



A History of **STAR TREK CONTINUES**

by
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(PDF assembled by Bryan Leech)

PART ONE



"If only..."

Those were the last two words uttered by Captain Kirk before *Star Trek* the original series was canceled in 1969.

"If only..."

Kirk was referring to the tragic descent into hate-filled insanity of his former love, Dr. Janice Lester. But for me, these two words were so much more powerful: If only *Star Trek* hadn't been canceled. If only *Star Trek* could have...

...continued.

TOS fans always felt a pang of frustration that the five-year mission of the *USS Enterprise* was cut short after only three years in space (and on the air). Sure, in 1973 and 1974, we got to see 22 animated episodes of the series, voiced by the same original actors, but never got to see the end of that five-year mission.

Even when *Star Trek* crossed over into motion pictures, the end of Kirk's first mission was still a mystery. And the days of seeing those bright red, blue, and gold uniforms and those amazingly colorful *Starship Enterprise* sets ... those days were gone forever ... except in reruns, of course.

I used to have this dream where I was watching an episode of TOS that I'd never seen before. Of course, I'd seen every episode dozens of times, so when I woke up, I'd sadly remember that there were no "lost" episodes of TOS.

Until there were...

I first felt that "feeling" that I was watching a "lost" episode in 2013 when I saw the first full-length episode of the new fan series *STAR TREK CONTINUES* ... an episode titled "**Pilgrim of Eternity**".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G-ziTBAbkQ>



Star Trek New Voyages/Phase II (top) had a wide-screen 16×9 aspect ratio. Star Trek Continues opted for a 4×3 ratio.

I'll be honest, though, I didn't feel it immediately. It hit me at about the 31-minute mark of the episode. Before that, this *Star Trek Continues* seemed fairly similar to *Star Trek: New Voyages/Phase II*, the trail-blazing fan series from **James Cawley**, who was the first to ever spend six-figures building precise recreations of the TOS sets from the 1960s. Both fan series were telling "untold" stories from the fourth and fifth years of Kirk's five-year mission. In fact, **Vic Mignogna**, the show-runner behind *Star Trek Continues*, actually got his start in *Trek* fan films directing and guest-starring in one of *Phase II*'s most ambitious productions, an episode called "**Kitumba**".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VJouMFIAN8Q>

The most notable difference between the two productions ... aside from the actors ... was that *NV/P2* decided to film in a widescreen 16×9 aspect ratio format, giving their series a more modern look. And their VFX shots of the *Enterprise* included new angles and movements not previously seen in the original series. *STC*, meanwhile, opted for a more classic 4×3 aspect format, intending for their episodes to feel almost exactly like the original series. To that end, they also kept their VFX angles of the *Enterprise* similar to those seen in the 1960s episodes.

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The other notable difference between the two series, and one of the things that most excited fans like me, was that **Chris Doohan**, the son of TOS actor **James “Scotty” Doohan** would be reprising his father’s role (and Scottish brogue). Although *NV/P2* had featured a wide range of TOS and sci-fi actors as special guest stars (including Walter Koenig, George Takei, Grace Lee Whitney, and Denise Crosby), they would appear in single episodes rather than being a part of the regular cast.

None of this is meant to diminish the spectacular accomplishments of *New Voyages/Phase 2*. By the time that *Star Trek Continues* premiered their first full episode in May of 2013, *NV/P2* had already released EIGHT full-length episodes, with even more in production! So in many ways, *STC* was standing on the shoulders of a giant.

Anyway, there I was in 2013, watching this brand new fan series and thinking it was pretty impressive...much like *NV/P2*. It looked fantastic...nicely lit, well-fitting costumes, good hair and make-up, decent acting, and of course, amazing sets. But it still felt like a fan film. That’s not to say it was bad. It was excellent! But fan films usually don’t reach the threshold of looking or feeling like the real thing. Even at its best, *NV/P2* didn’t make me feel as though I was watching an actual “lost” episode. And for the first half hour, “**Pilgrim of Eternity**” didn’t really give me feeling either...and to be honest, I wasn’t really expecting it to.

But then it happened.

The moment lasted only about a minute and a half, but there it was: that *feeling*! It was the same feeling I’d had as a kid watching a TOS episode for the first time! It was, quite literally, the feeling I’d been dreaming about for decades.



Chris Doohan, son of James Doohan, reprises his father's role of Scotty in Star Trek



The moment I first “felt it ...”

At the midway point of the episode, where the god Apollo suddenly strengthens and turns his powers on Kirk, in that moment I suddenly forgot I was watching a “fan” film and immersed myself in the belief that I was watching a never-before-discovered episode of the original *Star Trek*!

Of course, I knew in my head that the actors were different (except for Apollo). But in that moment when I heard Apollo’s voice reverberate, saw Kirk tossed into the air like a rag doll, and listened to that familiar music, it didn’t matter that it wasn’t William Shatner hitting the floor and being levitated. In those 90 seconds, in my heart, I was watching “pure” *Star Trek*.

I was hooked.

Star Trek Continues grew out of the *Starship Farragut* fan series. In fact, Vic Mignogna first played a cameo role of Captain James T. Kirk in the third full-length episode of the *Farragut* series, “**The Price of Anything**”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jJKQ1FHQc68> which Vic also directed. (Look for Vic starting at the 1 minute, 45 second mark.)

Vic put in both his own money and secured financial backing from Dracogen Strategic Investments in late 2011, allowing *Farragut Films* to move into a much larger studio in Kingsland, GA. This additional studio space and influx of capital gave *Farragut Films* the opportunity to



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expand their sets to include nearly every *USS Enterprise* interior that existed at Desilu studios back in the 1960s (except Engineering).

It was obvious almost from the beginning that the acting was of a higher caliber than that of many other fan productions. Not to put down other fan films, but Vic Mignogna, himself a well-known voice-over actor, insisted on bringing in others with acting backgrounds...and it showed. These weren't Emmy-winning Hollywood celebrities, of course, but they were more polished and professional than the typical amateur fans who populated most fan films. But it didn't stop there. Vic will be among the first to tell people who enjoy *STC* that the series owes its success to a lot more people than just him and the folks in front of the camera. *STC* is composed of a dedicated team (made up of both fans and industry veterans) who do professional-level work out of a love for this legendary franchise.

I could spend several blogs just talking about the many individuals who make *STC* possible, but I want to shine a special light (pun intended) on Director of Photography **Matt Bucy**...to give you an idea of why it is that *STC* looks so close to the original *Star Trek* series.



STC director of photography, Matt Bucy.

A resident of Vermont, this self-taught cinematographer had to fly down to Kingsland, GA for each episode to work his magic on *STC* (Matt is also a recreational pilot, but I suspect he flew commercial to get to Georgia). And part of that magic was lighting the *STC* sets the EXACT same way that the original sets were lit. You might be thinking, "Oh, that sounds so easy!" You'd be wrong.

Working closely with Vic, Matt carefully examined more than three thousand still images from multiple TOS season two and three episodes, trying to figure out precisely how the scenes and characters were lit. In an interview on the *STC* website, Matt commented, “One trick that directors of photography use is to look at the eyeballs of the actors. If you study them carefully, you can see a big dot that is reflecting the key light. You can see how a light will pick up the hair and shoulders.”

