

SEX
SECRETS FROM
"THE EMPIRE"

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Mark Hamill on the 'Star Wars' Trilogy

STARLOG

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**GENE
RODDENBERRY**
on "Star Trek"

JANE SEYMOUR
on "Somewhere
in Time"

GIL GERARD
on "Buck Rogers"

FRED FREIBERGER
on "Space:1999"

The Music of
JOHN WILLIAMS

**LUKE
SKYWALKER**
is Alive
and Well
and Full of
Surprises
(see page 16)



An Interview with **FRED FREIBERGER**

Part II

— BY MIKE CLARK & BILL COTTER —

Editor's Note: The following is the second part of our exclusive interview with the controversial producer. In the first part, Mr. Freiberger discussed his involvement with the Star Trek television series, among other projects he has worked on during his career. Part II focuses on Freiberger's involvement with Space: 1999.

STARLOG: Tell us about your work on *Space: 1999*. How did it come about?

FRED FREIBERGER: We had meetings with Abe Mandell and Gerry Anderson, and I went over to England for three weeks to discuss the feasibility of continuing the series. We had to generate enough enthusiasm and confidence in Mandell and Lew Grade's organization to make it a viable series the second year. Gerry and I sold them on continuing the series based on this new character,

Maya.

One of the reasons I was able to come up with Maya was part of my science-fiction background. I worked three years with Hanna-Barbera on their Saturday morning shows. Working in kid's television sparks your imagination; you can do some wild things.

SL: Some viewers have expressed the thought that Maya was a "token alien."

FF: Nobody was thinking "token" anything. *Star Trek* did a lot of morality plays—that wasn't my concern here. I was there to get a show back on the air again that would get ratings and would be entertaining in the American sense.

SL: Was Catherine Schell your original choice for the Maya part?

FF: No. We went after Teresa Graves to be Maya. We wanted her but we heard that she was deep into religion and had gone into

retreat somewhere... had left acting. The original Maya was to have been a black girl. We did test a lot of black girls in England. We would have loved Teresa Graves, but we couldn't get her. Abe Mandell recommended Catherine Schell; we looked at that *Pink Panther* film she was in and were quite impressed.

The character of Maya was a tough concept to sell to the British writers, but for some reason, easier to sell to the Americans. I knew that science-fiction fans would accept this character if we did it right.

SL: Were you considering major cast changes for Year II?

FF: When I went over to England, Barry Morse played a scientist in the series. I said, "Gerry, if you're going to have anybody as a professor, he should be a young kid with a beard. Do something different. Another problem with the show is that you can't have people standing around and talking and being philosophical with these long speeches... nobody will hold still for it. Let's do some switches on the characters."

There was a big question of the budget. We made several trans-Atlantic calls to Martin Landau and Barbara Bain... would they take a salary cut? They wouldn't take a cut. People assume when you're making an offer that you're lying and that they're in the driver's seat. This show was on the edge for weeks... it looked like we were finished. I stayed an extra week, and then it looked like 1999 had a life when I came up with Maya.

