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MARC ZICREE: A Fan's Journey Far Beyond the Stars



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Marc Zicree has been a fan of *Star Trek* since its debut in 1966 with "The Man Trap." "I was a huge sci-fi fan growing up and when the ads for *Star Trek* started premiering I was really excited. I was amazed by the first episode ... and was hooked from then on. My three favorite shows were *The Twilight Zone*, *The Outer Limits* and *Star Trek*, and many of the episodes were written by the same writers. *Star Trek* just had these revolution-

ary episodes, and it started to dawn on me that by writing one episode you could change someone's life. Harlan Ellison's 'City on the Edge of Forever' was unlike anything else that had ever been on TV. The hero didn't get the girl. He had to let the girl die! It really made me want to work in TV." Now, almost 45 years later, Zicree has been working as a writer in television for over thirty years and his success can all be traced back to *Star Trek*.

In 1968, during the final season of *Star Trek*, Zicree's stepmother wrote to the studio and asked if he could have a tour. To his delight, they said yes! "They were shooting the final episode, 'Turnabout Intruder.' I remember DeForest Kelley, William Shatner and Majel Barrett were there ... I sat in the Captain's Chair and I remember looking at the Transporter lights. I remember being in Engineering and it was designed in forced perspective and I was surprised at how small it was in person when it looked so big on screen. It was a really transformative experience in my life."

Flash forward to 1995. Zicree pitched a very unique story, one that only a true sci-fan could write, to Hans Beimler. It would be a year before Beimler could convince the other producers of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* that they should make the episode, "Far Beyond the Stars." The story came from the friendships Zicree developed with the great sci-fi writers like Theodore Sturgeon. "I was thinking about all these great science fiction writers that no one knows about. These writers who wrote for the love of it. They were writing for a penny a word! All the sci-fi we love comes from that world. I was also inspired by this audio tape of Harlan Ellison talking about writing for the pulps. He talked about how they would commission the cover art and then have to build a story around it..." Zicree wanted to tell a story about creating a better world and the cost of telling the truth. The result was one of the most beloved *Star Trek* episodes of the entire franchise. It was nominated for three Emmy Awards. Zicree notes that he is "...so proud that I could be part of this amazing *Star Trek* episode. It came out every bit as great as I thought it would."

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As if "Far Beyond the Stars" weren't enough of a crowning achievement, in 2007 Zicree directed and co-wrote the episode "World Enough and Time" for *Star Trek: New Voyages*. "We spent six months putting together the crew, and then we shot nine days in New York and two days in LA, and then we had a solid year of post-production. There were over 700 effects shots. We were the first web show ever to be nominated for a Hugo or a Nebula and we beat out *Battlestar Galactica* for a TV Guide award. It's my proudest achievement in over 30 years in the industry." Among the items Zicree has added to the

Propworx *Star Trek* auction is a Translite that features diagrams of the U.S.S. Enterprise from the TOS Bridge set. When TOS was canceled, the Bridge set was donated to UCLA. It remained there for a time but was eventually destroyed. Before that, a friend of Zicree's, Mike Jittlov, who was a UCLA film student, removed the Translite. Years later, he sold it to Zicree who owned it proudly for many years. "It's a phenomenal piece. I have photos from 'The Cage' through 'Mirror, Mirror' all the way to 'Turnabout Intruder.' It appeared in every episode!" Over the years, Zicree has been friends with many of the people involved with the creation of *Star Trek*. He's "...collected these items from a love of *Star Trek* and I hope people will treasure these iconic items as much as I have. I think *Star Trek* is the greatest science fiction franchise ever made and I think it will continue for a very long time."

Star Trek has always benefited from the writing of the best sci-fi authors. If writers like Marc Zicree keep creating stories as amaz-

ing as "Far Beyond the Stars," I have no doubt that *Star Trek* will indeed continue for a very long time.