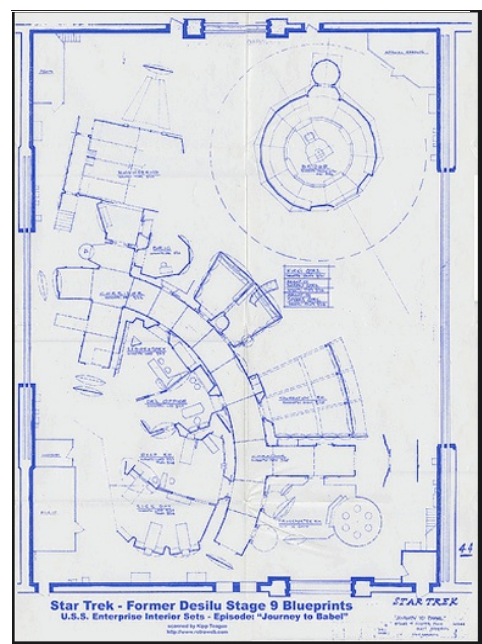
But it wasn't as simple as just looking at eye reflections. Lighting on sets creates shadow and depth, can add color, and even provide texture on areas that would otherwise look flat if lit incorrectly. Matt continued, "It's basically stage lighting, using hard light — a key light, a fill light, and a back-light. So we're using a lot of light sources. When you look at the 1960s series with a critical eye on lighting, you'll notice that they didn't care much about multiple shadows. In fact, I think that's one of the things that makes our production feel so similar — because there are shadows everywhere! Light is coming from above, usually at a 45-degree angle with the actors. And there are certain facial shadows that give *Star Trek Continues* a very "classic 'Trek' look."

Of course, the lights need something to actually illuminate, and in that department, Matt Bucy was also instrumental. In addition to being a pilot, Matt is also an architect and electronics wiz. (He's also a real estate developer, if you're curious.) But when it came to architecture, his expertise allowed the construction team to recreate the exact layout of the original *Trek* sets as they fit together on Stage 9 at Desilu Studios back in the 1960s. Take a look at this amazing walk-through of their sets:

<https://youtu.be/Rl9S6HM6pP4>

Goose-bumps, right?

If you look around the Internet, you can find a lot of overhead diagrams showing how the original sound stage was laid out. But those diagrams weren't full blueprints and lacked accurate measurements. Matt Bucy fixed that. In fact, in planning out the exact measurements of the corridors to the inch, Matt was able to extrapolate how high to build the spires that extend above the sets to hold the lights. Interestingly, doing the analysis of the lighting from the original series helped inform the architecture of the *STC* sets, and building the sets in turn helped determine the lighting. Matt's exacting blueprints allowed Michael Bednar and the Farragut



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Films set construction crew to build a *USS Enterprise* (and *USS Farragut*) interior nearly identical to what existed fifty years ago in Hollywood.



On the electronics side of things, Matt also created the lights that blink behind all the consoles of the bridge. Matt provided some insight in his interview: "Those are not random lights. They play in a sequence. Will Smith, our prop master and resident set expert, and I hope to upgrade the bridge set in the future to precisely match the patterns that illuminated on the backlit bridge panels. That's a project on our wish list for the future."

Indeed! In the meantime, other "little touches" abound in *Star Trek Continues*, some easier to notice than others.

For example, it's pretty obvious that the earliest *STC* episodes used much of the music and sound effects in the original *Star Trek*. But what you probably won't

notice unless you look closely is that the blocking of the actors (where they stand in a scene) is purposefully done to mimic what was done 50 years ago, as is the acting style. It's not just that the actors are doing impressions of Shatner, Nimoy, Kelley, and the rest. They are working very hard to move their bodies, manipulate their facial expressions, and control their vocal delivery to mirror the performances provided back in the 1960s. Modern acting styles can present very different performances that, while still strong and engaging, would not have the same feel as TOS. Likewise are many directing choices, such as cutting to close-up reaction shots with a flourish of incidental music or showing a subtle sideways glance of one character to another.

And if that isn't enough to impress you, there's two final touches that are added in post-production. First, the colors in each scene are super-saturated to have that over-colorful look of the original *Star Trek*. And second, because *Trek* was originally filmed on 35mm film and not video, *STC* digitally adds in a "graininess" during post-production to make the image look a little less "perfect"...and that, my friends, is what makes it come out so perfect!

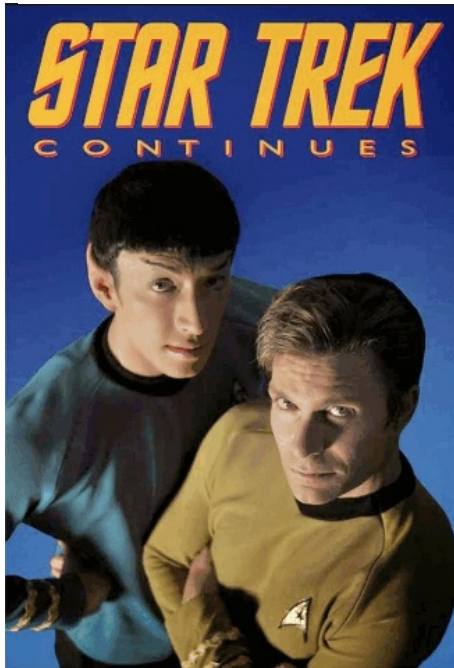
Next time: our focus on *Star Trek Continues*... er...continues with more about the actors and the earliest vignettes released to introduce this new fan series. We also begin spotlighting the episodes themselves with a closer look at "**Pilgrim of Eternity**" and how that production came together. And finally, we learn how much of his own money Vic Mignogna put into the roll out of *STC* and what happened when they held their first Kickstarter...er, **KIRK**starter!

All of the amazing offerings of *STC* can be found on their website:

<http://startrekcontinues.com/episodes.html>

PART TWO

WARNING! SPOILERS AHEAD!



Last time, we looked at an overview of what made **STAR TREK CONTINUES** unique among fan films. This week, we'll take a closer look at how this fan series got its start and some of its earliest fan film releases.

Months before producing and releasing its first full episode in 2013, *STC* filmed three short vignettes in May of 2012 to "introduce themselves" and get their space legs.

THE VIGNETTES

The first vignette, about four minutes long, recreated the ending of "**Turnabout Intruder**," the final first-run episode of TOS to air on television. But instead of ending on the depressingly somber line from Kirk, "If only..." the vignette CONTINUED the scene (get it?), following Kirk, Spock, and Scott into the turbolift and onto the bridge. Joined a few seconds later by McCoy, the somber mood is lightened by a good-natured poke at Spock by the doctor, and then Kirk orders the *Enterprise* to rendezvous with the *Potemkin*. The music shifts to an uplifting, optimistic melody, portending new and exciting adventures into the future. The camera pans out to reveal the entire bridge crew as the credits roll.

You can watch the vignette here...

https://youtu.be/kATcuut_tqM

And if you're curious, here's a couple of still-frame comparisons to the original version of that same scene from *TOS*...

This first vignette was released onto the Internet on July 31, 2012 and served to do more than simply say, "Hey, we're here! Look what we can do!" It also introduced four of the main actors who would be starring in the new series.

Show runner and executive producer **Vic Mignogna** (playing Kirk) is a professional actor who has done extensive voice-over work on anime and video games...along with having been a lifelong Trekkie who used to drag his mother to conventions and film his own *Trek* episodes on Super 8 as a child in the 1970s. Vic had worked on other *Trek* fan films, directing and acting in episodes of both *Star Trek: New Voyages/Phase II* and *Starship Farragut* (and later appearing in *Star Trek: Renegades*).

Vic decided that, as much as fans loved appearing in fan films, most of them weren't comfortable or convincing



The comparison of the original "**Turnabout Intruder**" (left), and the re-creation of the scenes in **STAR TREK CONTINUES**.

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enough in front of the camera. For his fan series, Vic wanted trained actors to be the ones appearing on screen. Non-professional fans could help out behind the scenes, but even there, Vic preferred to have people with film-making knowledge and experience leading those efforts, as well. Fans with less experience were welcome to assist, but under the supervision of the “veterans.” And it paid off by having a very professional and polished look and feel to their production.

