

A cosmic background featuring a view of Earth's horizon on the right side, with a dark, star-filled sky. Several bright, colorful streaks resembling shooting stars or meteors are scattered across the scene, adding a sense of dynamic movement and wonder.

ONE-SEASON WONDERS

**SCI-FI TV SHOWS THAT DESERVED TO DIE,
OR WERE GONE TOO SOON**

Presenters

Mark Haynes, Ann Arbor, Mich.

Julie Washington, Cleveland, Ohio

“How do you vote, Sarek of Vulcan?”

- As we go through our selections, we'll ask the audience to vote thumbs up or thumbs down on these TV shows, so get ready to express your opinion!
- Bonus: Finding some forgotten gems ripe for rediscovery on DVD, or for bingeing.

**Let's start with:
TV SHOWS THAT
DESERVED TO DIE**



Living Doll (1964-65)

- **Starring:** Bob Cummings, Julie Newmar
- **Premise:** A psychiatrist is given the care of a sexy android called Rhoda Miller, so she doesn't fall into the hands of the military.
- **Why it wasn't missed:** Dumb premise, sexist.

Holmes and Yoyo (1976)

- **Starring:** John Schuck, Richard B. Shull, Andrea Howard
- **Premise:** An accident-prone police officer is paired with a new robotic police officer, Yoyo.
- **Why it wasn't missed:** Cheezy robot special effects, lame robot humor

Quark (1977-78)

- Starring: Richard Benjamin, Barnstable Twins, Conrad Janis
- Premise: Adam Quark commands an interstellar garbage scow sent on secret diplomatic missions.
- Why it wasn't missed: Dumb humor; 99-cent special effects

Beyond Westworld (1980, 5 episodes)

- **Starring:** James Wainwright, Jim McMullan
- **Premise:** A sequel to the movies Westworld and Future World. A mad scientist, Simon Quaid, takes control of the androids and plans to use them to take over the world.
- **Why it wasn't missed:** Wasn't as good as the original Westworld movie. Mad scientists are overdone.

The Powers of Matthew Star (1982-83)

- **Starring:** Peter Barton, Amy Steel, Louis Gossett Jr.
- **Premise:** Alien prince Matthew 'E'Hawke' Star of the planet Quadris uses his magic powers to fight crime.
- **Why it wasn't missed:** Ranked #22 on TV Guide's list of "50 Worst TV Shows of All Time." Enough said.

The Phoenix (1982)

- **Starring:** Judson Scott, Richard Lynch
- **Premise:** Bennu of the Golden Light, an ancient extraterrestrial, has telekinesis, the power to levitate and do astral projection. His powers were made stronger by his special Phoenix amulet.
- **Why it wasn't missed:** Hard to take an alien named Bennu seriously.
- Ask Julie to tell her Judson Scott story!

Manimal (1983; eight episodes)

- **Starring:** Simon MacCorkindale, Michael D. Roberts, Melody Anderson
- **Premise:** Professor Jonathan Chase can transform into any animal at will. He uses his special ability to fight crime.
- **Why it wasn't missed:** SFX not advanced enough to make transformation look plausible.

Now and Again (1999-2000)

- **Starring:** Eric Close, Dennis Haysbert ("24"), Margaret Colin, Heather Matarazzo
- **Premise:** When family man Michael Wiseman is killed in a train accident, government scientists take his brain and implant it in an engineered body.
- **Why it wasn't missed:** SF comedy-drama is tough to do well.

Terra Nova (2011)

- **Starring:** Jason O'Mara, Shelley Conn, Christine Adams
- **Premise:** The Shannons leave polluted Earth by transporting back 85 million years to prehistoric Earth where they join Terra Nova colony to rebuild civilization.
- **Why it wasn't missed:** Tone swung between teen drama and action-adventure.

Frequency (2016-2017)

- **Starring:** Peyton List, Riley Smith, Devin Kelley
- **Premise:** A police detective communicates with her father via a ham radio, despite the fact that he died in 1996.
- **Why it wasn't missed:** Hard-to-swallow premise

Debris (2021)

- **Starring:** Jonathan Tucker, Riann Steele
- **Premise:** Two investigators collect debris from an alien spacecraft that has been falling across Earth. The spaceship pieces have weird properties.
- **Why it won't be missed:** Too many mysteries and too few answers.