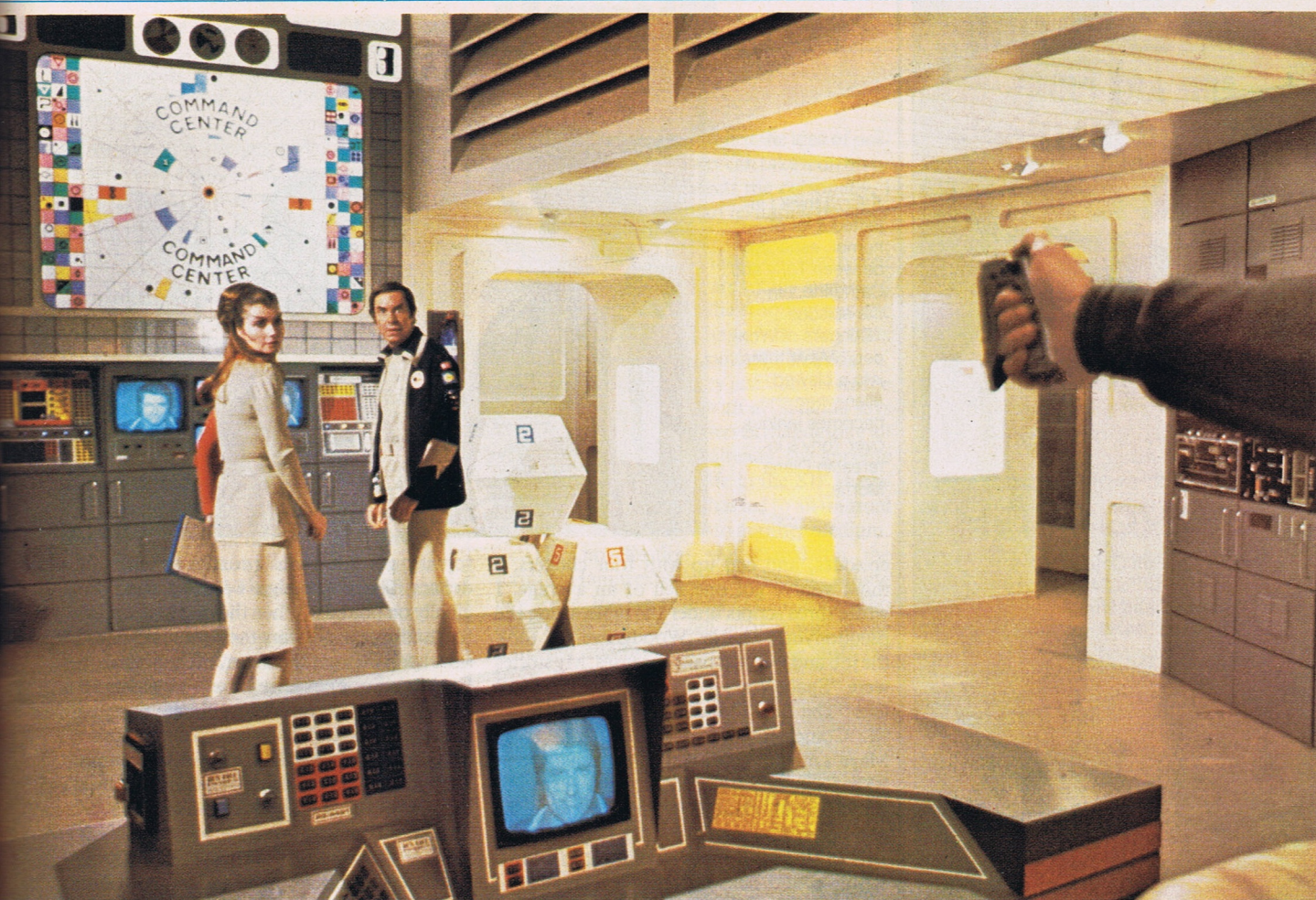
SL: What happened to Barry Morse?

FF: Barry Morse's agent came in demanding a big raise. Gerry made him a counter-offer. Morse's agent made a bad tactical error which was sheer insanity for an agent. He said, "No. If it's not going to be that amount, we're finished. We're out." So immediately Gerry said, "Okay, you're out." What an agent should say is, "He's out... except... I'll have to check with him."

We had big discussions about how to explain the disappearance of Professor Bergman, that he had a disease or something, and they asked us to take it out. Barry Morse is an excellent actor, but I felt his part was all



F.F.: "Gerry (Anderson) and I sold them on continuing the series based on this new character, Maya."



“Seance Spectre” explored the effects of the long confinement within Alpha’s sterile environment.

wrong.

SL: How did the changes in Barbara Bain’s character come about?

FF: When I had spoken on the phone to Barbara, whom I had never met, she was charming and delightful. I said, “Barbara, why don’t you do that in the series?” Her training at the Actor’s Studio in New York told her: *Be economical*, which was all wrong for this type of show. I tried to give her more to do. I tried to give her some sense of humor because she’s a natural in social situations. She’s sharp. She knows story and character very well.

Marty [Landau] was a delight, an excellent actor and fun on the set. . . he tells beautiful stories. I have great respect for Marty and Barbara, but I think science-fiction should have young faces.

SL: Why was the character of Sandra seen sporadically in Year II?

FF: Zienia Merton, who played Sandra, wanted more to do and was offered a job somewhere else, so we lent her out for several episodes and brought in the character of Yasko, director Ray Austin’s wife. We kept Nick Tate. Nick was very nervous when Tony Anholt came in, and always had his agent on us. We tried to use everybody. The New York office told us to drop Tate; I said no, it would be wrong.

SL: Tell us about other changes for 1999’s second year.

FF: We cut down the whole vast control

center. . . cut down the loss of Eagles. I felt if we were going to use violence of that sort. . . use it meaningfully. The English, when they did these shows, desperately wanted to reach the American market, since that’s where all the money is. And they would interpret “action” literally as action—shooting down a million Eagles. . . blasting away and doing wild physical things. . . instead of dramatic action. . . conflict. These are tough concepts for them to be able to understand and accept.

