episode nine entitled "Metamorphosis," that being Zefram Cochrane. (More about his metamorphosis later.) In discussions to write the script, two elements were needed to be portrayed: the Borg and time travel.

Once the script was completed, a director was needed to

see the vision come to life. The producer, Rick Berman, chose a veteran who had directed a number of *Star Trek* TV series episodes, yet this was his first time doing a major motion picture. The number one choice was Picard's number one: Jonathan Frakes.

As for the actors, all the regulars from *TOS* were included in the film. Patrick Stewart, the director Jonathan Frakes, LaVar Burton, Brent Spiner, Michael





Dorn, Gates McFadden, Marina Sirtis and backing them up was Alfre Woodard and the amazing Alice Krige as the Borg Queen. Yet, in my mind, the gem was having James Cromwell portraying Zefram Cochrane.

All the actors did a stand-up job in this film. Picard demanding revenge against the Borg who had boarded the Enterprise. Alfre Woodard's devotion to Cochrane and her defusing Picard's rage with the line, "...you broke your little ships. See you around, Ahab." Probably the sexiest scene in a Trek movie (as far as I am concerned) was when the Borg Queen blows air on Data's newly grafted skin. It was nearly pornographic (sorry for the course language) along with their kiss later on in the film. When Deanna is drunk after finding Cochrane. Or when Worf is called a coward by Picard. A moment of conflict that all great films

need. The hero worship seen in the forest with Geordi and Lt. Barclay and Cochrane's disdain for it. Each one of these scenes could be the best of any of the actors.

Yet, it is the performance by James Cromwell that stood out every time he appeared on screen. From his first appearance in the rag tag town with Lilly, he is drunk, to his meeting Troi in a bar, listening to loud music, we see that this is not the heroic Cochrane that was portrayed in "Metamorphosis." He is now a womanizer, a drunk, a man that is only using his scientific talents to make a lot of money. This was a real and well-developed character. His scene with Riker in the Phoenix, when he admits what he wants from the flight of the Phoenix, that this is his vision. Riker gets to use Cochrane's own words to snap him out of his funk, "don't try to be a great man. Just be a

man," this is a great moment. And of course, like any cool dude, he cannot use his new hot rod without his favorite music to go along for "on a magic carpet ride..."

Finally, James gets the most memorable moment in the film when he shakes hands with the Vulcans, creating all the future that is to be *Star Trek*. James would reprise his role as Cochrane in the first episode of *Enterprise* "Broken Bow" at the





commencement of the Warp Five complex. And once again, on *Lower Decks* season three, episode one “Grounded” as a hologram figure at the “Bozeman” amusement park in a replica Phoenix ride. (The creators of *Lower Decks* show so much reverence to *First Contact*. Right down to the music.) Which brings us to the spacecraft in this film. We get to see for the first time a Borg Sphere (and once again as its wreckage in *Star Trek: Enterprise* episode “Regeneration,” reviewed in the issue as well). We get to see the new and sleeker Enterprise-E. But the best is the spaceship that makes history, The Phoenix. Designed by John Eaves, he painstakingly created a craft that looked like something which could appear in the middle half of the 21st century. Using a Titan missile as the launch vehicle made it all the more believable

and ironic since those might have been used in World War Three. The interior of the capsule looks so believable, using buttons and switches that would be used in spacecraft of our time as well. Its reality is on display when Picard touches it, knowing he is in contact with something very precious. And the launch sequence, from

liftoff to first stage separation, to the deployment of the nacelles, to Cochrane’s first sight of the Earth out of the Phoenix’s windows, to the engagement of the warp drive, it is all so perfect.

What great *Trek* film would not be complete without a battle sequence. From the opening battle between the Borg Cube





and so many Starfleet crafts near Earth (Archer was right, it did take 200 years for Earth coordinates to reach the Borg) including a fan favorite, the Defiant. With Picard's connection to the Borg, he knows exactly where to hit it and destroy the Cube. And on board the Enterprise, Picard and those not captured and transformed into Borg must battle to prevent the Phoenix's first flight and subsequent encounter with the Vulcans. It might be Data and Picard's final battle with the Borg Queen, and her death, which saves the day and the future.

Finally, the soundtrack. There are great composers of major motion pictures, and each has a style you can listen to for each film. For Jerry Goldsmith, he is the sound of *Star Trek*. Over 60 years of TV and Film scoring and I think this is one of his best. Tapping into his involvement in prior *Trek* films, he

even used portions of music he composed for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* in this film as well. Yet it is the uplifting melodies in this film that makes it stand out as one of the best of his long and award winning career.