Vic brought in two fellow voice-over actors to play Spock and McCoy: **Todd Haberkorn** and **Chuck Huber**, respectively. Chuck would later miss the first two full-length episodes due to health issues, but he returned for the third episode and each one thereafter. Both actors Todd Haberkorn as “Spock” and Chuck Huber as “McCoy” brought their own interpretations to the iconic characters they were playing. And considering that there was no way that Leonard Nimoy or DeForest Kelley would be able to reprise those roles, Todd and Chuck did a pretty impressive job.

Perhaps most striking, however (eerily so!) was the person playing Scotty... and with good reason. The actor portraying the chief engineer literally had Montgomery Scott in his blood!

Chris Doohan is the son of late actor James Doohan (the original Scotty) and does an amazing job recreating that unique Scottish brogue that his father made so iconic. Chris initially came on to voice Scotty in an animated episode of *Starship Farragut* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zEQI0I9afk4> a few years prior, and Vic convinced him (with some effort) to come on board *STC*...and he’s been one of the standouts of the cast ever since.



Todd Haberkorn as “Spock” and Chuck Huber as “McCoy” join Vic Mignogna as “Kirk” in *STAR TREK CONTINUES*.



Like father, like son ... Chris Doohan (right) plays Scotty.

Star Trek Continues’ second vignette “**You’ve Got the Conn**” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDLnFkFj00U> was released two months after the first. This short film introduced the three remaining actors who had very minor roles in the first vignette: **Kim Stinger** as Uhura, **Wyatt Lenhart** as Chekov, and **Grant Imahara** as Sulu. You might recognize Grant’s name as one of the regulars on the Discovery Channel’s *Mythbusters* TV show. All three of these actors were given extensive lines in this 3-minute story showing what goes on when Kirk isn’t on the bridge, and each actor did a masterful job of recreating his or her character. Grant speaks in a low Sulu voice, and Wyatt’s Russian accent is wonderful!



Left to right: Wyatt Lenhart, Kim Stinger, Vic Mignogna and Grant Imahara.

The final vignette, “**Happy Birthday, Scotty**,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f82-hiS-m6k> (released on November 30) was the shortest of the bunch at just two minutes. Rather than introducing a new character or actor, this brief film introduced the new hand phaser props that the series would be using...similar to the originals but with a slightly sleeker appearance and cool flashy lights. Nevertheless, the vignette, like the other two before it, felt like *TOS Trek*.

Vic wore a lot of production hats in those three vignettes, including writing or co-writing all three (with the exception of the parts of “**Turnabout Intruder**” originally written by Gene Roddenberry and Arthur H. Singer, of course), directing two of the vignettes (Jack Marshall directed the first one), and editing all three.

THE FIRST FULL EPISODE — PILGRIM OF ETERNITY

Down the line, Vic’s eventual goal was to not have to do so many jobs simultaneously and instead concentrate mostly on acting. But for what would be the first full-length episode, Vic was still the “guy in charge” and would again (co)write the story (other professional screenplay writers would assemble the final script), direct, and edit...as well as appear as Kirk. No pressure.

In an interview from CNET from April of 2014, Vic shared how he decided on telling a story of redemption in the first full *STC* episode. And not just redemption for any old character — redemption for a *Trek* “bad guy” in a sequel to the second season *TOS* episode “**Who Mourns for Adonais?**” Vic said...



*Years ago, I became friends with BarBara Luna — who played Marlena in the original “**Mirror, Mirror**” episode — and one day out of the blue we were talking and she said to me long before I started Star Trek Continues, “You know, Mike Forest would love to do some Star Trek.” And I said, “Who is Michael Forest?” And she said, “Mike Forest played Apollo in the original series.” And I was like, “Oh my gosh, I love Apollo and I love that episode!” And so I kind of logged that away in the back of my mind, and when I started Star Trek Continues and was looking for an idea, I thought, wouldn’t it be awesome to do a follow-up episode to that episode? And so I contacted Michael Forest and told him I had an idea for an Apollo redemption story. He really liked it, and so we moved forward with writing the script and shooting the episode.*



Michael Forest as Apollo (left) and Jamie Barber, who used to play Apollo ... but in *Battlestar Galactica*.

Michael Forest wasn’t the only *Trek* veteran actor to participate in that first full episode of *STC*. In a bit of a coup, Vic convinced **Marina Sirtis** (Counselor Troi from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*) to provide the voice of the *Enterprise* computer. (That made Marina the second *TNG* regular series actor to appear in a *Trek* fan — the first being Denise “Tasha Yar” Crosby in *Star Trek: New Voyages*’ 2-part “**Blood and Fire**”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtifyhPScCw> four years earlier.)

It seemed oddly appropriate that

the person who played the daughter of Lawaxana Troi (portrayed by the late **Majel Barrett Roddenberry**) would lend her voice to the *Enterprise* computer, which had also been voiced by Majel.

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Another actor of sci-fi note to appear in the episode was **Jamie Bamber**, who played Lee Adama (Captain Apollo ... how fitting!) in the *Battlestar Galactica* reboot. Also worth mentioning was a cameo by *Star Trek* and *Galactica* art department veteran **Doug Drexler**. Doug, who had previously worked on other fan films' 3D computer FX, had recently decided to move away from fan films. But he changed that decision in order to do CGI visual effects for *STC*. The 3D animations for the three vignettes had previously been done by **Gabe Koerner**. Doug also appeared on camera in the opening sequence of "Pilgrim of Eternity" in a scene which immediately grabbed the viewer's attention as being plucked straight out of the Tombstone, Arizona setting of the TOS episode "Spectre of the Gun." It turns out the sequence is part of a virtual reality program running in a very early version of the Holodeck!

The Holodeck???

Yes. Vic and his co-writers decided to "evolve" *Star Trek* a little to move it forward toward things that were seen later on. It wasn't unheard of for the original *Star Trek* to add new things between seasons. Chekov was added to the crew in season two...along with a larger Engineering set and an expansion of Sickbay. So what might have been added in season four? Why not an early, experimental Holodeck (something already considered possible canon from the animated episode "**Practical Joker**")?

Another addition for *STC* was the completely new character of Lt. Elise McKennah, PhD, played by professional actress **Michele Specht**. Dr. McKennah was among the first of Starfleet's new ship's counselors, a bit of an experimental program....and not a program Kirk was particularly fond of at first.



Michele Specht (left) as ship's counselor Dr. McKennah and on the right, Larry Nemecek as Dr. McCoy and Todd Haberkorn as Mr. Spock.

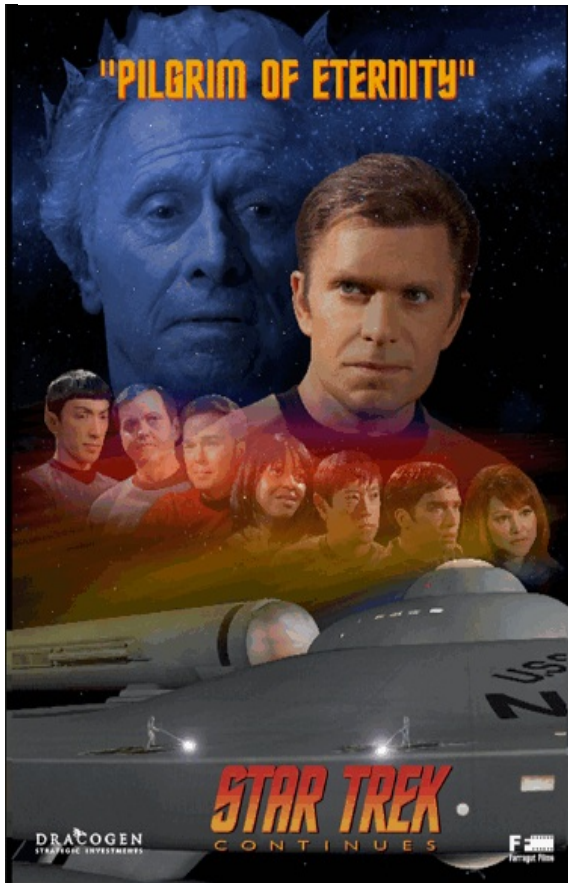
With Chuck Huber unavailable to play the role of Dr. McCoy for the first two episodes, a stand-in was found in the person of **Larry Nemecek**. If you've never heard of this legend of *Star Trek* folklore, look him up on Google (there's about 75,000 results!). He's also served as a creative consultant to *STC*, but for its first two episodes, he played a very convincing Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy.