SL: Overall, what were the problems with 1999, as you saw them?

FF: They were doing the show as an English show, where there was no story, with the people standing around and talking. They had good concepts, they have wonderful characters, but they kept talking about the same thing and there was no plot development. 1999 opened extremely well in the United States and then went right down the tubes. There was nobody you cared about in the show. Nobody at all. The people themselves didn’t care about each other. I did a whole thing where I at least had a scene where somebody said, “My God! He’s gonna be hurt! Is he dead? Is he alive?” They just didn’t do that.

In the first show I did, I stressed action as well as character development, along with strong story content, to prove that 1999 could stand up to the American concept of what an action-adventure show should be. Abe Man-

dell was pretty nervous, but we were well-received by the reviewers. A few of them said, “Gee, the show is vastly improved, but it’s too late to save it.”

SL: Why were there no American guest stars on 1999?

FF: British union rules. Marty and Barbara are both Americans. Even when I came over, they had to get special dispensation for me. For there to be an American guest star, I think there would have been big problems with the unions.

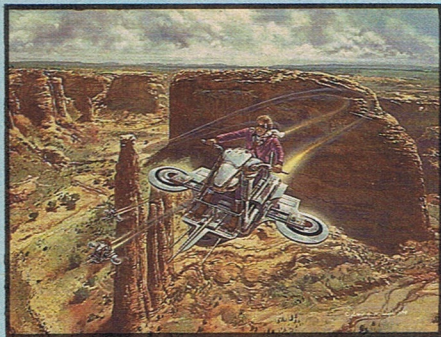
SL: Were you able to use any American writers?

FF: I was *allowed* six American writers, but in answer to your question, no. I didn’t want to work from 3,000 miles away.

SL: Were you getting acceptable scripts from the British writers?

FF: At the beginning of the season you’re very fussy about scripts, but as the year goes on and you reach 18 or 20 episodes, the stuff that looked terrible to you at the beginning starts to look like pure gold. I would explain things to the English writers very carefully—because I was sensitive to their feelings—how the script should be written for the American viewer. They were very cooperative, very creative. There were several English plot structures I came across that I felt weren’t right for us (mostly in terms of character), for an action-type series. As a television series producer, if you do 24 one-hour

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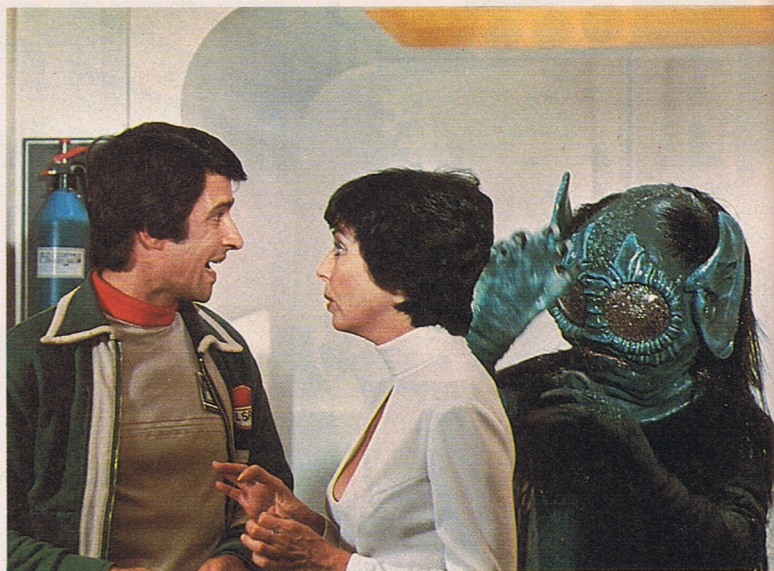
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F.F.: “I think I injected a lot of humor, especially between Tony and Catherine.” In the episode “Bringers of Wonder,” Maya turns into a clawed alien when she becomes jealous over Tony’s interest in Diana Morris.



episodes, and end up with four clinkers, I think you’ve got one hell of an average. I wrote three scripts under the table, using the pseudonym “Charles Woodgrove.” I took the job and was just paid expenses. My stories were “Space Warp,” “The Rules of Luton” and “The Beta Cloud.”

SL: Coincidentally, we wanted to ask why Maya’s metamorph abilities were changed in “The Rules of Luton” script. In other stories, Maya could change from one form to another without reverting back to her normal self. In “Luton” she is changed into a bird, captured and held prisoner in a small wire cage, unable to change into something smaller and escape. Why was this done?

FF: In this case I’ll just have to claim “writer’s license.”

