



The War of the Worlds When Worlds Collide

With **The War of the Worlds**, Paramount had taken its film version of HG Wells's novel and updated it with bizarre twists that gave it an insane charm. So what to do for Season Two? How about a total revamp? Jonathan Blum describes the arrival of the Second Wave...

By the end of its first season in early 1989, the syndicated **War of the Worlds** TV series had managed to earn itself a rapidly diminishing cult following. While early results had suggested that Paramount had found another *Star Trek*: *The Next Generation*-sized success in their film library, ratings had dropped close to the level of the studio's other adaptation of a Paramount film, *Friday the 13th*, over the course of the season. *Friday*, produced out of the same Toronto studio, had lower figures overall due to its controversial horror content (even though its concept of recovering antiques that had been cursed by the devil had little to do with the slasher movie franchise), but they were increasing dramatically rather than decreasing. So, Paramount's response was to clean house, replace

War's entire creative team, and put Friday executive producer Frank Mancuso Jr (son of Paramount CEO Frank Mancuso) in charge of both shows.

Mancuso was given carte blanche to overhaul the show – only the name was sacred, because the series had been created to exploit Paramount's rights to the 1953 theatrical movie. His first concern was that the show was developing a safeness to its storytelling formula, which had its roots firmly in '50s B-movie traditions. The heroes – hippie scientist Harrison Blackwood (Jared Martin), single-mom biochemist Suzanne McCulloch (Lynda Mason Green), hip black wheelchair-bound computer hacker Norton Drake (Phil Akin), strait-laced Cherokee colonel Paul Ironhorse (Richard Chaves), and Suzanne's teenage daughter Debi (Rachel Blanchard) – were an increasingly contented team who spent much of each



Ironhorse is not long for this world...

episode secure in their safehouse while investigating the aliens' scheme of the week. They had the full resources of the US military available to them, and with few if any of the aliens' plans succeeding there was little sense of the world being under threat.

So for Season Two, Mancuso chose to leap forward a few years, to the arrival of the second wave of alien colonists (as had been anticipated repeatedly in the first season). In the meantime, Earth had been struck by an environmental disaster and became a Max Headroom/Blade Runner-style urban wasteland (when shooting in the notoriously well-maintained city of Toronto, the art department generally had to supply their own squalor from scratch). The middle class had pretty much vanished; citizens were either fabulously well-off or near-destitute, and our heroes would soon find themselves among the 'have-nots'. Now the Humans would be on the defensive – the second-wave aliens had identified the Blackwood Project, and were hunting them throughout the series as well as vice versa.

B-movies, goofy gore, and camp were out; cyberpunk, action, and a dark desaturated colour palette were in. An astonishing moody title sequence captured the new atmosphere: a motion-controlled swoop through a model cityscape, alighting on TV sets glimpsed through broken windows that showed fragmentary news reports of rioting and chaos. Phrases from a reporter caught up in the spiralling breakdown – shouting 'What is this world coming to?' – even evoked the news-report format of Orson Welles' classic War radio broadcast. And despite the appearance of a major budget increase, the show was actually still being shot for about \$700,000 US an hour – barely half of an average network prime-time series budget at the time.

One of Mancuso's early thoughts was apparently to bring back John Colicos as a regular – Colicos's two appearances as the self-interested renegade alien Quinn having been highlights of the first season. Apparently the new season would begin with Quinn overthrowing the alien Advocates and striking a crippling blow against the Blackwood Project, before taking control of the new wave of colonists. Colicos was unavailable, though, so the new leader of the second wave became Malzor, played with forehead-vein-throbbing hypertension by first season guest star Denis Forest.

These new arrivals (now identified as Morthren) showed more personality and capability for internal dissent than the first-season aliens; Malzor's scientist underling Mana (a pre-Forever Knight Catherine Disher) was loyal to her people but not to him. The first wave's vacuum-cleaner suits were out; the newcomers had stable disease-resistant Human bodies, which allowed Forest and Disher to leave their lair and interact with the rest of the cast. Instead of possessing Humans, they could clone them, and improvised equipment was replaced with slimy green organic tech.