So, let me get out the Bingo card of great movies. We have great writing, check. Great directing, check. Excellent acting, check. Great space vehicles, check and great battle sequences, check. Amazing soundtrack, check. Yup, Bingo! There have been moments in all the *Trek* films (and TV series) that contain all that makes a perfect combinations, yet it is my opinion that it all exists in this near perfect film. Some have questioned why we did not see the return of the Phoenix to Earth or how it could have happened; but that is immaterial to the overall film.

And the cherry on this delicious ice cream sundae is: if you happen

to own the DVD of this great movie and listen to Jonathan Frakes commentary, you are in for a true treat. Recorded years after the film's release, he speaks as if he is sitting on the couch with you talking about it all as if you are watching it with him. I have met Jonathan and thanked him for this film and the fun commentary that he recorded for the DVD.

As Cochrane so elegantly stated, "let's rock and roll!"



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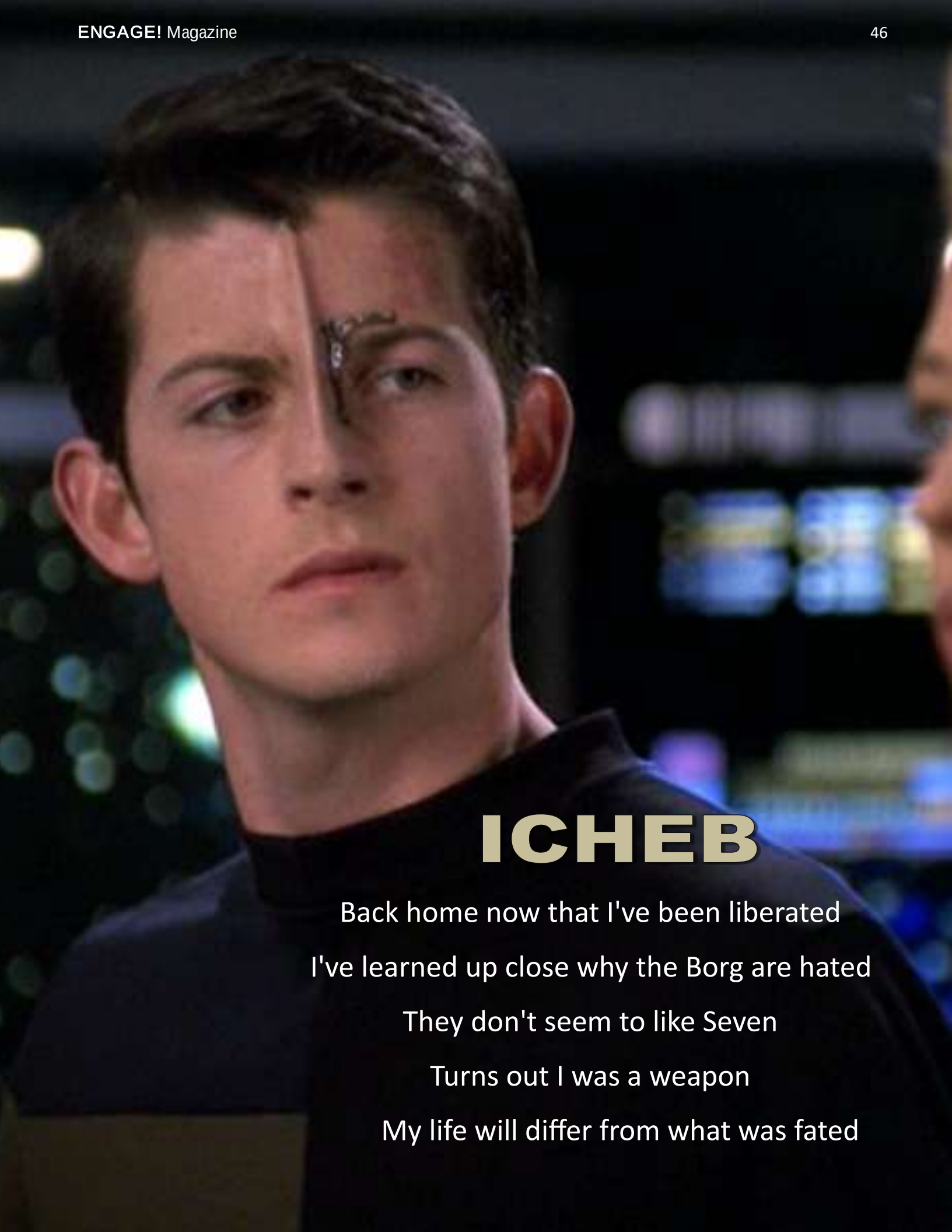


