



The War of the Worlds

When Worlds Collide

In 1988, minds more cunning and alien than ours viewed their back catalogue of intellectual property... and decided to make a TV version of **The War of the Worlds**. Jonathan Blum charts the history of the 1988 television series that set out to rival *Star Trek: The Next Generation*...

Out of all the different iterations of *War of the Worlds*, the two seasons of Paramount's 1988-1990 syndicated TV series are probably the most unloved, but in some ways the most extravagantly inventive. Even within each season the series veered between bold and amateurish, but for all its flaws there was a tantalizing sense of a good show just within reach.

The series had a killer high concept, which has only seemed sharper in recent years: an alien terrorist cell, working to destroy Human civilization. Unfortunately, this idea was fundamentally the opposite of Wells's original story, which was built around the idea of the Martians as an all-conquering military machine instead of furtive infiltrators.

It would almost have been interesting to see such a series developed from a clean sheet of paper, without bothering to tie it in with the existing title – but then, the title was a major reason why the series existed. After scoring hits the previous year with the launch of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Friday the 13th*, Paramount was pushing to exploit further movie properties on TV, and seized upon the 1953 George Pal film they owned. The series premiere would tie in with the 35th anniversary of the movie and the 50th anniversary of the Orson Welles radio broadcast, both occurring in late 1988.

Developing *War* fell to Greg Strangis (a grand-nephew of bandleader Spike Jones whose credits reach from *Happy Days* to *JAG*), who had previously been attached to Paramount's initial plans for *Star Trek: The Next Generation* (before Gene Roddenberry



Evil terrorists get their just desserts as alien hosts...

signed onto the series). Greg and his father Sam Strangis (production manager on the Adam West *Batman*, now executive producer on *CSI: Miami*) would share executive-producer credit on *War*, with first-season TNG alumnus Herbert Wright and former *Jake and the Fatman* writer Tom Lazarus also on staff.

Strangis's premise was simple: the Earth bacteria which had seen off the invaders in the original film had only sent them into hibernation rather than killing them. Thirty-five years later, radiation from nuclear waste stored near the alien 'remains' killed off the bacteria, and some of the aliens revived. They immediately set about trying to overthrow the Human race in preparation for the imminent arrival of their fleet of colonists.

The show did its best to gloss over questions about why no one seemed to remember the 1953 invasion (some sort of selective amnesia, perhaps brought on by the aliens themselves), and indeed why the world wasn't conspicuously lacking the landmarks demolished in the film. The series was also hampered by the fact that, if the aliens got their hands on even one of their war machines, they'd be completely invincible. While this allowed for much tension when one was tracked down, the general shortage of cobra-like flying machines unleashing scorching death on all comers could leave the series feeling a bit like a bait-and-switch trick.

As the show would be filmed in Toronto – sharing studio facilities with Paramount's *Friday the 13th* series – Paramount's deal with Canadian company Triumph Entertainment allowed *War* to qualify as a Canadian production. To this end, Americans like Wright and Lazarus couldn't take producer or story-editor credits – instead being credited as creative consultant and executive script consultant. The regular cast could be split equally between citizens of the two countries. This allowed the show to be produced for about \$680,000 American dollars an hour – astonishingly little at a time when the average primetime show cost \$1.2 million an hour, and TNG about \$1.5 million.

One factor in the savings was a short shooting schedule – six or seven filming days per episode, compared to eight or more for TNG. Also, to keep the alien-creature costs down (and increase paranoia to boot), the aliens got the ability to take over human bodies, fusing themselves with their victims – perhaps a metaphor for the way this concept fused the *War of the Worlds* film with its '50s peers like *Invasion of the Bodysnatchers*. Without their high-tech resources, the aliens adapted Human technology in various Heath Robinson ways, neatly allowing the designers to cobble high-tech props together from the guts of old TV sets and tennis rackets. Furthermore, when not in Human form, the alien leaders (the Advocates) wore form-concealing refrigeration suits to stabilize

Episode Guide

Dr Harrison Blackwood	Jared Martin
Colonel Paul Ironhorse	Richard Chaves
Dr Suzanne McCullough	Lynda Mason Green
Norton Drake	Phillip Akin
Debi McCullough	Rachel Blanchard (1-3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 21)
The Advocates	Richard Comar (1-11)
.....	Ilse Von Glatz (1-16, 19-22, 24)
.....	Michael Rudder (1-8, 10-11, 13-16)
.....	David Calderisi (12-18)
.....	Michael Kramer (17-18)
.....	Martin Neufeld (17-18)
.....	Ric Sarabia (19-22, 24)
.....	Michael Copeman (19-22)
.....	Frank Pellegrino (24)