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**SHOWS THAT
DESERVED TO
LIVE**



Time Tunnel (1966-67)

- **Starring:** James Darren, Robert Colbert, Lee Meriwether
- **Premise:** Two scientists leap into an experimental time machine and are lost in time, unable to return home.
- **Why it deserved better:** Good cast; the precursor to Quantum Leap

Alien Nation (1989-1990)

- **Starring:** Gary Graham, Eric Pierpoint, and Terri Treas
- **Premise:** When an alien spaceship crashes on Earth, it brings a race of aliens called Newcomers. The Newcomers must integrate into 1990s America despite discrimination against them.
- **Why it deserved better:** Socially relevant plots; fresh and engaging premise

Earth 2 (1994-95)

- **Starring:** Debrah Farentino, Joey Zimmerman, Clancy Brown
- **Premise:** The Eden Project travels to an Earth-like planet in an attempt to find a cure to an illness called "the syndrome."
- **Why it deserved better:** Nominated for an Emmy, Saturn and other awards.

Crusade (1999)

- **Starring:** Gary Cole, Tracy Scoggins, Daniel Dae Kim
- **Premise:** Spin-off from Babylon 5 and set 5 years after the events in that show. Ship seeks cure to nanovirus plague on Earth.
- **Why it deserved better:** With a strong cast and J. Michael Straczynski, it could have been a hit.

Firefly (2002-03)

- **Starring:** Nathan Fillion, Gina Torres, Alan Tudyk, Summer Glau
- **Show creator:** Joss Whedon ("Buffy the Vampire Slayer")
- **Premise:** Renegade crew of Serenity a living on the fringes of a society that resembles the Old West.
- **Why it deserved better:** One of the best SF TV shows ever.

Birds of Prey (2002-2003)

- **Starring:** Ashley Scott, Dina Meyer, Rachel Skarsten
- **Premise:** Batman has abandoned Gotham, so Oracle, the Huntress and Dinah Redmond take over his war on crime.
- **Why it deserved better:** We need more female superheroes on TV.

Threshold (2005)

Starring: Brent Spiner, Peter Dinklage, Charles S. Dutton. Produced by Brannon Braga

Premise: Secret government project investigates aliens attempting to alter human DNA.

Why it deserved better: Great cast, interesting premise

Flashforward (2009)

- **Starring:** Joseph Fiennes, John Cho, Dominic Monaghan, Courtney B. Vance
- Adapted for TV by Brannon Braga (ST: Next Gen) and David S. Goyer (superhero movies)
- **Premise:** Everyone on the planet simultaneously lost consciousness for 137 seconds and saw visions of their futures in a global “flashforward.”
- **Why it deserved better:** Strong cast and showrunners; adapted from SF novel

Caprica (2010)

- **Starring:** Eric Stoltz, Esai Morales and Paula Malcomson
- **Premise:** This spin-off of Battlestar Galactica takes place nearly 60 years before the destruction of the 12 Colonies. Wealthy technologist attempts to restore his deceased daughter using his inventions.
- **Why it deserved better:** Creator Ron Moore is brilliant.

Nightflyers (2018)

- **Starring:** Eoin Macken, David Ajala, Jodie Turner-Smith
- Based on stories by George R.R. Martin (Game of Thrones)
- **Premise:** In 2093, scientists board an advanced ship called the *Nightflyer* to make first contact with alien life forms. Terrifying and violent events occur.
- **Why it deserved better:** We will follow GRRM anywhere.

ON THE FENCE

- We can't decide how to classify these One-Season Wonders.
- What do you think? Gone too soon, or deserve to be forgotten?



Planet of the Apes (1974)

- **Starring:** Roddy McDowall, Ron Harper, Mark Lenard
- **Premise:** A young chimp must ensure the safety of two 20th-century humans who survived a crash landing and a trip through time to a future Earth.
- **Case against it:** Idea overused in movie sequels
- **Case for it:** We loved the first movie, so the TV show deserved a chance

Logan's Run (1977-78)

- **Starring:** Gregory Harrison, Heather Menzies, Randy Powell. D.C .Fontana was story editor.
- **Premise:** Logan and Jessica seek Sanctuary in a world where no one lives past age 30.
- **Case against it:** Couldn't compete with Star Wars
- **Case for it:** Good cast; SF authors wrote scripts

Honorable Mention

- **Battlestar Galactica (1978-79)**

Starring Richard Hatch, Dirk Benedict

Not a One-Season Wonder due to Galactica 1980

- **Man from Atlantis (1977-78)**

- Starring Patrick Duffy, Victor Buono

TV series followed four TV films that aired in 1977