SL: “Beta Cloud” seemed to be a rehash of the standard B.E.M. (Bug-Eyed Monster) type of story.

FF: What I did was try to get into the situation. How do you defeat the undefeatable? What intrigued me is that the Alphans could not seem to defeat this creature. Finally, Maya becomes a bee and enters the creature’s ear, discovering it to be a machine. David Prowse, who of course is now famous as Darth Vader, was in the costume.

SL: How many days on the average were you given to shoot an episode of 1999?

FF: Ten days, not including our special-effects stage; nine hours of shooting a day. In the U.S., you begin work at 8 a.m. and pull the plug at 6 p.m. In England, its 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. They shoot more in the U.S., too, because there’s overtime built into the budget.

SL: In a press release sent to STARLOG, ITC says the second season budget for 1999 was upped from \$6 million for Year I to \$7.2 million for Year II. This would break down to \$300,000 per episode. Was that your typical working budget?

FF: That’s nonsense! We brought them in for \$185,000 per episode, which got them fantastic production values. That \$300,000 figure is probably just for publicity. In England, at that time (1976), the pound dropped to \$1.80,

so they got enormous revenue in terms of dollars. The 1999 budget was predicated originally on pounds. When the pound dropped to \$1.80, for the dollars they got in domestic sales here, they got that many more pounds in England. So, in essence, that budget leaped way up. The studio had legitimate costs of about 25 percent. No way can you get a show in America for \$200,000. The fringe benefits alone amount to one third. A second assistant director in America gets \$900 a week! And that’s not counting overtime. We did a black panther sequence on 1999 (in “The Exiles”) . . . Catherine Schell made a leap and transformed into this panther . . . in mid-air. We spent the whole day and it cost us \$5,000. In America it would have cost us \$50,000!

SL: Is it still a good idea to do a series in England?

FF: I think so. I still think you can get, probably for two thirds of the cost here, the type of production values necessary. The facilities are great, and so are the people.

SL: Had *Space: 1999* been renewed for another season, what changes would you foresee?

FF: Well, I don’t know if I’d make any changes. I think I injected a lot of humor, especially between Tony and Catherine. As for Martin and Barbara, I think I beat the bad relationships. I think if they would have the budget for not only American guest stars, but if they could have really paid for high-class English actors, they would have had a hell of a lot better acting. But, in terms of changes, I think that American guest stars would be appealing for the American audience.

SL: Could you give our readers an idea of what’s involved in writing for a television series?

FF: Using the Harlan Ellison *Star Trek* script as an example. . . Roddenberry and Gene Coon rewrote his “City on the Edge of Forever” and Ellison submitted his first draft to the Writer’s Guild awards, and it got the award. Now, that doesn’t mean that the staff people were wrong in what they wanted to do, or that he was right. This is the nature of this business. If people come in to produce a

show... Gene Roddenberry and Gene Coon or whoever, that show has to be shaped in terms of what they think. There are 1,200 active writers in the Writer's Guild. Writers have fragile egos. They come in and submit something. You generally know your show better. You change that show; you rewrite that show. You suggest what they do. You make suggestions. The professional writer is one who has been in the business and knows what it is. No writer likes to have what he's done changed. Some of them will accept the fact that some good suggestions are made and will follow the guidance of the people who are running the show. The writer comes to the producer and tells him the idea. They get the assignment. All are cut-off assignments, cut off after story. They then come in with the story and discuss it. They adjust. At no time does a writer have to, if he's got such integrity, and I do not say that disparagingly, accept the change. All he has to do is leave and say, "Just pay me my money for that story and I'm finished." They don't have to go on with it after that.

The people who are running a show *have to run that show*. They can't let 22 different writers come in and determine how the show should go. You've got to shape it, rightly or wrongly, ratings and otherwise. The average writer that I know, if he's been around, he gets 50 percent up there on the screen.

There isn't too much joy in the actual writing. The term "hack" has a stigma attached to it, but it shouldn't, because it's much tougher to hack out a job for a format show than to write an anthology show, where you have no restrictions. But if you're "hacking" out a job on *Ben Casey* or *Star Trek*, you've got to handle their characters. You've got to shoehorn your story into a situation where these characters can come in where they probably don't even belong. You're stretching the story and doing things to get these people into that show. And it's very tough. You have to be a real craftsman. But if you hack out a job for one of these shows, you're doing pretty damn good. And they would always pay more money for an anthology show than for an episodic show, and we couldn't understand why, because it was so easy to do an anthology show as opposed to the other.