Created by Greg Strangis
 Produced by Jonathan Hackett
 Executive Producers Greg and Sam Strangis

A1/2 THE RESURRECTION

Chambers/Advocate #1 (Richard Comar), Lena Urick/Advocate #2 (Ilse von Glatz), Einhorn/Advocate #3 (Michael Rudder), General Wilson (John Vernon), Charlotte (Gwynyth Walsh), Sgt Gordon Reynolds (Eugene Clark), Mrs Pennyworth (Corinne Conley), Tom Kensington (Larry Reynolds), Mossoud (Frank Pellegrino), Finney (Martin Neufeld), Teal (Ric Sarabia), Orel (Desmond Ellis), Doc (Jack Mather), Sheriff Deak (Harry Booker), Dr Efram Jacobi (David Hughs), Dr Jeffrey Gutterman (Donald Tripe), Corporals (Steve Atkinson, Kevin Fox), General Arquette (Ted Follows), Pilots (Judah Katz, Jeff Knight), Signal Corps Technician (Daryl Shuttleworth), Hunters (Richard Sali, Don Keppy)

Terrorists breaking into a disposal site for nuclear waste at Fort Jericho discover something they didn't expect – the site actually stores the dormant bodies of aliens who invaded Earth in 1953. Taking over the terrorists' bodies, the revived aliens attempt to retrieve their war machines.

Written by Greg Strangis
 Directed by Colin Chilvers
First broadcast: 3 October 1988

A3 THE WALLS OF JERICHO

General Wilson (John Vernon), Milkmen (Mark Humphrey, Stephen Makaj), Advocates (Richard Comar, Ilse von Glatz, Michael Rudder), Tom Kensington (Larry Reynolds), Mrs Pennyworth (Corinne Conley), Framer (Chris Potter), Sheriff Ted (Dale Wilson), Rancher Zeke (Jum Bearden), Detectives (Les Carlson, Kris Ryan), Young Wife (Louise Cranfield), Woman Worker (Brenda Adams), Computer Technician (Rob Hefferman), Ralph (Michael Caruana), Foreman (Eric Keenleyside), Detective Chin (Robert Lee), Mrs Lau (Chinese Woman), Guard (Ted Hanlan), Cop (Paul de la Rosa)

Dr Harrison Blackwood and his colleagues attempt to persuade Colonel Ironhorse and General Wilson that the aliens remain a threat, while the aliens themselves discover that the radiation that's protecting them from Earth's bacteria is also killing their host bodies.

Written by Forrest Van Buren
 Directed by Colin Chilvers
First broadcast: 10 October 1988

A4 THY KINGDOM COME

Sylvia Van Buren (Ann Robinson), Alien Hunter (Alar Aedma), Prison Guard (Walker Boone), Beckwith (Michael Fletcher), Mom (Joy Thompson), Dad (John Blackwood), Granny (Helen Carscallen), Bobby (Stuart Stone), Nurse Hamilton (Diane Douglass), Old Man (John Dee), Attendant (Paul Bettis), Sheriff Dumas (Steve Mousseau), Police Captain (Len Doncheff), Hunters (Paul MacCallum, David Blacker, Kenneth W Roberts), Hockey Players (Michael-Michael Sokovnin, Robbie Rox, Al Therrien), Goalie (Gary Robbins), Guard (Aaron Ross Fraser), Jordan (Colleen Embree), Nuns (Dolora Harvey, Valerie Boyle), Military Guards (Brian Hall, Elliot McIver)

Blackwood contacts Sylvia Van Buren, an associate of his adoptive father and a survivor of the 1953 invasion whose experiences have left her in the Whitewood Mental Health Care Center. Her insights guide the Blackwood team to Canada, where the aliens have located more of their race.

Episode Guide

Written by Herbert Wright
 Directed by Winrich Kolbe
First broadcast: 17 October 1988

A5 A MULTITUDE OF IDOLS

Elyse Conway (Michele Scarabelli), Reverend (Neil Vipond), FBI Leader (Ray James), Blanche (Jackie Richardson), Simons (Garfield Andrews), Alex (Von Flores), Judy (Judy Sinclair), Frank (Chick Roberts), Drivers (Roger McKeen, Tedd Dillon), FBI Agents (Richard Gira, Jim Walton, Joseph Matheson)
The aliens plot to increase their numbers by irradiating potential hosts in the ghost town of Beeton, but a reporter catches evidence of alien possession on video, attracting the attention of the Blackwood Project.