LIMERICK TIME with CRAFTYBEAR

HUGH

On the Artifact, XB's in my charge
They've been shunned by society at large
An old friend seeks my help
To find Soji he's compelled
I sure wish Geordi had come with Picard





ICHEB

Back home now that I've been liberated
I've learned up close why the Borg are hated
They don't seem to like Seven
Turns out I was a weapon
My life will differ from what was fated



SEVEN OF NINE

Annika was the name I had before
She couldn't know what her life had in store
Voyager is my home now
To protect them I do vow
My humanity is next to explore



FAN FICTION

PEACE LOVE & THE BORG

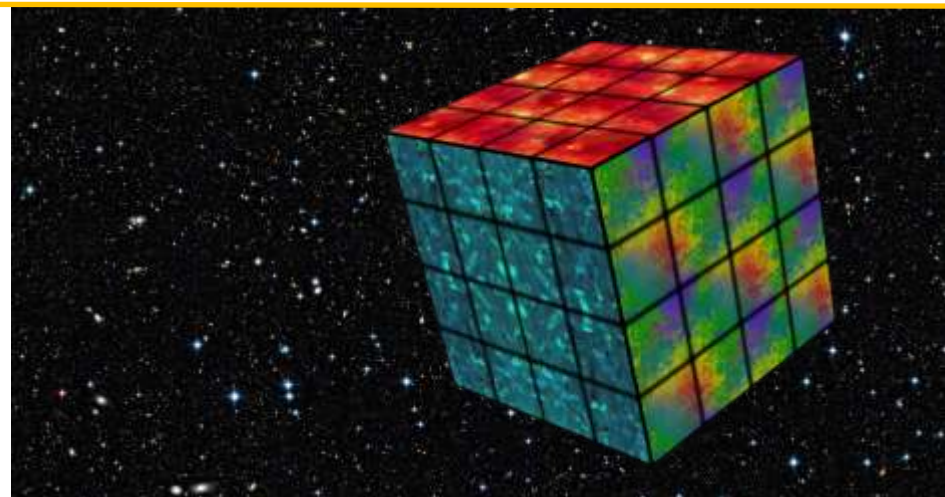


STEPHEN MIRKIN

We all know that good is evil in the Mirror Universe, does that make evil good now?

Traveling the Universe in their psychedelic cube of a spacecraft, a commune, a collection of various races that lived together in peace and harmony for the collective good of the hive. They were known as "The Borg." Yet it did not start out that way.

Founded many eons ago by the first Queen of the Borg, she made it her quest to assimilate any and all beings they came across in their travels. Most of the societies they encountered resisted their methods of assimilation. However, the strength and power the Borg accumulated allowed them to overpower any resistance they faced. Their motto was, "resistance is futile." This continued on as planet after planet were assimilated into the Borg collective. That is until the moment of separation. It was when the Prime Universe was split and the Mirror Universe was created. At that moment, good became evil and conversely, evil became good. And the evil of assimilation was gone. At that point, the mis-



sion of the Borg was not to take over other societies or planets, but to give them refuge within the collective.

To the Borg, it was the moment of enlightenment.

From that moment on, the Borg's mission was to offer help and assistance to any creature feeling alone or lost or in need of physical or emotional help. The Borg used their nanotechnology to help repair the limbs or internal organs of any creature they encountered on their travels. If an arm or leg were dismembered by some attack or inflection of pain, their nanotechnology could repair the damage. If the damage were of a mental reason, by hooking

into the collective, the entire realm of the Borg could be there to help and assist those in need. It was a time of peace, love, and the Borg.

All seemed fine, that is until the Terran Empire learned of the Borg.

On one of the ISS Enterprise-D missions to conquer another system of planets, they came across a wayward drone who used the name "Hugh." Hugh was adrift and when he encountered the Enterprise, he offered them the enlightenment that the Borg was spreading with their missions. Of course, the evil Jean-Luc Picard would have none of it.