Integrity's a wonderful thing when you can afford it. I have no great admiration for the guy who wouldn't work in television or wouldn't work in a show and chose to stay in a garret and starve to death. I don't want to live that way, but I admire and applaud his right to do that, if that's what he wants.

* * *

With *Beyond Westworld* behind him, Fred Freiberger is now concentrating on a new project, *Space Station Starburst*. Projected as a Saturday morning show for CBS, this live-action series would chronicle the first manned space station in Earth orbit. The show will be realistic, with background information supplied by NASA. If the series is sold, a start date for the 1981-82 TV season will be set. ★

Hamill

(continued from page 20)

ers, magic. Others say it is just the idea of positive thought. Each viewer can take it on his or her own level. As it effects me personally, I don't see it in the genre of levitating boxes or standing on my hands."

Like Harrison Ford, Hamill has discovered that the true enthusiasts are totally engrossed with speculation about the storyline and the Force and all other aspects of the *Star Wars* trilogy, but not to the point of obsession.

"Everyone tells me they just want to see the next episode, so get on with it," Hamill says with a smile. He also observes that despite all that has been explained already, the appetite for information about life in the *SW* galaxy remains unabated. This has led to an unusual expansion of the story into another medium.

"The novelization was based on the script," Hamill explains, "so there is nothing new there. But we've done 13 half-hour radio shows that not only tell all that was in the film, but additional stuff too, the stuff cut from the film.

"The Princess goes to Alderon and you meet her father. I did it with Tony Daniels, but Harrison was working on *Raiders of the Lost Ark* for George and Steve Spielberg, so Perry King plays Han Solo and it is a totally different interpretation.

"Carrie [Fisher] didn't want to do it, so Anne Sacks plays the Princess. She was in *Dracula* on Broadway with Frank Langella. It [the radio show] will be coming on FM stations in March, and I hope it is as much fun to listen to as it was to do.

"It wasn't a money thing, but it's great—my first time with radio drama and probably the first time a lot of kids will hear drama that calls on them to use their imaginations. Another pleasure for me is that I can say my lines and not have to wait 18 months for the visuals to be done.

"I say, 'Look at the size of that,' and you hear this rumble and you know how huge it is. Compare the trash compactor scene that I do [on radio] with my head in a bucket of water, and the one in the film where I get dunked for a shot, go upstairs, take off my stormtrooper outfit and put on a bathrobe, blow dry my hair, get my makeup back on, get back into my rubber suit and stormtrooper outfit, then go back down for another shot—and repeat the process all day for a week.

"Sounds like hard work? It is," Hamill admits. "And probably the hardest thing I had to do in either film was that last battle scene in the trench in *Star Wars*. We did it in one continuous take and I had to memorize all those technical words and lines—like you'd memorize the Lord's Prayer in Russian."

All too quickly our allotted time with Mark Hamill is gone. This 28-year-old actor, who looks 20, is as enthusiastic and exuberant as a 12-year-old about the *Star Wars* saga. He is, in fact, awaiting the evolution of the storyline in *The Revenge of the Jedi* just as anxiously as is every other 12-year-old in America. ★

Fan Scene

(continued from page 21)

"Star Trek 7" mainly. Now, I'd like to read that one! I've seen many papers on *Star Trek* and each one has a different viewpoint, which makes the multi-faceted aspects of the show even more intriguing.

One militant lady wants me to take on Harlan Ellison's review of *ST:TMP*, "retaliating" to his assorted nit-picking mistakes. Lisa, I have known Harlan since we were both 18, which is a long time ago, through several thicks and thins of near-friendship and almost-enmity. Unless it's really important, I don't challenge Harlan on anything (if it *is* important, I wouldn't hesitate to challenge *anyone* on *anything!*), because I know all it would do would be to cause a flurry of verbiage which would obfuscate the issue beyond any hope of recall!

An ET2 off the *USS High Point* mentions that I missed a chance to keep the shuttlecraft named "Constitution" since the *Enterprise* was a Constitution class starship; true, and if I'd really wanted to be authentic, we should have named a shuttlecraft "Galileo," right? Actually the choice was not mine. I was horn-swoggled into helping a first effort to get the name "Enterprise" on the first shuttlecraft by people who assured me they knew what they were doing. After I'd expended the work on the project, I found that the first shuttlecraft was never destined for space; that the second one should have been named "Enterprise" instead! Well, we all get caught sometimes; it was ironic, wasn't it?

Anyway, the whole idea of getting the shuttlecraft named "Enterprise" was to get as many people as possible to write the President, *showing an interest in the space program*. Frankly, we could have named the thing "Phred" for all I cared, but it wouldn't have been exciting to fans, nor would it have engendered a nice write-in campaign that placed a lot of space program letters on executive desks.