Written by Tom Lazarus
 Directed by Neill Fearnley
First broadcast: 24 October 1988

A6 EYE FOR AN EYE

Flannery (Jeff Corey), Harv (John Ireland), Bill (Jack Jessop) Marla (Mary Beth Rubens), Bikers (Sascha Tukatsch, Sergio Galli, Kenny Maclean, Linda Singer), Sam (Jack Ammon) Officers (Richard Fitzpatrick, Michael Fawkes), Red (Mark Holmes), Orson Welles Imitators (Frank Knight, Giovanni Paldino), Miss Daly (Rita Tuckett), Dog (Kevin Rushton), Worker (Alanna Cavanagh), Westbrook Van Voorhis (Westbrook Van Voorhis – archive audio)
On the 50th anniversary of Orson Welles' infamous Halloween broadcast, the aliens travel to a commemoration at the town of Grovers' Mill, New Jersey – the scene of a real invasion, which was covered by Welles's 'hoax', and is the location of a buried alien war machine.

Written by Tom Lazarus
 Directed by Mark Sobel
First broadcast: 31 October 1988

A7 THE SECOND SEAL

Amanda Burke (Lynne Griffin), General Masters (Greg Morris), Cameraman (Roy Lewis), Alien Courier (Paul Eves), Officer at Bar (Wally Boderenko), Lt Hamill (Michael McKeever), Guard (Todd Schroeder), Captain Murphy (James Kidnie), Newswoman (Anne Farquhar), Hancock (Kirk Dunn), Sgt Ellen (Miriam Newshouse)
Blackwood discovers his father Dr Forrester's records of the 1953 invasion are held in a facility called Operation Deep Ice, along with relics of alien technology, and must get to them before the aliens can.

Written by Patrick Barry
 Directed by Neill Fearnley
First broadcast: 7 November 1988

A8 GOLIATH IS MY NAME

Student (Jeremy Ratchford), Jefferson (Eric Bruskotter), Pete (Jason Bickler), Aliens (Hume Baugh, Darren O'Donnell, Damon D'Oliveria), Debra (Carolyn Dunn), Kim (Kelly Rowan), Robert Parkins (James Kee), Dean Holden (Tarry Doyle), Samuel (Alex Karzis), Gabriel (Kevin Frank), Patty (Jill Hennessy), Lab Technician (TJ Scott), Officer Helfrich (George Merner)
The aliens infiltrate a college campus to obtain samples of the lethal Y-Fever virus... but a clumsy alien host drops a vial, creating a mutant which carries two more vials of the lethal germ around campus.

Written by Tom Lazarus
 Directed by George Bloomfield
First broadcast: 14 November 1988

E9 TO HEAL THE LEPER

Sylvia Van Buren (Ann Robinson), Scott (Kim Coates), Beth (Guylaine St-Onge), Leo (Paul Boretski), Detective Harley (Neil Dainard), Nurse (Diane Douglass), Old Man (John Dee), Fred (Philip Williams), Attending Alien (Len Carlson), Officer Roberts (Ross Manson), Desk Honey (Elizabeth Leslie), Teen Queen (Krista Bridges), Dean (Claude Rae), Guard (Harold Luft)
The alien Avocates invade a nuclear power station, seeking Human brains with which to cure one of their number who's been struck down by chicken pox, while the staff of the Blackwood Project are puzzled by the lack of alien transmissions.

Written by David Tynan
 Directed by William Fruet
First broadcast: 21 November 1988



Jared Martin as Blackwood – he's not in Texas anymore...

their metabolism, which left them looking like cut-price Vorlons in gas-masks. The downside was that with their native forms hidden, and any possessed bodies decaying after an episode or two from radiation poisoning, it was hard for the actors playing aliens to be more than ciphers.

The regular characters were also drawn from the military-scientific complexes which populated '50s movies, but with a touch of the anarchic spin of the early '70s UNIT era of *Doctor Who*. At centre stage was this decade's version of the Noble Scientist – Harrison Blackwood, an irreverent hippie working on SETI research, a proponent of lateral thinking and New Age techniques like memory regression. Jared Martin of *Dallas* and *Fantastic Journey* took the role at the last minute, replacing Michael Nouri (co-star of *The Hidden*) after shooting had started on the pilot. He was paired with biochemist Dr Suzanne McCulloch (Canadian actress Lynda Mason Green), the Faintly Repressed Heroine who Harrison has to teach to loosen up. In the '80s such a figure could be divorced, with an 11-year-old daughter Debi (Rachel Blanchard, later to star in UPN's *Clueless* series, and more recently seen as Nancy in Channel Four's *Peep Show*). The Amusing Sidekick was Norton Drake (Philip Akin, later of *Highlander*), who efficiently combined two minority tokens in one – being both a hip, funny black guy and a wheelchair-bound computer hacker (and part of the Canadian cast quota to boot.) When these three detected transmissions from the revived aliens, they crossed paths with Lt-Col Paul Ironhorse (Richard Chaves), the Square-Jawed Soldier figure – by-the-book commander, hard-nosed skeptic, and Cherokee warrior as a bonus. Together, they fight aliens.

