

DS9: TRIALS AND TRIBBLE-ATIONS



Emmy-nominated "Trials and Tribble-ations," conceived by Ira Steven Behr, Hans Beimler and Robert Hewitt Wolfe, was a tribute to the original *Star Trek* series (TOS) for *Star Trek's* 30th anniversary in 1996. Rick Berman asked Behr if DS9 wanted to do something unique to celebrate the anniversary after the *Star Trek: Voyager* staff announced plans for their tribute episode, "Flashback." Reportedly, Behr was originally unsure about the idea but fate stepped in and Trekkies everywhere rejoiced!

This episode was a massive undertaking for a television drama in 1996. Building on the technology developed at Paramount for *Forrest Gump* (1994), the visual effects

team was able to use the original negative for TOS's "The Trouble With Tribbles" and insert members of the DS9 cast into the footage seamlessly. This required a great deal of painstaking work on behalf from Gary Hutzel's visual effects team and the cast who performed many scenes to exact timing in front of blank blue or green screens.

In addition to using this amazing technology, the art department re-created sets from TOS in incredible detail. Doug Drexler, by virtue of his huge knowledge of TOS, became the "go-to guy" for details. Since there were no original blueprints to draw on and DVD was not yet available, Drexler had to scan through VHS tapes of TOS episodes and use the heights of the actors to help determine measurements for the new sets. Mike Okuda had to use the same technique to re-create graphics that were originally manufactured by companies that no longer existed.

Charlie Brill reprised his role as Arne Darvin, the Klingon spy. In an amazing coincidence, as Behr and the writing staff were pondering the possibilities for this episode at a pizza parlor, Charlie Brill walked in. Behr cited this as evidence that God is a DS9 fan! The regular cast would appear only in the footage from "The Trouble With Tribbles" but many of

them visited the sets and remarked on how eerily accurate they were. David Gerrold, writer of the original episode, appeared as a background Starfleet officer aboard the Enterprise.

Everyone involved knew that this episode was incredibly special and important. Extremely detailed new models of the *U.S.S. Enterprise* and *Space Station K7* had to be built from scratch. Measurements from the original shooting model at the Smithsonian were used to ensure accuracy. The crew was extremely aware that fans would recognize the smallest detail out of place so everyone gave more than their best efforts. Their work paid off.

Though the hours were exhausting and the work intense, all of the *Star Trek* cast and crew pulled together to deliver one of the most memorable episodes of the franchise. Everyone involved will tell you how tiring this episode was, but they will also tell you the memories of exhaustion are eclipsed by the amount of fun they had bringing it all together. "Trials and Tribble-ations" stands as a wonderful tribute to the original *Star Trek* and a reminder of the respect and admiration for Gene Roddenberry's vision among those to whom he entrusted his universe.