With all the pieces in place, including the amazing sets and props, costumes from Anovos, make-up artists, lighting specialists, sound engineers, production crew of all shapes and sizes and specialties, and of course, the actors, filming on "**Pilgrim of Eternity**" began in October of 2012 and lasted a little over a week...just like an episode of the original *Trek* did back in the 60s.

Vic himself paid the expenses of the actors and some of the crew to come down to Georgia for the shooting. Michael Forest brought along his wife Diana, who ended up playing a small role as Athena, who gives up the last of her energy so that Apollo can live. The two of them had a blast and, according to Vic, still come to *STC* social events that happen in the Los Angeles area (where they live) because they feel like they're "a part of the family."

With all the footage "in the can", work began on post production: adjusting sound levels and light and color, cutting and editing scenes together, adding music and sound effects, and completing visual effects shots until the episode was finished and ready to premiere to the world on May 24, 2013. Take a look at the finished production:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G-ziTBakbQ>



with Kickstarter, if you don't make it to your goal, you get nothing.



Fan reaction was overwhelmingly positive. Sure, there were complaints that Vic Mignogna's acting was too derivative of Shatner or that this or that actor could never replace the original. Well, of course not! No one was trying to replace anyone, only to honor them by carrying forward their iconic characters. But despite a few grumblers out there, the vast majority of fans were blown away by what they saw (including me!), and were eagerly anticipating what would come next.

And what came next would require...a Kickstarter! (Or rather, a **KIRK**starter, as *STC* cleverly called it.)

Vic reportedly spent about \$40-60,000 of his own money financing the first full-length episode. Vic later commented in an interview, "My feeling was that it would be unethical for me to ask people to give me money to do something I had not proven I could do." And even though the three vignettes had grabbed people's attention, they were short. A full-length episode would have a much stronger impact.

And now that Vic had his full-length episode to show people, it was time to see if folks would donate their money in order to see more. But this was only 2013...before most *Trek* fans even knew what a Kickstarter was. In fact, by the time *STC* launched their campaign in early October, only one *Star Trek* fan film had ever successfully completed a Kickstarter campaign (*Star Trek: Renegades*). Everyone else had failed to fund.

STC set an ambitious goal of \$100,000. Would they be able to convince fans to give them that much money? Remember,

Next time: we find out whether *Star Trek Continues* reached that \$100,000 or not. Then our spotlight rolls on with a closer look at *STC*'s next three episodes, as the make-up and costuming departments get pushed to their limits!

And of course, all of the amazing offerings of *STC* can be found on their website:

<http://startrekcontinues.com/episodes.html>

PART THREE

WARNING! SPOILERS AHEAD!



Last time: Having released a very impressive debut episode, “Pilgrim of Eternity,” in May of 2013, **STAR TREK CONTINUES** was ready to bring fans even more episodes from what they imagined would have been the never-produced 4th and 5th seasons of TOS Star Trek. They just needed one thing: money.

Vic Mignogna had funded their first episode himself as a way of telling fans, “Hey, this is what we can do. Please donate so we can make more Episodes like this.” Some of the sets had already been built by the team at *Starship Farragut*, which agreed to share their studio with *STC*. Other set pieces, like the briefing room and captain’s quarters, had been partially constructed in Oklahoma City for the never-made fan film *Starship Ajax*, and Vic purchased them from *Ajax* show-runner John Hughes to take to Georgia.

In 2012, Farragut Films moved to a larger studio in Kingsland, GA, with 10,000 square feet to expand into. With their combined resources, the two productions were now able to have a TOS bridge, transporter, crew quarters, briefing room/mess hall, sickbay, and corridors. New set construction “including improvements for the existing bridge” were overseen by local contractor William Smith, who became the *de facto* “custodian” of the entire set, as he lived close to the studio.

But a fan film needs more than just sets. There was also rent for the sound stage, rent for the equipment, utilities, prop creation, costume production and rental, make-up supplies and equipment, and post-production costs for things like hard-drive storage. Add to this costs for travel and lodging for out-of-town cast and crew plus food for everyone during the week and a half of filming. And while most of the team were volunteers, some professionals were working at a discounted rate (about 10% of their normal fee). It all added up!

Vic determined that if *STC* could raise \$100,000 in a crowd-funder, they could afford to make three additional episodes. The campaign was held in late 2013, and on November 6, the Kickstarter (or **KIRK**starter, as they called it) finished with \$126,028 from 2,981 backers. That was more than enough for three new episodes!

Let’s take a closer look at each of them.



EPISODE #2 — LOLANI

Work on their second episode had started months before their Kickstarter campaign began. The first thing required, of course, was a script...and for that, they needed a story.

In multiple interviews, show runner Vic Mignogna discussed how he wanted *STC* to have stories about something. Many fans had pitched him space battle episode ideas with Klingons and the such, but the original series had relatively little of that. Instead, TOS scripts had social relevance, reflecting societal issues of the day through a sci-fi “lens.” *Star Trek* gave us stories that made us think, that had moral dilemmas where things weren’t always wrapped up neatly in a bow. And that’s the foundation on which *STC*’s second episode was conceived.

Vic co-wrote "**Lolani**"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mOpmIFTxkE>

with **Huston Huddleston**, who in turn finished the teleplay with **Paul Bianchi**. Like their first episode, "**Pilgrim of Eternity**,"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3G-ziTBAbkQ>

(which featured a theme of redemption through self-sacrifice), their second episode also touched on an important subject: human trafficking. Conveniently, *Trek* already had the perfect foils for an episode about this subject: the green-skinned Orions and their intoxicatingly sensual "slave women." Surprisingly, TOS itself never dealt with the seemingly incongruous existence of an active slave trade in an otherwise utopian future. On the other hand, Orion wasn't a member of the Federation... and thus does the episode introduce the primary conflict of Lolani's story.

The challenge of such an episode, of course, was going to be actor make-up. "**Lolani**" featured two prominent characters who would have large amounts of exposed green skin: Lolani herself, an Orion slave played by the mesmerizing **Fiona Vroom**, and her brutish Orion owner Zaminhon, played by **Lou Ferrigno**. Ferrigno was no stranger to green body make-up, having played the Incredible Hulk on the live-action TV series from 1977-1981. But this green make-up this time was going to look noticeably different and include a beard and bald head (not very Hulk-like). His face, neck, hands, and very muscular arms would need to be colored, while Lolani would be doing many of her scenes scantily clad, requiring massive coverage of green make-up that (hopefully) wouldn't get all over the place...including on all those nice uniforms and set pieces!



It's not easy being green!

Fortunately, the wife and husband team of **Lisa Hansell** and **Tim Vittetoe** were on the job as the hair and make-up supervisors on *STC*. Based in Los Angeles, Tim and Lisa have done a lot of work in the Hollywood entertainment industry and received instruction from five-time Emmy winning make-up artist **Gil Mosko** (who worked on *TNG* and *DS9*). They were also no strangers to

Trek fan films, Tim having been part of *Star Trek: Of Gods and Men*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFqAME7dx58> supervised make-up on *Star Trek: Renegades*,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eE2Wgop9VLM&t=725s&pbjreload=10>

which is where they met Vic. (They've also done work on the recent *Star Trek: Horizon* fan film

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l94v4YOqxOc&t=1s&pbjreload=10> .

