



WAR OF THE WORLDS

Story Ideas & Tip Sheet

A Historical Perspective on a Timeless Story

Few literary works have generated as many interpretations in different media as "War of the Worlds." The novel by H.G. Wells, published in 1898, was hailed as a brilliant work of fiction; the 1938 radio broadcast terrorized an entire nation; the 1953 Paramount film won an Academy Award for special effects; and now, 35 years later, the much-anticipated television incarnation continues the literary legacy. Track the continuing history of this legendary science-fiction story.

Bringing a Classic Tale of Science Fiction Into the 1980s

"War of the Worlds" picks up the action 35 years after the end of the classic film. Executive producer Greg Strangis wrote the two-hour movie premiere for the series, which explains how the aliens resume their mission to annihilate mankind. What challenges did Strangis meet in updating a story already imprinted on the national consciousness?

50th Anniversary of the Infamous Radiocast

On October 30, 1938, Orson Welles's famed Mercury Theatre aired an earth-shattering radio play entitled "War of the Worlds." Consider sending a reporter to cover this year's official 50th Anniversary celebration of that broadcast in Grovers Mill, New Jersey, the original site of the "invasion." The event is being planned by Douglas Forrester (who coincidentally shares the same last name as

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Gene Barry's character from the 1953 film) and other residents of Grovers Mill. Scheduled for October 27-30, the gala will feature celebrities from both the original radio broadcast and the new syndicated television show. Proceeds from the celebration are earmarked for scholarship funds and the restoration of Grovers Mill Pond as the historic Martian landing site.

"War of the Worlds" Special Effects Should Get Star Billing

An extraordinary team of special effects and make-up wizards has been assembled for this television series. Among those available for interviews are:

- Alien effects supervisor Bill Sturgeon, who worked on the terrifying "American Werewolf in London"
- Model-maker Greg Jein, who built the alien spacecraft for the series
- Special effects coordinator Bernie Laramie, whose most recent credit was on ABC's "Max Headroom."

A Day in the Life of "War of the Worlds"

Spend a day behind the scenes with the "War of the Worlds" cast and crew and you'll probably believe we are not alone on this planet. Whether on the communications center set tracking alien transmissions, or in the post-production houses where the special effects magic is created, a visit to the "War of the Worlds" production facility provides fascinating copy and terrific visuals.

Story Ideas/Casting News

Look for Ann Robinson, the co-star of the original movie, to reprise her role as Sylvia Van Buren in several upcoming episodes of "War of the Worlds." Her unique perspective on the movie makes her the perfect candidate for an interview.

About the Producers

Executive producers Sam Strangis and Greg Strangis have a relationship that continues outside the office. Talk to the father and

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son team about what it's like to work with each other and why television runs in their blood. Sam Strangis brings to the show a unique viewpoint. He has been part of the evolution of science fiction on TV, serving as Paramount's vice president in charge of production during the making of the original "Star Trek" series. Discuss these experiences with him and at the same time, discover how the genre has changed.

As the creative force behind "War of the Worlds," Greg Strangis has mapped out the blueprint for an entire alien race, complete with social, political and philosophical viewpoints. Talk to Greg about creating a fictional, yet believable alien civilization.

The Actors

"War of the Worlds'" international cast brings different styles and perspectives to their work. Talk to the Americans, Jared Martin and Richard Chaves, and the Canadians, Lynda Mason Green and Philip Akin, to find out how well their different styles mesh and how mutual respect rapidly grew among the principal members of the cast.

Psychological Element

Could the same mass hysteria that was ignited by the fateful radio broadcast in 1938 happen again? Fifty years later, the world is a much different place, with the concept of a "global village" now recognized as a reality. Given the present state of world communications, would this broadcast have the same impact? Talk to national or local psychologists/psychiatrists and media experts, and apply the analysis to your community.

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