Most intriguingly, the Morthren brought their god with them: a glowing disembodied spirit called the Eternal. Originally the Eternal would have been called the Immortal, recalling the first-season alien catchphrase "To life immortal"; the plan for it to speak in cryptic deity-babble ("I am Morthrai. Morthrai is eternal. Yet a new Morthrai is created every second. In my mind. As I rise towards the final perfection. Void.") was changed to a sort of alien whale song. This obscured a key detail: the Morthren plans for genocide stemmed from their interpretation of its command to "cleanse all impurity", when in fact the Eternal might have been commanding them to clean up pollution, stamp out diseases, or just take a shower.

Episode Guide

Dr Harrison Blackwood Jared Martin
Dr Suzanne McCullough Lynda Mason Green
Liam Kincaid Adrian Paul
Debi McCullough Rachel Blanchard
Malzor Denis Forest
Mana Catherine Disher
Ardix Julian Richings

Created by Greg Strangis
Produced by Frank Mancuso Jr

B1 THE SECOND WAVE

Lt Col Ironhorse (Richard Chaves), Norton Drake (Philip Akin), Alien Scientist (Julian Richings), Female Newcomer (Sonya Delwaide), Alien Guard (James Kirchner), Plato (Aaron Ross Fraser), First Addict (Greg Kramer), Guard (Michael Woods), Hooker (Marion Bennett), Tough Kid (Richard Zeppieri), Marine (Paul Eves)

With no sign of alien activity in months, military support for the Blackwood project is waning as environmental disaster wrecks society. Then the long-expected Second Wave of aliens arrives, taking on Human form and executing the original aliens as punishment for their repeated failures. Sensing the threat from the Blackwood project, they capture Ironhorse and clone him, using the duplicate to infiltrate the cottage...

Teleplay by Michael Michaelian and Jonathan Glassner
Story by Michael Michaelian
Directed by Francis Delia
First broadcast: 2 October 1989

B2 NO DIRECTION HOME

Father Tim (Angelo Rizacos), Ralph (Peter Blais), Mission woman (Denise Fergusson), Ex-biker (Kevin Rushton)

In the aftermath of the Cottage's destruction and the deaths of Norton and Ironhorse, the team's survivors search for a new home, while Blackwood and Kincaid discover an alien device that can store memories and is then to transfer them from the original person to a clone. Meanwhile, Mana and Ardix clone a clergyman and send him out to preach the gospel of the true god... the Eternal they worship.

Teleplay by Nolan Powers
Story by Thomas Baum
Directed by Mark Sobel
First broadcast: 9 October 1989

B3 DOOMSDAY

Reverend Thomas Solter (Kurt Reis), Grace Solter (Diana Reis), Steven Solter (Nathaniel Moreau), Bayda (Patricia Phillips), Gates (Stephen Black), Jones (Donnie Bowes), Barrows (Vince Guerriero), Desperate Man (Frank Blanch), Parishioner (Gerry Pearson)

The Morthren attempt to take control of the city by cutting off its water supply during a heat wave, causing riots to break out as supplies dwindle. Then the font at the Reverend Thomas Salter's church starts to produce an inexhaustible supply of water. As further miracles follow, with the preacher's cloned son returning from the dead, Kincaid and the team realize that the aliens are trying to develop a cult of worship around their own god, the Eternal...

Written by Tony DiFranco
Directed by Timothy Bond
First broadcast: 16 October 1989

B4 TERMINAL ROCK

Rosa (Shannon Lawson), Larry (Jaimz Woolvett), Sol/Dennis Lawson (Paul Bettis), Mr Ripper (Lawrence King), Scavenger (Dylan Neal)

The aliens clone the lead singer of a punk band, introducing subliminal messages that will incite violence in Humans into his music. As the Blackwood team investigate, the situation causes problems for Kincaid and the adolescent Debi...

Written by John Groves
Directed by Gabriel Pelletier
First broadcast: 23 October 1989

Episode Guide

B5 BREEDING GROUND

Kate Barrows (Helen Hughes), Dr Emil Gestaine (Gerard Parkes), Bayda (Patricia Phillips), Eddie (John Knapp), Mailman (John Dee), Nurse (Elizabeth Leslie), Fifth Floor Nurse (Sandra Caldwell)

Blackwood discovers gruesome evidence of alien experiments while searching for medication, as Malzor and Mana attempt to increase their numbers by breeding Morthren on Earth, and offer to cure a terminally ill doctor in return for his aid in grafting alien embryos into his patients.