For the green coloring, Tim and Lisa used a mixture of adhesive and acrylic color, called PAX, so that the green would not transfer onto the sets or costumes. A custom-matched cream make-up was used for their faces. Each day, Fiona's Lolani make-up required a crew of three make-up artists five hours to apply. Lou Ferrigno's make-up took about three hours. When they were done each day, it still took hours more to remove all the make-up! But it was worth it, as the two characters were among the most visually interesting of any seen in a *Trek* fan film so far...and their strong acting only enhanced the impact

(I should note that Lou Ferrigno lost the majority of his hearing as a small child and has a bit of a speech impediment because of it. While the lisp is noticeable in the episode, his strong performance and physical presence far outweigh it.)

Ferrigno wasn't the only notable sci-fi genre star to appear in this episode. As a frequent guest at signing conventions, Vic knows a lot of industry folks, and he convinced **Erin Gray** (who portrayed Colonel Wilma Deering on *Buck Rogers*

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in the 1980s) to play a Starfleet Commodore, as well as **Daniel Logan** (who played the young Boba Fett in *Star Wars: Attack of the Clones*) to play the *Enterprise* navigator.



Daniel "young Boba Fett" Logan and Erin "Wilma Deering" Gray.

Released in February of 2014, "Lolani" was a huge hit with fans, even more than *STC*'s first episode. This was considered to be a major triumph for the team, as this time they weren't relying on a sequel to a TOS episode but instead presenting a truly unique and stand-alone story. Vic had stepped aside from directing (Chris White directed "Lolani"), allowing him to concentrate more on playing Kirk correctly and avoiding the stigma of imitating a caricature of Shatner's acting style. **Michele Specht's** new character of Counselor McKennah also got a chance to

really shine as a foil for Kirk, setting up some interesting tension between the two of them.

EPISODE #3 — FAIREST OF THEM ALL



If make-up was the biggest challenge for their second full episode, then costuming was the major obstacle for their third. "**Fairest of Them All**" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dJf2ovQtl6w> wasn't so much a sequel to the TOS episode "Mirror, Mirror" as an *extension* of it. We all know what happened to "our" Captain Kirk after he and the landing party returned from the mirror universe. But what about their counterparts? Was Mirror- Spock able to find a way to spare the Halkans after all? What would Mirror-Kirk do now that he was back on the *USS Enterprise*?

In an episode co-written by Vic and James Kerwin (who also directed) from a story by Vic, these questions and more were answered...in an exciting and suspenseful way. In fact, it's a top MUST WATCH *Trek* fan film. Released onto the Internet on June 15, 2014, the story line draws you in, the drama keeps you on the edge of your seat and constantly guessing, and the resolution is ultimately quite satisfying. Sure, these aren't the exact same actors who crewed our favorite starship 50 years ago (how could they be?), but once you put that expectation aside, the entire 40-minute episode feels like a piece of "lost" *Star Trek* from the 1960s.

Especially notable was the performance of **Todd Haberkorn** as Spock. Up until this point, Todd hadn't been given much to do. But he *owned* this episode and played the mirror-Spock to perfection. Also amazing was **Asia**

DeMarcos, playing the captain's woman, Marlena Moreau. Asia looked uncannily similar to BarBara Luna, who played the role back in 1967. Also, listen closely to the computer voice. Recognize it? That's *TNG*'s and *DS9*'s **Michael "Worf" Dorn**! (Chuck Huber also returned to the role of McCoy in this episode and has continued to play him ever since.)

The look of the mirror universe was sheer brilliance! The costuming department, which included Vic himself and was led by costume designer **Ginger Holley**, worked almost non-stop on the costumes from November of 2013 until March of 2014 when filming kicked off. Nearly everything had to be made from scratch! You would think they could just tweak their regular uniforms and add the Empire's insignia, but it wasn't that easy. Their regular *STC* uniforms were made from a polyester fabric similar to what TOS had used in its third season. But "Mirror, Mirror" was a second season TOS episode,



Holding up a mirror to "Mirror Mirror". Todd Haberkorn and Asia DeMarcos as Spock and Marlena,

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filmed while Shatner and company were still wearing uniforms made of stretch velour (which is nearly impossible to find these days).



Ginger described the final rush to complete the uniforms in an interview on the *STC* website: “We finally found the right cotton velour about two weeks before filming began, and so all of the dyed tunics for the main cast and for extras had to be cut and assembled very quickly. I had never dyed anything before, so I watched a lot of YouTube videos. I ended up dyeing the fabrics in my bathtub. It was a lot of trial and error.”

And then there was Kirk’s sleeveless sparkly gold vest, perhaps the toughest piece to make. Ginger found a vintage woven gold metal lurex fabric and hand- stitched two identical vests just in case one became damaged in the fight

scenes. The attention to detail on those costumes and their adornments was the icing on this oh-so-sweet cake.

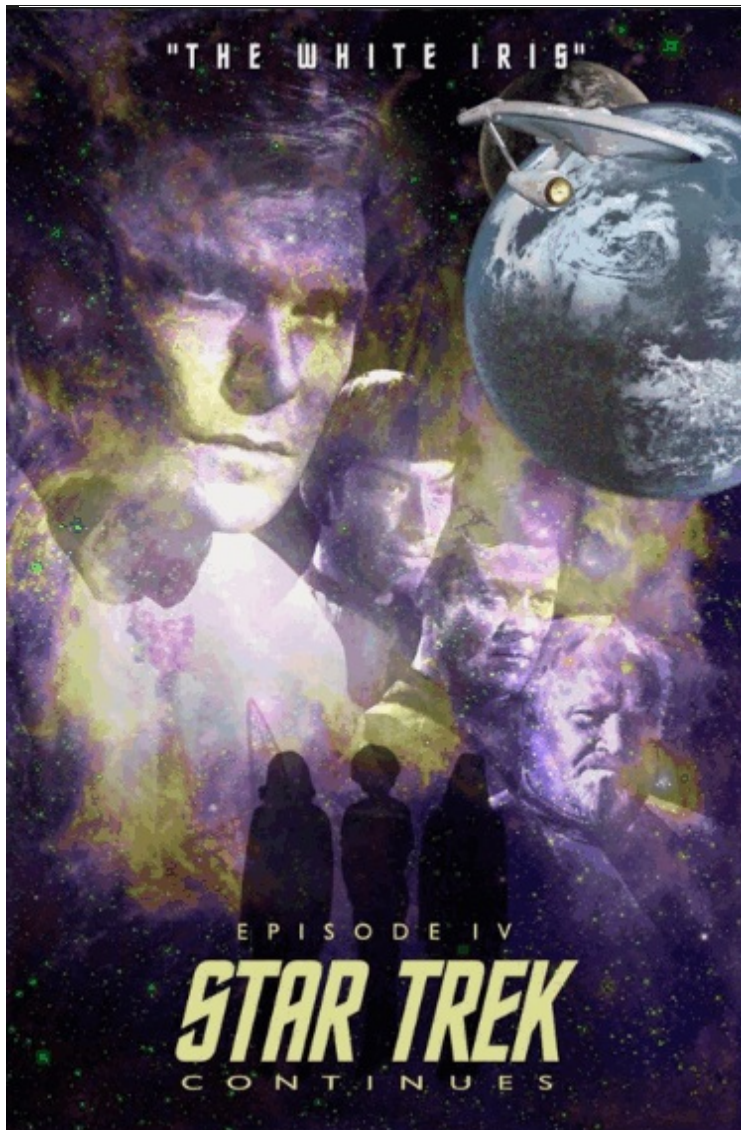
After doing most of the filming in March, the last scenes were shot in May at the Johnson Space Center where the recently-restored Galileo shuttlecraft was (and still is) on display. Special permission was given to *STC* to film there based on a review of the quality of their previous episodes, and the scene is pretty awesome to watch.