Interestingly, in retrospect, Harrison and Suzanne suggest a prototype Mulder and Scully (fighting a rather more coherent paranoid alien conspiracy). Unusually, the male is the intuitive and holistic one, and the female lead is the sceptical rationalist. The team as a whole also evokes a cut-rate *Stargate*. And these days hearing Harrison Blackwood talk earnestly about his foster father Dr. Clayton Forrester brings to mind not the hero of the *War* movie, but his mad-scientist namesake from *Mystery Science 3000*,

“The joy I had writing the line ‘More brains! More brains!’ It’s the high point of my career.”
 – Tom Lazarus

Episode Guide

A10 THE GOOD SAMARITAN

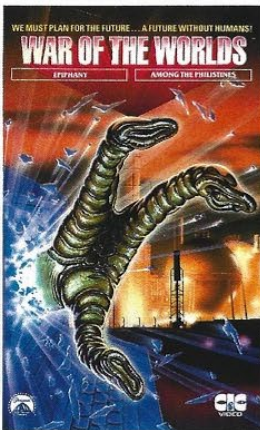
Teri (Lori Hallier), Franklin (Warren Davis), Marcus Madison Mason (Alex Cord), Mrs Pennyworth (Corinne Conley), Larson (David Gardner), Helen (Sharolyn Sparrow), Joyce Mason (Micki Moore), Hewlit (Barry Flatman), Commander (Michael Kramer), Cook (James O'Regan), Busboy (Mark Krause, Nun (Jackie May), Waitress (Mung-Ling Tsui), Matrons (Billie Mae Richards, Maxine Miller, Anne Mirvish), Bodyguard (Michael Woods), Dr Adams (JR Zimmerman), Longshoreman (George Kash), Doctor (John Baylis), Nurse (Djanet Sears), College Boys (Darrin Baker, Andrew Gunn), Cheerleader (Laura Cruickshank), Captive Woman (CJ Fidler)

A womanizing businessman develops a form of germ and radiation resistant grain that could feed the world, but could also be of immense use to the aliens.

Written by Sylvia Clayton

Directed by Paul Tucker

First broadcast: 26 December 1988



A soviet scientist asks her old flame, Harrison Blackwood, to help her defect, while the aliens attempt to cause a nuclear war by sabotaging a disarmament conference by detonating an atomic bomb.

Written by Sylvia Van Buren

Directed by Neill Fearnley

First broadcast: 2 January 1989

A12 AMONG THE PHILISTINES

Dr Adrian Bushard (Cedric Smith), Mrs Pennyworth (Corinne Conley), Kensington (Larry Reynolds), Chubs (Gregory Cross), Alien Trucker (Cliff Woolner), Alien Driver (Richard Beach), Soldier (Clyde Whitham)

Blackwood recruits a language expert to decrypt the aliens' transmissions, and allow him access to the cottage. Unfortunately, he's actually an alien assassin who now has Norton and Debi at his mercy...

Written by Patrick Barry

Directed by William Fruet

First broadcast: 9 January 1989

A13 CHOIRS OF ANGELS

Aliens (John Novack, Alex Carter), Alien Soldier (Heidi Von Pallese), Dr Eric Von Deer (Jan Rubeš), Billy Carlos (Billy Thorpe), Receptionist (Warren Wood), Policeman (Wally Bolland)

The aliens place subliminal messages in a musician's recordings to brainwash a scientist into developing a way of immunizing them against Earth's bacteria.

Written by Durnford King

Directed by Herbert Wright

First broadcast: 16 January 1989

A14 DUST TO DUST

Kirk (Elias Zarou), Joseph Lonetree (Ivan Naranjo), Mark Newport (RD Reid), Grace Lonetree (Robin Sewell), Darrow Lonetree (Erich Schweig), Connie (Linda Goranson), Pat (Joseph Zeigler), Lawyer (George Bloomfield), Detective (Gairey Richardson), Guard (Tim MacMenamin), Alien (Michael Kramer)

"Some newspaper called us the worst show on television. I've never been prouder in my life."