Written by Alan Moskowitz

Directed by Armand Mastroianni

First broadcast: 30 October 1989

B6 SEFT OF EMUN

Seft (Laura Press), Blade (Victoria Snow), Torri (Illya Woloshyn)

With a power shortage threatening the Morthren plans, Malzor brings the last survivors of a race exterminated by the Morthren out of suspended animation. To create more power crystals, the alien priestess Seft has to obtain supplies from a black market shop, where she encounters Blackwood and seeks his aid...

Written by JKE Rose

Directed by William Fruet

First broadcast: 6 November 1989

B7 LOVING THE ALIEN

Marcus Crane (Eugene Glazer), Ceeto (Keram Malicki-Sanchez), Jo Crane (Mia Kirshner), Dix (Elliot Smith), Cappy (Cal Wilson), Packrat (Louis Tucci), Mercenary (Larry McLean)

Ceeto, the teenage alien destined to become Malzor's successor, becomes bored with his training and slips away, befriending Debi, who continues to trust him even after they're attacked by thugs and he's revealed to be an alien.

Meanwhile, Suzanne helps Marcus Crane search for his missing daughter, unaware that she's been cloned by the Morthren.

Written by Janet MacLean

Directed by Otta Hanus

First broadcast: 13 November 1989

B8 NIGHT MOVES

John (Ken Pogue), Rebecca (Sally Chamberlin), Paul Fox (Wayne Best), Shirley (Meg Hogarth), Roy (Dale Wilson), Scoggs (Belinda Metz), Farmer (Leonard Chow), Guard (John Thallon), Morthren Worker (Ted Ludzik)

A food shortage in the city leads Suzanne to take Debi to seek refuge at her mother's farm... only to find that her stepfather has been cloned by the Morthren, who are using his farm and many others to grow Morthren food supplies under the cover of a secret government agricultural experiment...

Written by Lorne Rossman

Directed by Mark Sobel

First broadcast: 20 November 1989

B9 SYNTHETIC LOVE

Jonathan Laporte (Vlasta Vrana), Pollito (Sam Malkin), Rene Laporte (Kathryn Rose), Aide (Richard Sali), Bayda (Patricia Phillips), Lunatic (Andrew Scorer), Nurse (Ellen Horst), Drug Dealer (Dean Richards), Young Woman (Gigi De Leon), Druggist (RD Reid), Scientist (Elizabeth Beeler), Man in Bar (Réal Andrews)

Kincaid takes a drug-addicted friend to the famed Laporte Rehabilitation Center, where he can be treated with an experimental drug called Krebulax. But the drug is produced from Human brain tissue, and is intended to provide the Morthren with a way to control Human society...

Written by Nancy Ann Miller

Directed by Francis Delia

First broadcast: 15 January 1990

B10 THE DEFECTOR

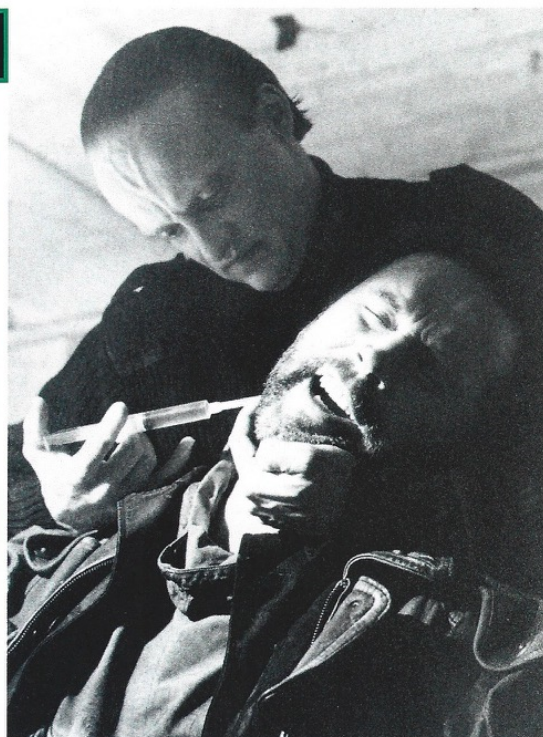
Kemo (Charles McCaughan), Scoggs (Belinda Metz), Lunatic (Andrew Scorer), Ace (Charles Kerr), Lonelyheart (Alan Feiman), Roller (Paul Coeur)

When an attempt to hack into the Humans' computers goes wrong, a Morthren technician Kemo is left physically scarred by the experience. Facing execution, he poses as a Human hacker and tries to thwart the Morthren plans...