To the clever fans who couldn't find an address to write me, inviting assorted Trimbles to visit on their way to WorldCon, the idea of calling the Los Angeles Science Fantasy Society and asking that the club give me a message was a good idea. Some fans did not realize we lived in Los Angeles, and wrote the New York STARLOG offices to invite me to a local (NY) school science-fiction meeting. I do thank you; I'd have loved to attend, really, but not only was it too far away, the letter was forwarded to me too late. That is a problem in contacting writers through publications; we are all at the mercy of the mail room which may or may not forward letters in a reasonable time. Remember that when you write a fan letter to an author via a publisher; be patient. The author may be out of the country or unreachable for many reasons, even if the mail room is willing to send out letters and packets quickly.

But don't let that discourage you; keep those cards and letters coming! ★

Thunder and Lightning

You'll notice that the title of this column is "Thunder and Lightning." I've been rumbling long enough. It's time I erupted.

And I've got a damn good reason to.

My Daddy used to tell me: "Never wrassle with a pig. You'll get dirty. And besides, the pig likes it."

But once in a while a pig reaches up and pulls you down into the mud, and you have no choice. You are in a fight.

Some things were said about me last month (STARLOG #39) in Mike Clark and Bill Cotter's interview with Fred Freiberger that must be responded to, because if I don't, there are people who will assume that these things are true.

And I'm genuinely angry about having to write this column because I had been wanting to do something about the art of costuming or mention how much fun I had at a screening of George Pal's *Doc Savage*. Instead, I have to do this.

But before I start, I want you all to take a good look at what's written in the little box down below. It says that David Gerrold's words are his own responsibility and do not represent the opinions of the editor or publisher. In the four years I have been writing for this magazine, I have regarded that as a responsibility, not a license. Part of that responsibility is that I must resist the temptation to get involved in feuds and personal attacks. The purpose of this column is to talk about ideas, not people.

And that's the way I'd like to keep it.

* * *

Let's start with Mike Clark and Bill Cotter, the interviewers. I do not know these men personally, have never met them, know nothing about them—I have no way of knowing why they interviewed Fred Freiberger as they did, but they have done all of us a disservice, most of all Fred Freiberger—because they have encouraged him to say unkind things about a number of people and, in effect, portray himself as a bitter little man.

There could be any number of reasons why this interview turned out as badly as it did—the interviewers could have been inexperienced and the situation got out of control, or they didn't know what else to ask—or, more ominously, they set up this situation deliberately. It is no secret that Fred Freiberger is controversial. There are members of the Writer's Guild of America who are bitter about him and call him "the show-killer" because when he comes on a series as producer, it's usually that series' last season. It goes down in ratings and does not get renewed. (*Iron Horse*, *Wild Wild West*, *Star Trek*, *Space: 1999*, *Korg*, *Beyond Westworld* and others.) This is a terrible reputation to

have—and an unfortunate one, because Fred Freiberger is not an untalented man. He co-wrote one of my all-time favorite movies, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*. It's a classic film and it is an honorable credential for any screenwriter.

With a career as varied as he has had, Fred Freiberger must have a lot of interesting observations to say about the shows he has worked on and the people he has worked with. Unfortunately, Clark's and Cotter's questions seem deliberately designed to "stir up the shit." They handed him a copy of my book, *The World of Star Trek*, and invited him to argue with it. "Could you tell us about David Gerrold's script, 'The Cloud Minder's'?", "Was that the last time you heard from Gerrold?", "Gerrold also criticized the lack of a racially balanced crew on the *Enterprise*", "Another Gerrold observation is that the third season burnt itself out... people weren't giving 100 percent." As a result, a significant portion of the interview is not about Fred Freiberger, but about Fred Freiberger's opinions of David Gerrold.

I will say it bluntly: This is a disgraceful interview. The interviewers attached my name to a set of deliberately loaded questions. If they thought that the opinions were valid, then they should have asked the questions directly, without making it an issue of personalities—because part of the responsibility of being an interviewer is to ask the unpleasant questions yourself—and if not, then there is only one other conclusion to be drawn: Mike Clark and Bill Cotter may be playing a classic game of "Let's you and him fight." That may not have been their intention, but unfortunately, it was certainly the result. Perhaps they thought they were being Woodward and Bernstein, confronting the "show-killer" in his den, using my book as ammunition—but what did they expect? That he would grovel at their knees and beg forgiveness for his crimes against science fiction? Hell, no—Fred Freiberger thinks he's done a good job. And he's no hypocrite—he says what he feels. Unfortunately, that kind of candor almost always feeds a certain insidious social phenomenon that is classically crystallized in science-fiction fandom.