- Tom Lazarus

gleefully inflicting the worst '50s B-movies imaginable on his captive audience... which seems oddly fitting.

From the beginning the show was dogged by script troubles. The pilot was shot during the 1988 Writers Guild strike which also curtailed Season Two of TNG. Greg Strangis, heavily involved in the Writers Guild, had to stop any work on his own show, but Sam Strangis (heavily involved in the Directors Guild) refused to shut down production. Thus, the first three episodes shot after the pilot (*The Walls of Jericho*, *The Good Samaritan*, and *Epiphany*) were written by strike-breaking writers under pseudonyms – Forrest Van Buren, Sylvia Clayton, and Sylvia Van Buren, all named after Harrison's foster parents. The resulting scripts were wonky and underwritten; while *Jericho* had to follow the pilot for story reasons, the other two episodes were held back for reworking, and eventually slipped quietly into the middle of rerun season during Christmas and New Years.

When the staff returned to the show at the end of the strike, Lazarus and Wright penned the next four episodes between them: *Goliath is my Name* (a quickie to keep the show in production), *A Multitude of Idols*, *Thy Kingdom Come*, and *Eye for an Eye*. The last three episodes staked out the territory the show aimed to explore. In *Multitude*, astonishingly for American action TV at the time, the bad guys won outright – reviving a thousand new aliens and setting up an entire town of bodysnatchers before dispersing into the general population. *Kingdom* introduced Sylvia Van Buren (Ann Robinson, recreating her role from the film) as a recurring character – Harrison's foster mother, now in a mental institution after her encounter with an alien, and psychically attuned to the aliens' activity. (It also featured Little Bobby, a kid whose family were taken over by aliens – Bobby was given a cameo in the next script, and his attempts to get someone to believe him were meant to be a running gag throughout later episodes, but Paramount vetoed it.) And *Eye for an Eye* marked the 50th anniversary of Orson Welles's War radio broadcast, with a return to Grovers Mill, New Jersey.



The surprise star of the show – Richard Chaves as Ironhorse



Welles's War

Everyone surely knows the story of Orson Welles's Hallowe'en 1938 radio broadcast of *War of the Worlds*, and how its all-too-convincing fake news reports of a Martian attack in Grovers Mill, New Jersey provoked mass panic in the streets. Some people even know that the *real* news reports were equally fake, and that there were actually no mass riots or suicides at all. But the folklore lives on, and the broadcast did undoubtedly convince a sizeable number of people of the invasion, at least up to the first commercial break. The effect has happened again and again — locally-produced versions of the play have had the same effect everywhere from Santiago, Chile in 1944 to northern Portugal in 1988. Most tragically, the February 12, 1949 broadcast in Quito, Ecuador resulted in an enraged

mob setting fire to the radio station, killing 15 people.

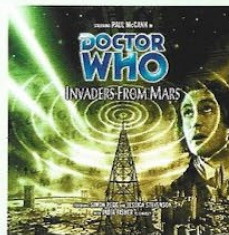
The *War of the Worlds* series celebrated the radio show with *Eye for an Eye* by Tom Lazarus, an episode airing 50 years to the day after the broadcast. It turns out that Welles's broadcast was a government cover-up for a real alien scout-mission landing; now the aliens are returning to Grovers Mill to retrieve a crashed war machine. The fact that the film-style war machine shown in the episode bears no resemblance to the Martian tripods which Welles described is *almost* addressed; there's an implication that 'Welles' and his two government advisers were actually a triad of aliens spreading disinformation to boot.

Similarly, the episode confronts head-on the question of why no one in the world seems to remember

either invasion; unfortunately, they don't answer it. (The best suggestions they can come up with are selective amnesia as a by-product of mass hysteria, and that the aliens have inflicted memory loss on all of Humanity.) The Blackwood team goes to Grovers Mill, in the midst of a county-fair-like anniversary party to talk to the surviving old men who fought in 1938, the only ones who still remember. However, when some of the aliens start snacking on a veteran's prized rose bushes, our heroes realize the 'Martians' have returned...

The episode also featured Harrison Blackwood's first face-to-face meeting with an alien, including the immortal lines: "You are fungus before us. There can be no dialogue with fungus. Only death."