Episode #4 — “The White Iris”

“The White Iris”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6PvgJl6cvh8> (co-written by Vic, James Kerwin, and Chris White, and directed by James Kerwin again) was an interesting departure from anything *STC* had done before. A relatively quiet episode, “The White Iris” felt more like a dramatic stage play than a typical *Star Trek* fan film. It’s a journey, of sorts, through Kirk’s psyche as he deals with the “ghosts” of women from his past who have died, and it provides an amazing opportunity for Counselor McKennah’s character to really develop. I won’t say more, as the ending is one of the most beautiful tear-jerkers (yes, dammit, I cried!) that I’ve ever seen in ANY *Star Trek*...not just fan films.

As was becoming the norm, the episode featured a noted sci-fi celebrity guest star: **Colin Baker**, who played the sixth incarnation of the titular Time Lord on the British series *Doctor Who*. Also, **Martina “Counselor Troi” Sirtis** returned to *STC* to once again voice the *Enterprise* computer.



Kudos must go to costume designer **Ginger Holley** and wardrobe supervisor **Dorothy Booraem**, who spent uncounted hours creating amazing replicas of the costumes originally worn by the characters of Edith Keeler, Miramanee, and Rayna...plus nearly a dozen other original pieces.

But what was most notable about this episode was the music. For the first three episodes of *STC*, a collection of the commercially-available original *Star Trek* music was used. But then something pretty awesome happened, and I'll let Vic tell it in his own words from a great radio interview he recently did (regrettably, no longer available online, so I can't link to it)...

I got an e-mail out of the blue from this guy [Andy Farber], and he said, "Listen, I'm a composer, and I love Star Trek, and I love the original series, and I love what you guys are doing. Have you ever thought of having original music?"

And I wrote this guy back — just like I'd written five other guys back — and I said, "Well, I really appreciate it, but the reality is that people just don't write like that anymore. It's a very specific style of writing." And he wrote back and said, "Well, I'd love to try." And I said to him, "Well, I'll tell you what: our episode that we're getting ready to do has an original character in it named Nakia. She was a young girl who served on the Farragut with Kirk when he was a young lieutenant. And just like Edith Keeler had her own theme and Miramanee had her own theme, we want this original character to have her own theme. Andy, why don't you write something for her and send it to me, as a test, and see how you

do?" And he recorded something and he sent it, and my jaw hit the ground! I was like, omigod, this guys gets it!

*And so I sent him the rough cut of the episode, and he wrote some original pieces for the episode. And then I flew up to Rochester, NY, where he had put together an orchestra at the Rochester Institute of Technology, and we recorded a live orchestra...never been done on a fan production before! And we had such a good time, and it went so well, that we did the same thing for "**Divided We Stand**" [episode 5], and he's gonna be writing original music for "**Come Not Between the Dragons**" [episode 6].*

And by the way, I found out later on that Andy Farber, he's not just "a composer," but he teaches composition at Julliard in New York City...one of the most prestigious music schools in the country.

STC produced a wonderful 8-minute behind-the-scenes video spotlighting the creation of the music for this episode: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F5Ahf49fYbg&t=9s>

"**The White Iris**" debuted on the Internet at the end of May 2015 and, shortly thereafter, ran into a bit of controversy. YouTube pulled down the episode due to a copyright violation because *STC* used a short clip from the TOS episode "**The Paradise Syndrome**" without obtaining permission. A number of fans began to panic that CBS was now going to start shutting down all fan films and that *STC* had pushed the envelope too far and ruined everything. (Yeah, I know...sounds very familiar. But this was six months *before* Axanar Productions was served with an infringement lawsuit from CBS and Paramount.)

But instead of *STC* being shut down, within a few days, the matter was resolved. On June 19, 2015, *STC* posted to its Facebook page: "We are very pleased to announce that, after two notices from CBS to YouTube, the mistaken copyright

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strike against us has been removed — and Episode 4, THE WHITE IRIS, is back on our channel! Sincere thanks to CBS for following up on this personally. They graciously contacted us yesterday asking why the episode was not yet re-posted. After learning that the hold-up was on YouTube's end, CBS sent them a second notice to reinstate the episode immediately. Contrary to any rumor-mongering, no changes to the original cut have been made, nor was that ever the issue. So spread the word, and we hope you enjoy THE WHITE IRIS as much as we enjoyed bringing it to you."

Whew...not a copyright crisis after all!

Next time: believe it or not, a lot MORE happened in 2015! In addition to another Kickstarter and the release of *STC*'s sixth episode "Divided We Stand," *STC* and *Starship Farragut* also parted ways. Not a lot of fans know the background details and who was paid how much and for what. But I'll have all of that information for you next week. And finally, a closer look at how episodes 7 and 8 both broke new ground.

All of the amazing offerings of *STC* can be found on their website at this page:

<http://startrekcontinues.com/episodes.html>

PART FOUR

WARNING! SPOILERS AHEAD!



Last time: we took a look at the first three episodes of **STAR TREK CONTINUES** to be filmed with \$126,000 in funds donated from their first “**Kirkstarter**” campaign in late 2013: “Lolani,”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P3LwfbfzjsI&feature=youtu.be>

“Fairest of Them All,”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MHCx9Lx26Wo&feature=youtu.be>

and “The White Iris.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKvFbWDEoS8&feature=youtu.be>

The last of these three episodes was filmed in January of 2015, just as *STC* was launching its second Kickstarter campaign (**Kirkstarter 2.0**, as they called it) to fund their next episode...and possibly more. But before we get to the crowd-funding campaign, something even more significant was about to happen in the Georgia Studio where *STC* shared space with Farragut Films.

Farragut Films wanted out, and was ready to let *STC* take over the studio completely (along with the \$4,000/month rent!).

The only problem: Farragut Films wanted to take their bridge

with them. After all, they built it! But how was *STC* going to make more episodes without the most important TOS set of them all???

Later on at the end of 2015, *STC* would file for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, and their submitted paperwork became public record. As such, we now know all of the details of what happened behind-the-scenes when Farragut Films moved out of the studio...

BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO

The following comes from a really interesting Addendum filed to expand on *STC*’s submitted IRS Form 1023. It’s full of fascinating tidbits about *STC*. Want to know exactly how much of their own money **Vic Mignogna** and **Steven Dengler** put into the production? Want to know the average discounted rate most of the professionals who worked on *STC* over the years were charging? It’s all in there.



And this is what it says about the bridge set...

[The Starship] Farragut group owned just the bridge set which they graciously “loaned” to STC. At first it was “free” but then FFH [Far From Home Productions, the original name for Trek Continues, Inc.] had to start paying some of the rent, which was eventually paid by a fan.

Quick interruption. That last part is actually a fascinating story that not many people know about. Initially, *STC* had an agreement where they would just borrow Farragut Films’ studio and sets for a few weeks each year to film a couple of episodes of their fan series. Farragut would be paying the entire \$4,000/month rent on the warehouse facility-turned-studio. In the meantime, Vic Mignogna and Steven Dengler had put \$41,000 into production costs during 2013, and some of that money went into expanding and improving the standing sets.

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But \$48,000 a year is a lot of money. And when, at the end of 2013, *STC* pulled in over \$100,000 (after fees) from their first crowd-funding campaign, Farragut Films thought it was time to start splitting the rent evenly. The only problem was that *STC* had budgeted their three episodes based on the assumption of free rent. But Farragut insisted that the rental costs now be shared (which, to be honest, seems fair). However, that would likely cost *STC* one of their three promised episodes.

But then, sometime in early 2014, the studio landlord received an anonymous payment of \$24,000 covering *STC*'s half of the rent for the year. The addendum lists it only as being paid by "a fan." Since Vic's and Steve's donations to the production are thoroughly recorded in the IRS filing, it's unlikely either of them was the anonymous fan. And it sure as heck wasn't me! So the identity of this anonymous benefactor still remains one of the mysteries of the fan film world!