Written by Judith Berg and Sandra Berg

Directed by Armand Mastroianni

First broadcast: 22 January 1990



Malzor gets his hands on Blackwood...

The second season premiere, *The Second Wave* (written by first season TNG writer Michael Michelian with a polish by future *Stargate* supremo Jonathan Glassner), set up the new format. The new aliens arrived, executed the Advocates and their followers, infiltrated the Human military and government, replaced Ironhorse's superiors, and blew up the Blackwood Project safe-house, giving Norton and Ironhorse heroic deaths in the process as a bonus. Harrison, Suzanne and Debi went on the run with John Kincaid (Adrian Paul, later to star as Duncan MacLeod in *Highlander*), a Mad-Max-style ex-military loner with a perpetual stubble and inexhaustible supply of ammunition.

Stories differ on the reasons for the cast changes; some reports have Paramount feeling that Akin and Chaves made the cast "too ethnic", but Mancuso said that Norton was dropped because his wheelchair would be too impractical for the new scenario, while a clean-and-pressed-by-the-book military man like Ironhorse wouldn't fit the new street-level format. Another factor in Ironhorse's departure may have been the Canadian content restrictions crucial to the show's financing; if Canadian Philip Akin was dropped from the cast, one Canadian partnering two Americans wouldn't be enough to count as Canadian content, so one of the Americans would presumably have had to step aside for Commonwealth resident Adrian Paul.

Fans were predictably outraged at the changes – objecting to all the discontinuities in tone and detail with the first season, while tacitly overlooking the equally huge leaps in content and style between Season One and the original movie. In particular, having the pacifist Blackwood start carrying a gun in year two was obviously a bridge too far, even though turning movie heroine Sylvia Van Buren into an institutionalized half-mad psychic was accepted as 'character development'. Martin and Green preferred the second season approach – and arguably that year, with the presence of the Eternal and several episodes where the aliens attempted to manipulate Human religion, engaged more directly

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Episode Guide

B11 TIME TO REAP

General Mann (George R Robertson), Miranda (Paula Barrett), Young Harrison (Amos Crawley), Sylvia (Martha Irving), Nurse (Ellen Horst), Tommy (Seirge LeBlanc), Aide (Brian Furlong), Reporters (Alan Argue, Lorne Pardy), Cab Driver (Gerry Quigley)

The Eternal orders Malzor to return to the aftermath of the 1953 invasion, where he can change history by inoculating the alien First Wave against Earth's bacteria. Following him through the Time tunnel, Kincaid and Blackwood battle to ensure that history remains on course...

Written by Jim Trombetta

Directed by Joseph Scanlan

First broadcast: 29 January 1990

B12 THE PIED PIPER

Adam (Joel Carlson), Paul Daniels (Ron Lea), Julie (Lisa Jakub), Miss Gholston (Tania Jacobs), Bill (Domenic Cuzzocrea), Patrick (Marc Marut), Man (Michael Copeman), Mrs Daniels (Nadine MacKinnon)

As the first of the Morthren to be born on Earth reaches an apparent age of nine, the aliens place it at the Creche Experimental School, an academy for gifted children run by a grief-stricken friend of Suzanne's.

Written by Nancy Ann Miller

Story by Alan Moskowitz

Directed by Allan Eastman

First broadcast: 5 February 1990

B13 THE DEADLIEST DISEASE

Brock (James Purcell), Bing (Joon B Kim), Abraham (Elias Zarou), Gerry (Alex Karzis), Tao (Aki Aleong), West (John Evans), Wiley (Gene Mack), Chin (Denis Ariyama), Vendor (Robert Lee), Thief (Matt Birman)

A variety of warring factions battle to obtain a med cell that could save countless lives, with Malzor forced to strike a deal with the US military in order to save Mana from a disease that threatens his people.