Other series have also paid tribute to Welles's classic drama. In 2002 the Big Finish *Doctor Who* radio dramas produced *Invaders From Mars*,



by *League of Gentlemen* mainstay and new TV-Who writer Mark Gatiss, co-starring the now ubiquitous Simon Pegg and Jessica Stevenson of *Spaced* and *Shaun of the Dead*. Welles himself was played by David Benson, and Jonathan Rigby portrayed John Houseman. Paul McGann's eighth Doctor and India Fisher as Charley Pollard travel to New York in 1938, and while the Doctor plays private detective two real aliens land in search of a lost comrade. The result is a sort of *film noir* comedy, all brassy dames and mush-mouthed mobsters and

a sort of alien Maltese Falcon. It all spirals into chaos as the aliens are revealed to be staging a hoax invasion of their own, and in turn are frightened off when the Doctor uses Welles's broadcast to convince them that they're outgunned by the Martians.

Neither tribute could hold a candle to the Animaniacs' 1993 *Pinky and the Brain* short *Battle for the Planet*, in which everyone's favourite megalomaniac and his lab-rat stooge produce their own alien landing for a TV broadcast. (Appropriately, Maurice LaMarche's voice as Brain had always been based on Orson Welles, and he later voiced the role of Welles in Tim Burton's film *Ed Wood*.) The idea of course was to convince the audience it was real, so that they could take over the world in the resulting chaos. What they managed was to convince the world it was a comedy spectacular...

Episode Guide

Both the aliens and the Blackwood project take notice after an archaeologist steals a Native American headdress that appears to be made of alien material. The crystal at its centre could power an ancient alien warship buried under a reservation for thousands of years.

Written by Richard Krzemien
 Directed by George Bloomfield
First broadcast: 23 January 1989

A15 HE FEEDETH AMONG THE LILIES

Karen McKinney (Cynthia Belliveau), Estelle Robards (Maria del Mar), Pat Thistle (Carole Galloway), Arnold Thistle (Graham Batchelor), Walter Hayden (Myron Senkus), Alien Doctors (Mary Pirie, Faye Cohen, Diana Rowland), Alien Paramedics (Mark Wilson, Dana Anderson), Man with Hat (Julian Richings), Doctor (Larrey Mannell), Nurse (Bonnie Gruen), Aide (Andrea Nevitt), Cop (Chris Trace)

The aliens abduct Human beings and implant them with devices to study their immune systems before releasing them back into the world... and Blackwood falls in love with one of the victims.

Written by Tom Lazarus
 Directed by George Bloomfield
 30 January 1989

A16 THE PRODIGAL SON

Quinn (John Colicos), McGinnis (James Purcell), Sgt Fitzpatrick (Robert Morelli), Alien Cop (Boris Khaimovich), Cop (Elliot McIver), Margo (Randall Carpenter), Hwanf (Jim Yip), Sanchez (Dan Delabbio)

The aliens attempt to hunt down an artist called Quinn, who's actually an alien who survived the 1953 invasion thanks to his natural immunity to Earth's bacteria. But Quinn has his own plans to take over the world, and kidnaps Blackwood before delivering an ultimatum to the United Nations.

Written by Herbert Wright
 Story by Patrick Barry
 Directed by George McCowan
First broadcast: 6 February 1989

A17 THE MEEK SHALL INHERIT

Sylvia Van Buren (Ann Robinson), Molly Stone (Diana Reis), Dayton (Michael Copeman), Sensky (John Gilbert), Pollito (Sam Malkin), Sgt Coleman (Norah Grant), Corporal Alexander Stavrakos (Vito Rezza), Sgt Derriman (Steve Pernie), Bull (Gene Mack), Nurse Hamilton (Diane Douglass), Lineman (Steve Makaj), Hooker (Kim Cayer), Mom (Mary McCandless), Dad (Will Finlay), Daughter (Susan Lowry), Stan (Jed Dixon)

Sylvia befriends a homeless woman who saw a friend taken over by an alien, and stumbles upon an alien plot to disrupt global communications.

Written by DC Fontana
 Directed by William Fruet
First broadcast: 13 February 1989

A18 UNTO US A CHILD IS BORN

Jesse (Brent Carver), Nancy Salvo (Amber Lea Weston), Lang (Ken Girotti), Nurse (Michael Claire), Colin (Geoffrey Bowes), Blanche (Jacqueline McLeod), Young (Clark Johnson), Bernie (James Mainprize), Alien Toddler (Jonathan Ursini and Brandyn Ursini), Howard Hugo (Peter Boretzki), Peggy (Martha Irving), Alien Mutants (Mark Parr, John Furguson), Dr Melish (Tim Koetting), Sgt Coleman (Norah Grant), Saleslady (Deborah Theaker), Ken Salvo (Albert Schultz)

A biological attack on a shopping mall collapses in chaos, forcing an alien to take over the body of a pregnant woman, who gives birth to a mutant child that's half-Human, half-alien.