Okay, back to the story of the *STC*/Farragut break-up...

The bridge was good and sturdy but, for example, the (computer) lights at the various officers' stations did not mimic the ones from TOS to the satisfaction of STC volunteers and professionals. For the STC shoots, they made several major upgrades. The lights on the bridge were upgraded as everyone wanted. There were sets added around the bridge, just as in TOS. You'll have to take the set tour but behind the bridge there is an elevator opening, a conference room to the left and a long hall to the right which has a crew quarters room, a transporter room and a sick bay. Now, there is also an engineering room set farther down the hall.

*If somebody came "to repossess" the bridge, the expensive new light set would get wrecked and the rest of the sets would fall like a bunch of dominos. Stated another way, the bridge set is the solidly built "keystone" that keeps the rest of the sets in place and sturdy. Eventually in 2014, it became obvious that *STC* could not have the bridge set "repossessed." This led to the \$50,000 deal to have full title to the bridge and assure the continued availability of the other set.*

That price was pretty much determined by the SS Farragut group. That's what they felt they put into the bridge set in hardware (not counting time) and they wanted their costs back. The set is beautiful and the first price of \$40,000 was a really good deal. Then they decided they wanted more, \$50,000, and the TCI [Trek Continues, Inc.] board voted unanimously to authorize Vic to do what it took, literally, to keep the bridge "nailed down." Before they upped the price again, Vic entered into the \$50,000 contract which is at E52-53 and the set was "safe."

KIRKSTARTER 2.0

On January 17, 2015, *STC* launched their second "Kirkstarter" — again with a goal of \$100,000 — but this time, they pulled out all of the stops!

Their new crowd-funder was supported by a huge social media campaign and a series of some of my favorite-ever *Trek* Kickstarter videos. Wearing 1920s-era gangster suits Vic Mignogna and Todd Haberkorn played Kirk and Spock from "A Piece of the Action"; they even had a beige 2-door jalopy coupe! (Granted, it's not the 1931 Cadillac 370A V12 that was used in the original *Trek* episode, but it's pretty close.) Take a look at a couple of their shorts:

<https://vimeo.com/115610581>

Even though *Trek Continues, Inc.* was not yet a 510(c)(3) tax-exempt organization (that application would be filed nearly a year later), they were still operating as a non-profit organization, a fact that was mentioned frequently in their messaging to potential donors (and something that *Axanar* Productions would likewise do later that same year for their next crowd-funding campaign).

There's no way to know whether the non-profit nature of the production company had any effect on the donations, but regardless, **Kirkstarter 2.0** blew away all expectations, taking in nearly \$215,000 from 2,916 backers! Having more than doubled their goal number, *STC* would now be able to construct an amazing full Engineering set along with an alien planet set. They also brought in enough to cover the \$50,000 buy-out of Farragut Films and afford the full studio rent (increased from \$4,000 to \$5,000/month to give them more room to build Engineering) for the entire year. And with the remainder, *STC* would be able to produce TWO new episodes in 2015.



Spocko and Vic make the fan a Kickstarter offer they can't refuse...ya know what I mean?

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But first, there was still one episode from the previous Kickstarter still in post-production.

Wait a second! Didn't *STC* already produce and release the three episodes from the previous Kickstarter: "Lolani," "Fairest of Them All," and "The White Iris"? Where did this extra episode come from?

EPISODE #5 — DIVIDED WE STAND



"Divided We Stand,"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9i8XwLLCs4&feature=youtu.be> was actually filmed back-to-back with "The White Iris" in order to save money on travel and hotel costs, as well as on equipment rentals and other expenses. And that's how *STC* managed to squeeze out a fourth episode from the donations raised in the first *Kirk*starter.

Each episode usually took about 8-9 days to shoot, but "Divided We Stand" required an extra little "field trip" to nearby Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park in northern Florida (about an hour from the studio in Kingsland, GA).

A couple of years earlier, Vic got an idea to do an episode where the crew visit a specific period in history...which some of his favorite episodes of TOS had done. But where (or rather when) had the *Enterprise* crew NOT gone before? When Vic came up with the answer, he also came up with the solution of how to recreate another time period without blowing the budget: the American Civil War.

It turned out that a local Civil War re-enactment group would be staging the Battle of Olustee just a few days after studio filming wrapped on "Divided We Stand." Hundreds and hundreds of extras would already be fighting in period uniforms with guns (shooting blanks, of course!) and cannons exploding...surrounded old military tents set up in army camp style. All *STC* needed to do was to convince a couple dozen re-enactors to show up a little early to film some scenes in the studio and a few extra

non-fighting scenes out near the battlefield. Then they filmed the battle re-enactment itself.

Released onto the Internet in late September of 2015, the result is an episode that has probably set an almost-insurmountable bar for other *Trek* fan series. The Civil War battle footage was as realistic as anything you'll ever see in Hollywood. Add in a great story focusing specifically on Kirk and McCoy, masterfully acted by both **Vic Mignogna** and **Chuck Huber**, and you've got yet another MUST-SEE fan film effort.

EPISODE #6 — COME NOT BETWEEN THE DRAGONS

Star Trek Continues had now reached the mid-point of its planned run of 13 episodes. Vic Mignogna, born in 1962 according to his IMDb page <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0586003/> said during a CNET interview, "I can't speak for anybody else, but at least for me — I'm not going to be able to play a 35-year-old Captain Kirk forever."



So the plan was always to do about 13 episodes or so, with the final few episodes gradually leading to the end of the five-year mission and setting up the situations that would lead the characters to where they were at the beginning of *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.

This seventh episode featured the first hint of that ongoing story arc. The story opens with Scotty informing Kirk that the *USS Lexington* had to be scuttled after an accident, leaving only eight *Constitution* class starships of the original fleet intact (*Constellation*, *Defiant*, *Intrepid*, *Excalibur*, and *Valiant* were all destroyed/lost during TOS episodes). Fans didn't know it at the time, but this stand-alone reference to the destruction of another starship would play a larger role in the remaining episodes.

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It was another ground-breaking episode by *STC*, one of their best yet with a very true-to-TOS feel. They tackled a real social issue with a morality tale, employing many of the tropes that TOS used (like alien mind control and a “monster” who turned out to be more of a victim). Guest star **Gigi Edgley** <http://www.gigiedgley.com/> (of *Farscape* fame) gave a powerful performance. The regular cast by this point were becoming much more comfortable in their roles, no longer simply mimicking the original series regulars but finding their own rhythms playing these characters. It was also the first episode (of any fan series) to feature a full Engineering set. (Although the fan series *Star Trek: New Voyages* had built an Engineering set, it was never used in an actual completed episode.)



How AWESOME is this set???

Five days after the release of “Come Not Between the Dragons”

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eO_v00Uj7Zk&feature=youtu.be

on May 28, 2016, *STC* released this really fun (and somewhat emotional) behind-the-scenes video spotlight of creature designer and episode writer **Greg Dykstra** (no relation to special effects legend **John Dykstra**) that you should really take a few moments to watch...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5PcTo5P0i0&t=62s>

EPISODE #7 — EMBRACING THE WINDS

The eighth episode of *STC*, “Embracing the Winds,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eALLj_D37Q&feature=youtu.be was also the first to be released after the announcement of the fan film guidelines <http://www.startrek.com/fan-films> by CBS and Paramount (more about that in Part 5 of this blog series). The guidelines weren't an issue for this episode, however, as it had been filmed and was already in post production long before the guideline announcement.