I make this observation: Science fiction is an adolescent literature. Most of its stories are derived from adolescent fantasies of one kind or another. As a directly related phenomenon, fandom is an adolescent environment. This is meant as neither condemnation nor approval, merely analysis. (I hope to get into this in more detail in a later column.) While the bulk of fans are positively oriented and well worth knowing, there is always an element irresistibly drawn to feuds, because they get off on the excitement. Maybe it

makes things seem important and meaningful to take sides, but it happens almost on a regular basis—you can set your calendar by it—because there are always new fans coming along, who don't know what happened two years previously. The people who initiate these situations never seem to realize, not even afterward, just how much damage they have done to the people they have involved.

I won't have it—I am not going to be drawn into a public feud just to amuse a gaggle of morbid little cretins with a prurient interest in watching well-known people debase themselves. This kind of thing happens just too damned often in the science-fiction community—I'm a writer, not a target; I won't be part of this shabby little set of manipulations. The people who start this kind of bullshit, who create an inflammatory environment and then throw in a lighted match because they like to see fireworks, are publicly irresponsible.

* * *

Which brings me directly to Kerry O'Quinn and Howard Zimmerman, two men who I love and admire not just as colleagues, but as friends. I honestly regret that this situation occurred, guys—but if you want me to be a critic-commentator on the science-fiction scene, then I must deal with *all* of it, including, and *especially*, what happens here in the pages of STARLOG.

If the interview with Fred Freiberger is irresponsible journalism, then the decision to print it here, last issue, is equally irresponsible. There is more than enough news in the science-fiction community that it shouldn't have to be *manufactured*.

I am honestly surprised that it got past both Kerry O'Quinn and Howard Zimmerman. My working relationship with these men is that they both have very perceptive editorial eyes. On more than one occasion, Kerry O'Quinn has sent one of these columns back to me and said, "David, don't you want to think about this a little bit longer before you turn it in?" Kerry can be very politic. He has also been right on most of those occasions.

I don't think the interview should have been run—not as it stood. Fred Freiberger—or anyone else who is interviewed for the pages of this magazine—deserves a better treatment than to be so blatantly suckered into a phony feud. It cheats the readers twice—first, because it distracts them from the real issues, and second, because the important questions about the production of science fiction on television still have not been answered.

Kerry, you've told me too many times about the debt we owe to our fans. Without an audience, we don't exist. You're right—I think this is a case where STARLOG has failed

them; and I think part of the blame falls on your shoulders and on Howard's for letting an article like this appear in print.

I believe apologies, and perhaps explanations, are in order.

* * *

Finally, that brings me to Fred Freiberger himself.

Some of the things he said about me are wrong. But I can understand why he said them.

I have met the man only a few times. I do not know him well enough to dislike him. I do know that he and I have different theories of what makes a good television show. We have two different approaches to the medium. He has practiced in his way, I have practiced in mine, and if the question is ever asked whose way is *better*, then the final judgment will be made by the audience. If they laugh, it was funny. If they cry, it was sad. If they cheer, it was exciting. But if they yawn, then they were bored and the writer wasted their time. That, at least, is recognizable failure.

I wrote *The World of Star Trek* in 1972. Much of the information in the book is distilled from several sources, including Gene Roddenberry, Gene L. Coon, Dorothy Fontana, as many of the most important members of the production crew as I could locate and the entire cast. I will not reveal who said what, because some of it was confidential and I don't like telling tales out of school—but I stand by what I wrote. Many people who were close to the show during its first two seasons were unhappy with the third season of the show—as were many of the show's most ardent fans and critics, myself included.

Gene Roddenberry has long admitted that he was so distressed about NBC's decision to put the show on at 10:00 p.m. on Friday nights that he felt he had no choice but to refuse to be an active part of its production during the third year. The show had just been saved by a massive letter campaign by the fans, and this change of time-slot by the network would certainly kill the series. It looked and felt very much like a deliberate revenge by NBC because *Star Trek* and its fans had embarrassed them.

Gene felt that he had no choice, the network had broken their promise to give him a proper time slot, he no longer felt bound by his promise to stay and take an active hand in the show's production. The series continued on, but without his direct guidance. Several of the cast members said they felt abandoned by that. The crew felt it too. Gene's absence was the greatest reason for the change in *Star Trek's* "flavor"—the show needed its creator, and the fact that he was not there was deeply felt by everyone involved.