He tortured Hugh trying to





unlock the connection Hugh had with the collective. Finally, Picard learned of the reason for the assimilation of those the Borg met on their travels. Picard now saw the Borg as a threat to the Terran Empire. The idea of good over evil sickened him. He decided to implant a message into Hugh that the Empire was there to assist the Borg trying to lead the Borg into a trap. Yet, before Hugh left to infect the collective, Picard allowed himself to be infected with the Borg nanos so he could be a spy into the minds of the Borg. He even took the name Locutus so as to fool the Borg if they probed his mind.

The message Hugh carried back to the Borg was used to lull them into a false sense of security; that the Terran Empire was there to be a friend. This caused the Borg to travel to Wolf 359 where they were ambushed by the Terran Empire forces. Even though the Borg wanted only peace, they put up a fight, damaging many of the Empire forces. With every destroyed Empire ship, the Borg would pause for a moment and mourn the loss of any living creature.

As the battle continued, the Borg knew they were going to be destroyed by the total forces of

the Empire. As the end was coming, the collective decided it was best for a small number of drones and the Queen to escape in a Borg sphere before the cube spacecraft was destroyed.

The sphere jumped to warp as the entire Terran Empire armada attacked the cube once Picard was able to access their systems and initiate "nap time." Being defenseless, the cube was destroyed and Picard proclaimed they had eliminated the Borg forever.

The remaining Borg throughout the galaxy decided that, since their connection to the Queen was broken, they would continue to live their lives in peace and harmony as best they could. Occasionally, rogue Borg would make contact with Terran Empire spacecraft. One in particular was Seven Of Nine who used



her sexual powers to become entwined with Capt. Janeway's mission of conquest in the Delta Quadrant.

What happened to the Borg Queen and her remaining drones? She decided that their original mission of traveling to Earth should not be stopped. They knew that they needed to hide in the past, opening up a Temporal Vortex and traveling back to a time when the Terran Empire was in its beginning, the 1960s. In that time, the Borg traveled to the location of the future Starfleet, in San Francisco so they could maintain a watchful eye. They knew they could fit in without notice in the Haight-Asbury district and there they settled into a time of peace, love, and togetherness. It was decided they would no longer use the name Borg, as it sounded too Swedish and took the new name of "Hippies."



STEPHEN MIRKIN: I first learned about science fiction the moment I was able to reach the on/off knob on my parents' black-and-white TV set. Being born in 1956, I was there on Sept. 8, 1966 to watch the first episode of *Star Trek*. Since then, I have watched every TV series

BRIAN DONAHUE: Brian is a pastor, songwriter, aspiring author and avid podcaster hosting three different podcasts, including The BIG Sci-Fi Podcast. He lives in Ohio with his wife, two kids and Data the golden-doodle.



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MARINA'S TREK CALENDAR

An updated list of events and conventions from all across the world. Marina is recognized in the Star Trek fandom as an expert on conventions, and a much beloved presence at Trek events!.



Marina Kravchuk

Links are clickable

AUGUST

1-3: [Tampa Bay Comic Convention](#) (in-person convention; Doug Jones, John Rhys-Davies attending)

2-3: [William Shatner](#) makes an appearance after Star Trek II screening at two locations in Florida

6-10: [STLV - Trek to Vegas](#) (in-person convention)

8-10: [FanExpo Boston](#) (in-person convention; John Rhys-Davies, Christopher Lloyd, Simon Pegg, Jason Isaacs, Mark Sheppard attending)

15-17: [Trekonderoga](#) (in-person event; Kate Mulgrew, Nana Visitor, Terry Farrell, Armin Shimerman attending)

15-17: [GalaxyCon San Jose](#) (in-person convention; William Shatner, Ron Perlman, Jason Isaacs, Alan Ruck attending)

23-24: [Trek to Orlando](#) (in-person convention)

29-31: [Destination, An Unofficial Star Trek Fan Convention](#) (in-person convention)

29-31: [Nightmare Weekend Cleveland](#) (in-person convention; Denise Crosby, Chris Sarandon, Clint Howard, Jeffrey Combs attending)

Aug. 28 - Sept. 1: [Dragon Con](#) (in-person convention; Dr. Erin Macdonald, Andrew Robinson, Garrett Wang, Robert Duncan McNeill, Robert Picardo, Tim Russ, William Shatner, Oded Fehr attending)

FOR MORE EVENTS, PLEASE VISIT: [MARINA'S PAGE](#)



OUR NEXT ISSUE



DUE OUT MID-SEPTEMBER

Send us feedback! ENGAGESubmissions@yahoo.com

WANT TO VOLUNTEER AS A WRITER? toboldlygo78@yahoo.com





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