Written by Carl Binder

Story by Wilson Coneybeare

Directed by William Fruet

First broadcast: 12 February 1990

B14 PATH OF LIES

Samuels (Maurice Evans), Rob Nunn (Martin Doyle), Maureen (Nadia Capone), Salo (Ken Quinn), Marc Traynor (David Ferry), Ed Jennings (Bernard Behrens), Mrs Bebe Gardner (Barbara Gordon)

Ardix bargains with a dying millionaire in an attempt to obtain access to a communications satellite, while investigative reporter Marc Traynor narrowly escapes death after getting too close to the aliens' plans – and obtains images of Kincaid and Blackwood killing the Morthren that could blow their cover.

Written by Rick Schwartz and Nancy Ann Miller

Story by Rick Schwartz

Directed by Allan Eastman

First broadcast: 19 February 1990

than their memories. And it's played against an encounter with a minister working with the damaged souls in the urban wasteland, who the aliens exploited as they tracked down Blackwood's team: a man who serves as a symbol of the faith and Human compassion which allows our heroes to rally their strength in the end.

The new season and format definitely had high aims. Still, while the show had improved substantially on dramatic and production grounds, it had lost quite a bit of its deranged charm. Instead of lengthy character scenes with (supposedly) witty lines, the second season was much briefer about things – veering between more deft, and sketchy. Some good drama could have come out of Harrison's new gun-toting, but it was largely confined to Martin squeezing a few hints of wounded idealism into the margins of his performance. On the other hand, the sense of danger increased dramatically, because the aliens were more likely to win rounds – *Breeding Ground*, the third episode made, had the aliens succeed outright in creating a half-Human child (named Adam, naturally). New recurring characters evolved as well: Julian Richings (later the first victim in *Cube*) as Mana's aide Ardix, and Belinda Metz as a sexy computer hacker named Scoggs.

But in the end, production of the second season ran no smoother than the first. Five episodes into production, new executive script consultant Jeremy Hole was hospitalized, and he never returned to the show. Jared Martin says that he and Adrian Paul volunteered to act as de facto story editors during this stretch, rewriting the next week's script during breaks in each week's shooting. Production co-ordinator Rick Schwartz became a recurring writer on the show. Occasional *Star Trek* freelancer Jim Trombetta assumed and left the post of story editor over less than two months. The lack of continuity in the writing staff, both within this year and with the previous one, meant that the show was soon finding new ways to recycle clichés they'd already explored. *The Defector* reused the underlying idea of Quinn, with a lone alien on the run from his people – in this case because he'd been deemed imperfect. The second season did both its own *Drugs Are Bad* story (this time in a future where they'd been legalized and sold through pharmacies), and another 'evil subliminal messages in music' story – though characteristically, where the first season had used New Age music, year two used industrial death metal.

A high point was Jim Trombetta's *Time to Reap*, in which the Eternal gives Malzor a chance to travel back in Time to immunize some of the aliens against Earth bacteria, and Harrison gets to reacquire himself with the child he used to be. The story harked back to the first season, with its bits of '50s B-movie texture and Biblical title; it featured the season's only glimpse of the manta ray alien war machine from the movie, references to Drake and Ironhorse, an appearance by Sylvia Van Buren (played in the '50s flashback by Martha Irving), and even a homage of sorts to HG Wells's original novel. (In Wells's novel, the diseases which killed the aliens off were apparently found in the Human blood they consumed; in this story, the blood contained the antibodies the aliens needed.) Other stories gave the aliens further partial or complete victories (*Path of Lies*), had them resurrect Kincaid's brother as a weapon against him (*Max*), or showed them developing Human-like compassion for one another in the face of

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with the religious angle of Pal's film (or even Wells's novel) than the first season's lip-service use of Biblical titles for all its episodes.