Written by David Brass
 Directed by George McCowan
First broadcast: 20 February 1989

A19 THE LAST SUPPER

Gabriel Morales (Efrain Figueroa), Leonid Argochev (Colm Feore), Soo Tak (James Hong), Jerry Raymond (Barry Kennedy), Dr Sunethra Menathong (Suzanne Coy), Morris Burnobi (Abbot Jones Anderson), Nurse (Brenda Kamino), Businessmen (Rob Payne), Sgt Coleman (Norah Grant)

Experts from across the world are gathered together to discuss the alien threat, providing the Advocates with a tempting opportunity to eliminate their enemies.



Ironhorse in action, protecting his colleagues

Over the next batch of stories, the cast sharpened their interplay; Ironhorse became a breakout character, attracting more fanmail than Jared Martin. The writers picked up on Philip Akin's martial arts training and gave Norton some novel fight scenes, fighting from his motorized wheelchair using a quarterstaff. A late decision that Norton should in fact *not* be played with a broad Jamaican accent resulted in Akin looping all his dialogue for the first few episodes, producing oddly contorted line readings which couldn't hide their origins even with Californian inflection. Wright and Lazarus rewrote scripts like mad – producing one from scratch in two days when Paramount vetoed one at the last minute – and revelled in the lunacy of it all.

The aliens also got fleshed out – pretty much literally; the show started featuring odd bursts of splatter-movie gore, as the aliens occasionally pulled off a leg or stole brains from peoples' skulls. They were given a point of view beyond simple conquest: their dying world had been a garden paradise, and they felt they'd take better care of this one than we would. Even the political commentary of Wells's original survived in an Americanized form – rather than the aliens representing British colonialism, the series related them to the treatment of Native Americans, mainly through Ironhorse's background. As he deadpanned in *Thy Kingdom Come*, "Great. First the white man, now aliens."

In an attempt to put a human face on the alien point of view, Wright's *The Prodigal Son* introduced John Colicos as Quinn – the lone survivor of the 1953 invasion. His mysterious immunity to Earth bacteria had kept him trapped in the same Human body since 1953, and he had become humanized enough not to want the Advocates to dissect him to discover his secret. Quinn played both sides against each other to ensure his own survival. Harrison saw him as a chance to open a dialogue with the aliens, but Quinn wasn't nearly so earnest about it: "I've got nothing against Humans, really... some of my best friends are Human. But as a group, they stink. I say kill 'em all." Colicos, the man who created the first Klingon on *Star Trek* and the original Baltar on *Battlestar Galactica*, brought a half-mad sense of relish to his scenes sparring with Harrison, which were the first real chance for Human and alien perspectives to confront each other. The character's ambition to take over from the Advocates could lead him to be an ally, if he could be persuaded to end the war, but after a second brief appearance in *My Soul to Keep* the character disappeared for the rest of the season.

The sixteenth episode made, *Among the Philistines*, saw the aliens infiltrate the Blackwood Project's safe house and kill their groundskeeper Tom Kensington. Despite their attempts to portray Kensington as a part of the team in an emotive Tasha Yar-style funeral finale, in fact he hadn't actually appeared on the show since the second episode, and reappeared without explanation halfway through this one just to be killed off. Swapping the episode order

Episode Guide

Written by Tom Lazarus
 Directed by George McCowan
First broadcast: 6 March 1989

E20 VENGEANCE IS MINE

Psychiatrist (Bernard Behrens), Martin Cole (Denis Forest), Sarah Cole (Carolyn Dunn), Samantha (Alannah Myles), Aliens (Peter Millard, Paul Coeur, Julie Kahner), Milton (Don Allison), Henchman (Roger Montgomery), Stavrakos (Vito Rezza), Woman Student (Mishu Vellani), Reverend (David Mulholland), Guard (Simon Du Toit), Human Captive (Nick Dekruyff)
Ironhorse opens fire on three suspected aliens... only to find he's killed an innocent Human hostage, whose husband seeks revenge.

Written by Arnold Margolin
 Directed by George Bloomfield
First broadcast: 17 April 1989

E21 MY SOUL TO KEEP

Cash McCullough (Michael Parks), Quinn (John Colicos), Alien Farmer (Michael Dyson), Guard (Bruce McFee), Stavrakos (Vito Rezza), Alien Cabbie (Moshin Sharazee), Old Clerk (Handy Atmadja), Cooper (Robert Bibaman), Camera Crew (Peter Van Wart, André Mayers)

Quinn contacts Suzanne's ex-husband, an investigative journalist, and leaks him details of the Blackwood project, while the aliens attempt to breed a new generation of Earth-adapted young.