Fred Freiberger had to come aboard the show on very short notice, and unfortunately, he was woefully underprepared. The first time I met with the man on a story confer-

ence, he had only seen six episodes of the show, and was screening more on a one-a-day basis, trying to catch up. The man was in a very difficult situation—because he was seen by some of the people he had to work with as an interloper, a Johnny-come-lately and a pretender to the throne of the Great Bird of the Galaxy.

I can tell you that there are members of the cast who did not like him. I cannot give you the specifics—but one cast member who felt his character was not being properly developed took the time to write a long, careful memo to the new producer about the original conception of his role. Several days later, the actor relates, the producer saw him in the hall and said, "I got your memo. Forget it."

As a result of incidents like that, the morale on the *Star Trek* set during the third season was... ah, not as good as it had been during the two seasons prior.

This gave me a very real problem when I began writing *The World of Star Trek*. When I interviewed various members of the production crew, they told me a number of horror stories of how things went very sadly wrong during the third season—they loved *Star Trek* too. Should I tell those stories or not? The fans knew that something had gone wrong during the show's season—they did not know the details. Most of them did not like many of the third-season episodes.

And yes, I admit, I had been very unhappy about the way I felt I had been treated on "The Cloud Minders." I knew I had to mention that the story as aired did not represent what I had intended—but I also knew that I could *not* use my book to exercise a personal grievance at length. That would be bad manners. Despite at least one panicky rumor that I was going to write an expose, I knew that I could *not*. I loved that television show, I still do, even with all its warts and flaws. It had been very good to me, the fans felt very strongly about it and it was one of the few dreams of the late 60s that had not been soured by reality. *Star Trek* had been about Hope.

I will also tell you that I had a great deal of personal affection for that cast and crew. I had learned a lot from them, and it had been a privilege to work with them. This book had to be my way of repaying that debt. I would not sacrifice candor, but neither would I lose sight of the people or the dreams that made the show a phenomenon. My book was going to be a clear-eyed, affectionate book.

I felt I had a journalistic responsibility to interview Fred Freiberger too. So, I telephoned him to explain what I was doing and to ask if I could meet with him. I did not accuse him of destroying *Star Trek*. It's my mother's other son who's the fool. In fact, I specifically remember trying to be as polite as possible to him for a number of reasons. Almost immediately, however, he accused myself and

Dorothy Fontana of bad-mouthing him behind his back. This is not true.

Very early on, I had decided that I could not talk about Fred Freiberger. I had been at a convention, and I had been asked about "The Cloud Minders," and I had told of my experiences in the bitterest possible terms. I had shocked quite a few people. Afterward, I realized I had made a very serious mistake, both professionally and personally, and I resolved never again to repeat the error. I never said another word about the man. Likewise, I cannot remember ever hearing Dorothy Fontana say anything defamatory about Fred Freiberger in a public forum. I can tell you that my own feeling of embarrassment about "The Cloud Minders" has minimized my desire to speak about it, and in those early years of *Star Trek* conventions and appearances, I remember trying very hard to pretend that the third season did not exist—because *Star Trek* in its third season was simply not the same show that it was when Gene Roddenberry was in control.

I do remember apologizing to Fred Freiberger in that phone call for the misunderstanding—but the hostility on his part was so intense that it crystallized a decision about *The World of Star Trek* that I had been slowly working toward: I would have to avoid the whole subject of the third season altogether—except in general. And I would not mention Fred Freiberger at all—not anywhere in the book. He may not remember that he threatened me with a lawsuit if I libeled him, but that wasn't the reason for the decision. It's much simpler. I wanted to write a positive book, not a negative one, and to do that, I was going to concentrate on *Star Trek's* strengths and only discuss those weaknesses which could not be ignored.

I distilled as many of the common criticisms made by fans and pros alike as I agreed with, codified them, added a few of my own and then tried to demonstrate that the show's initial premise was strong enough to survive even haphazard execution.

The World of Star Trek was never meant as a criticism of Fred Freiberger or any other individual. It was intended as a general discussion of the merits and flaws of *Star Trek* itself. I am distressed that Mike Clark and Bill Cotter used my book the way they did and I publicly apologize to Fred Freiberger for that misinterpretation.

* * *

I've run out of room, but there's still a lot more that has to be said. Next month, I'm going to talk about "The Cloud Minders." Stay tuned. ★

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Gerrold has been given a free hand to express any ideas, with any attitude, and in any language he wishes, and therefore, this column does not necessarily represent the editorial views of STARLOG magazine nor our philosophy. The content is copyrighted © 1980 by David Gerrold.