The second episode, *No Direction Home* by Nolan Powers and *Nightmare Café* writer Thomas Baum, took the show's storytelling in a more overtly theme-oriented direction than before. The whole episode was built around the shell-shocked survivors dealing with their losses. Blackwood – now bearded and scruffy – abruptly started carrying a gun. While the Humans hid out in Kincaid's converted A-bomb shelter, they studied a captured piece of alien technology: an engram from their cloning system, which stimulates and reads their memories and generally extracts their life-energy. It's all a metaphor for how dwelling on their moment of loss will destroy them, and how they need to deal with the present rather

potential extinction (*The Deadliest Disease*). The half-Human Adam returned in *The Pied Piper*, and Scoggs was unexpectedly killed off in *Max*.

The show's style continued to shift over the season; more stories began to get out of the urban-jungle environment, exploring upper-class environments (*Video Messiah*) and even a rural one (the farm of Suzanne's mother in *Night Moves*). Having broken the first season format, Mancuso was already expressing frustration with the new one's boundaries as well. Even the street-level episodes tried to get more life-affirming. This reached a peak (or nadir) with *Candle in the Night*, in which the alien threat was back-burnered while the team went to extraordinary lengths to try to give Debi a normal 14th birthday party with her friends. This was



Kincaid's brother returns from the dead as a Cyborg assassin in *Max*

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part of a larger trend to make Debi a character in her own right rather than an appendage of Suzanne's – having a romance with an alien boy in *Loving the Alien*, or fighting another alien in VR in *Totally Real*. More than before, she was used as a symbol of what the team was fighting to save.

While Mancuso's first few episodes more or less halted the ratings slide, they stabilized at too low a level; after 14 episodes had aired, the show was averaging a Nielsen rating of just 3.8, and was slipping below *Friday* the 13th in the syndicated Nielsens. At that point, in March 1990, the axe fell on both shows; *Friday*'s ratings had also slumped as stations dropped it due to its horror content or moved it to late-night timeslots. The Canadian finance deal that underpinned both shows fell through at this point.

Astonishingly for a cancelled series, they had time to produce both a proper finale, *The Obelisk*, and then an episode designed to lead up to it (*True Believer*). *The Obelisk* revealed that the entire invasion had been the result of a personal obsession on Malzor's part (since his wife had died on Earth in 1953). Thus, the whole war could be resolved just by exposing his deceptions and killing him off. Mana then led the surviving aliens away to an unknown fate. The finale managed to be simultaneously clever and sloppy – establishing on one hand that the aliens first noticed us because of our use of atomic weapons in a World War we managed on our own, but contradicting both the 1938 mission and the earlier alien visits established in the first season in the process. It did tie up the environmental subtext that had been in the show from the beginning; it turned out that the Morthren had brought environmental disaster to their garden-paradise world by attempting to expand to Earth, and that Humans were facing similar consequences of their own hubris. Malzor's final plan was to use alien bacteria to wipe out all Earthly life, in a neat turnabout of Wells's original premise, but in the end (in a sort of mutant



Second season new recruit and future *Highlander* Adrian Paul

Episode Guide

B15 CANDLE IN THE NIGHT

Pitcher (Paul Mastroianni), Second Baseman (Nigel Tan), Zeel (Rob McNally), Grace (Jayne Eastwood), Sal (Sam Moses), Joe (Nicolas Van Burek), Lisa (Krista Houston), Ralph (Marlow Vella), Gunther (Sandy Webster), Nate (Noam Zylberman), Sam Fisher (Gema Zamprogna)
While the aliens try to recover a malfunctioning surveillance device, the team band together in an attempt to give Debi a normal birthday... even though they can't find a cake.

Written by Carl Binder

Directed by Armand Mastroianni

First broadcast: 9 April 1990

B16 VIDEO MESSIAH

Van Order (Roy Thinnes), Mindy Cooper (Lori Hallier), Clark (Alex Carter), Hardy Galt (Larry Joshua), Bob (Keith Knight), Jane (Angela Dohrmann), Kurt (Michael Caruana), Sara (Denise McLeod), Staff Member (Suzanne Coy), Thief (Randy Butcher)

The aliens clone a charismatic motivational speaker and use subliminal messages to take control of the rich and powerful. Kincaid is drawn into the scheme because his girlfriend works at the advertising firm handling the campaign...