Written by John Kubichan
 Directed by William Fruet
First broadcast: 24 April 1989

E22 SO SHALL YE REAP

Envoy (Jill Jacobson), Lt Teri Novak (Dixie Seatle), Det Jack Sawyer (Jonathan Welsh), Alien Aide (Angelo Rizacos), Sherry (Isabelle Mejias), Woman (Carolyn Scott), Director (Peter MacNeill), Streetwalker (Shelley-Lynn Owens), Alien Driver (Andrew Scorer), Megan (Charlene Richards), Businessman (Charles Gray), Cops (Allen Kosonic, Phillip Jarrett), Sergeant (Reg Dreger), Bartender (Gene Mack), Nasty Alien (Vince Guerriero), Man (Myron Senkus), Busboy (Benson Simmonds), Bum (Charles Hayter), Coroner (John Grima)

The aliens test an addictive drug that causes violent impulses, while the Blackwood team pose as Drug Enforcement Agents to investigate a series of murders.

Written by Michael McCormack
 Directed by George Bloomfield
First broadcast: 1 May 1989

E23 THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

Dr Frederick Alexander (Nicolas Coster), Ray (Hugh Thompson), Lab Technicians (Tim Lee, James Rankin), Lt Col Manning (Thomas Hauff), Lt Perry (Janet Bailey), Worker (John Tench), Sgt Tex (Dale Wilson), Man (Hume Baugh)

An alien craft is taken to a government black ops unit called Project Nine, whose chief has dangerous ideas about establishing communications with the aliens.

Written by Durnford King
 Directed by Neill Fearnley
First broadcast: 8 May 1989

E24 THE ANGEL OF DEATH

Q'Tara (Elaine Giftos), Jake (John Evans), Housewives (Rachel Stephens, Denise Baillarceon, Maryanne McIssac), Stavrakos (Vito Rezza), Max (David McKnight), Firemen (Dwight Bacquie, Peter James Haworth, Alan Fawcett), TJ (Gerry Mendicino), Fred (Richard Blackburn), Man with Glasses (Doug Hughes), Janitor (Art Nefsky), Beggar (Adrian Pellett)

Aliens are hunted down by a serial killer that wants to know the location of the advocacy, and proves to be a Synth from the planet Qar'to. But can this ally against the Advocates be trusted?

Written by Herbert Wright
 Directed by Herbert Wright
First broadcast: 15 May 1989



My, what a big tank. Does it have some hidden meaning?

around shortened the gap between his appearances, but meant that *Prodigal Son* aired after an episode which made reference to its events.

The last batch of episodes made an effort to broaden the scope of the series – sending the team everywhere from Chicago to Antarctica (for a take on *The Thing from Another World*). Episodes spent less time in the Blackwood Project safehouse, addressing a perceived problem that the heroes spent too much of each episode sitting around in safety before stumbling across the alien scheme of the week. The gloriously-named Omega Squad were introduced in an episode titled (perhaps inappropriately) *The Meek Shall Inherit* – recurring soldier characters under Ironhorse's command, given just enough time in the spotlight that the audience would presumably care about their eventual grisly demises. (As it happened, none of them met their fates before the end of the season.) International representatives came to a conference on fighting the aliens in *The Last Supper*, allowing Blackwood and company to show them budget-saving clips.

Finally, Herbert Wright wrote and directed the season finale, *The Angel of Death*, and cast his wife Elaine Giftos as an alien android assassin – Q'tara, a Synth from planet Qar'to. Not to be upstaged by such names, or her elaborate pop-star wig and make-up, Giftos called upon all her dance skills to give Q'tara stylized movements of a sort not seen outside of Kate Bush's *Wuthering Heights* video. The result was memorable, to say the least, even before she started shooting laser bolts from her fingertips. Q'tara represented a second alien race which wanted to preserve Humans... as a future food source for them, of course. With these elements, plus Quinn, the producers were setting the stage to expand the mythology for the second season.

However, with ratings sliding over the course of the season from a high premiere to a 6.9 average (at a time when TNG was getting a 12 rating), Paramount ousted the existing production staff and gave the show to Frank Mancuso Jr, executive producer of Paramount's sister show *Friday the 13th*. Mancuso was given *carte blanche* to overhaul the show, and would produce a new take on the *War* which bore about as little resemblance to this season as the first season did to any previous version of *War of the Worlds*... 🐱



Blackwood and McCullough confer