Written by Norman Snider

Directed by Gabriel Pelletier

First broadcast: 16 April 1990

B17 TOTALLY REAL

Nikita (Colm Feore), David Nash (Trevor Cameron Smith), Scoggs (Belinda Metz), Sendac (Michael Woods), Gamblers (John Tench, Elena Kudaba), Hood (Anthony Audian), Stoner (Peter Szkoda)

Debi is kidnapped and forced to battle an alien warrior in a virtual reality for the entertainment of gamblers, with a very real world death in line for the loser.

Written by James Trombetta

Directed by William Fruet

First broadcast: 23 April 1990

B18 MAX

Max (Michael Welden), Bradley (Chuck Shamata), Scoggs (Belinda Metz), Scott (Jill Hennessy), Zak (Michael Rhodes), Desk Clerk (Marcus Parlio), Military Policeman (Barclay Hope), Gomes (Jorge Montesi)

One year after his brother Max was murdered, Kincaid is stalked by an assassin – his own brother, who the Morthren have resurrected as a cyborg.

Written by Naomi Janzen

Directed by Jorge Montesi

First broadcast: 30 April 1990

B19 THE TRUE BELIEVER

Nash (Michael Hogan), Thresher (Timothy Webber), Hook (Vincent Dale), Guard (Leslie Toth), Newscaster (Sandi Stahlbrand), Dutch (Jon Andersen), Alien Cop (Matt Birman), Hunter (D McLean, JJ Nakaro), Aliens (Marco Bianco, Denis Christensen, Ken Quinn, TJ Scott, Shane Cardwell, Ted Hanlan)

The aliens discover Blackwood, Kincaid and Suzanne's identities, and frame them for a bank robbery by using alien imposters who kill bystanders during the raid.

Written by Jim Henshaw

Directed by Armand Mastroianni

First broadcast: 7 May 1990

B20 THE OBELISK

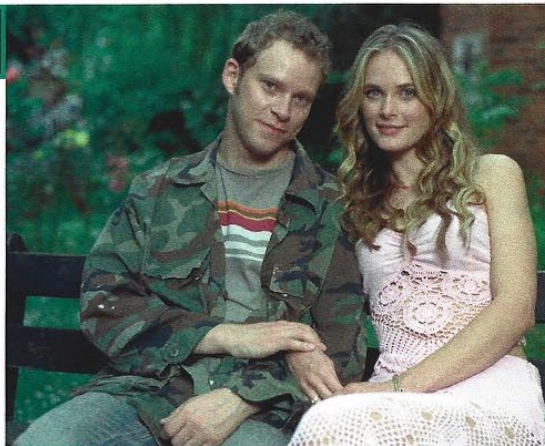
Tallick (John Gilbert), Ceeto (Keram Malicki-Sanchez), Tila (Cynthia Dale), Bayda (Patricia Phillips)

As the Morthren's losses mount, Malzor goes over the edge and embarks on a mad scheme to release a spore which will destroy every native organism on Earth. Appalled at his plans, Ceeto contacts Debi to warn her, and the true causes of the War of the Worlds are finally revealed...

Written by Rick Schwartz and Nancy Ann Miller

Directed by William Fruet

First broadcast: 14 May 1990



Rachel Blanchard later starred in Channel 4's *Peep Show*

variation on Wells) he was defeated by 'the humblest thing that God, in his wisdom, has put upon this earth' – in this case, Debi. Unfortunately, the story also forgot that the alien base was in a high-radiation zone, meaning that our heroes and Debi were probably dying of radiation poisoning as they walked off into the sunrise.

Overall, it's perhaps best to view *War of the Worlds* as experimental – wide-ranging, tremendously ambitious for its budget, but fumbling the ball as often as it caught it. In some ways a bit ahead of its time, in others far behind it. Neither season was especially faithful to any previous version of *War of the Worlds*, but each had a striking ambition of its own: the first a gleeful horror romp with a strong enviro-hippie bent, and the second a commendable attempt at doing a post-apocalyptic urban nightmare on a Canadian action-hour budget. A flawed but ambitious revamp of a flawed but ambitious series. It would be hard for a show built around a fusion of '50s and '80s B-movie trends to be anything but B-grade, but *War* achieved more than it's generally given credit for.



Teen lead Rachel Blanchard took a more active role in year two