The episode, released just two months prior to the 2016 presidential election, was also very timely, as it dealt with the role of women in Starfleet and being awarded command of a starship. Back in the 1960s, Gene Roddenberry was able to convince the network that men of color could command starships (Commodore Stone and Captain Chandra from “Court Martial”), but he was never able to convince the executives to put a woman in the center seat...at least not of a Starfleet vessel (Romulans, it seems, did not have the same problem). In fact, the first woman commanding a starship wouldn't happen until the very beginning of the **FOURTH** *Star Trek* feature film nearly two decades later. And the first woman to run for president representing a major U.S. party...that wouldn't happen for another three decades after *Star Trek IV*!



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The parallels with the character of Commander Diana Garrett (masterfully played by professional actress Clare Kramer, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0004456/> best known to genre fans for her role as “Glory” on 13 episodes of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) become obvious early in the episode.

And while **James Kerwin** and **Vic Mignogna**’s script remains a bit heavy-handed in places, you could say the same thing about many episodes of TOS. And this issue is not a simple one, something the episode did not shy away from either. Indeed, *Buck Rogers* actress **Erin Gray** <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0001292/> makes her triumphant return as Commodore Gray, who outranks Kirk and yet has resigned herself to never commanding a starship. It’s a very powerful episode.



Clare Kramer as Commander Diana Garrett



Vic Mignogna with actress Erin Gray

Finally, it should be noted that this is yet another episode that continues the march toward the inevitable conclusion of the fan series and the set-up for *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. Chekov gets a promotion to Lieutenant Junior Grade and a suggestion that he might want to consider a transfer of specialties from navigation to tactical, a position he had in the first *Star Trek* feature film. And look out, because yet another starship is lost in this episode: the *USS Hood* (leaving only six heavy cruiser-class starships in service...with *Farragut* and *Constitution* being decommissioned and the others lost). Some fans complained about sloppy writing, as the reason for the *Hood*’s destruction was never revealed in the episode. But guess what? The answer was still to come...viewers just needed to be a little more patient



Next time: *Star Trek Continues* sets up its third crowd-funding campaign just as another major fan production is sued by CBS and Paramount. (Yeah, you know who.) And then there were those pesky fan film guidelines released by the studios! How would *STC* handle the fact that an ongoing fan series was now a “no-no,” and all future fan films were suddenly given a time-limit of just 15 minutes? Would fans end up missing the end of the five-year mission after all?

All of the amazing offerings of *STC* can be found on their website at this page:

<http://startrekcontinues.com/episodes.html>

PART FIVE



Last time, as 2015 came to a close, **STAR TREK CONTINUES** was well on its way to a royal fizzbin. They purchased the entirety of the sets in Kingsland, GA, and released their sixth episode, "Divided We Stand."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9i8XwLLCs4&feature=youtu.be> *STC*'s second "**Kirkstarter**" at the beginning of 2015 had brought in nearly \$215,000 to fund their next two episodes and build two new sets: Engineering and a planet set similar to what existed for TOS back in the 1960s on the Paramount lot. And then 2016 brought the release of those next two episodes, "Come Not Between the Dragons"

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eO_v00Uj7Zk&feature=youtu.be and "Embracing the Winds."

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eALLj_D37Q&feature=youtu.be

With eight episodes completed and released, *STC* was now way past the mid-point of what was originally intended to be a 13-episode run. Show-runner **Vic Mignogna** never envisioned *STC* going past that number of episodes, and joked that he, now well into his fifties, couldn't play a 35-year-old James T. Kirk forever. Indeed, episodes 7 and 8 already began introducing plot elements that would form into an ongoing story arc that would culminate in the series finale

that would end Kirk's five-year mission and lead into *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.

But as 2015 drew to a close, no one suspected that 2016 would turn out to be an uncertain and controversial year, not just for *STC*, but for all *Star Trek* fan films. And it all began just before New Years with the filing of a copyright infringement lawsuit by CBS and Paramount against another fan production...*Axanar*.

STC'S INDIEGOGO CAMPAIGN

The year-long *Axanar* lawsuit is covered in excruciating detail elsewhere on the FanFilmFactor website, <https://fanfilmfactor.com/category/blog-entries/axanar-lawsuit/> and this is a look back on *STC*. However, by 2016, as you'll see shortly, *STC* and *Axanar* began to affect each other in very public ways. And so one can't fully cover the history of *Star Trek Continues* without also mentioning the 800-pound mugato in the cave: *Axanar*.

Suffice it to say that the lawsuit had a significant and rather devastating effect on *Star Trek* fan film fandom in general. In addition to creating a near panic among most fan film producers wondering if they would be next, the lawsuit nearly tore apart the fan community as *Axanar* supporters and detractors took sides and began to battle among themselves on social media.

By March of 2016, the lawsuit was looking like a game of rugby, with both sides fighting tooth and nail with pre-trial motions...and no settlement or resolution in sight. Into this environment of uncertainty and high emotion, *STC* launched its third crowd-funding campaign. This time they switched from Kickstarter to Indiegogo for a variety of reasons—including the latter service not requiring a campaign to reach their goal in order to receive the funds raised. The target for the two-month campaign was set at an ambitious \$350,000 to cover post-production on episode 7 plus the full production on three more episodes, as well as \$5,000/month rent for the next 18 months.

It should be noted that, at the time the Indiegogo campaign was launched, episodes 6 and 7 had long since been filmed, and episode 6 was nearly ready to debut. In fact, "Come Not Between the Dragons" would premiere just three weeks after the completion of the campaign in early May, and "Embracing the Winds" would be released six months later in September.

With the entirety of *STC* episodes having been viewed over 4 million times by that point, there was an expectation that the campaign would easily reach \$350,000...and a stretch goal of \$450,000 was announced at the start that would allow for a fourth episode.



A history of **STAR TREK CONTINUES**

And so it came as a shock to many when, after nearly two months—with just one week left to go—their campaign had managed to raise only \$150K from just 1,741 backers. (Their first campaign had 3,000 donors and their second had 2,600.) What had gone wrong???

As far as Vic Mignogna was concerned, the answer was obvious. Having not spoken out publicly up until this point—other than to reaffirm *STC*'s commitment to honoring CBS's ownership of the *Star Trek* intellectual property and to remind fans and donors that no one on *STC* was making a salary—Vic's frustration with *Axanar* finally boiled over during a podcast interview on April 22 http://synthaholics.com/episode60_vic_mignogna/. Even though he didn't name the production or the producer, the following comment really stirred up the already-volatile fan base...on both sides of the issue:

Well, it's not been going as good as we had hoped, and I'm fairly certain, as are most of our production team that the reason for that is the 'other production'—that shall not be named—who behaved in such a way that they brought down a lawsuit on themselves. And I think it's really poisoned the well for the rest of us.

The irony in saying *Axanar* had “poisoned the well” (which was, in turn, poisoning the well against *Axanar*) wasn't lost on many *Axanar* supporters, including many who were also supporters and donors to *STC* (like myself). A portion of a video message from Vic to donors during the final week of the campaign only added fuel to the controversy... (the URL to download the clip)

[https://fanfilmfactor.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Vic-Mignogna-video.mp4?_ =1](https://fanfilmfactor.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Vic-Mignogna-video.mp4?_=)

Indeed, those same financials Vic mentions in the video thrust *STC* into the *Axanar* controversy when fans discovered — thanks to *STC*'s public Form 1023 filing to the IRS for 501(c)(3) for tax-exempt status - that *STC* was not “all volunteer” after all. Indeed, over the course of the three years from 2013-2015, *STC* had paid nearly \$165,000 to actors and contract laborers...

Of course, Vic was correct in stating that, unlike *Axanar*, *STC* was NOT paying annual salaries to anyone. Those in the cast and on the production crew who were being paid were, on average, charging only 10% of what they normally got paid, and were only being compensated during the two or three weeks a year they were working in Georgia at the studio (not counting post-production like VFX and musical scoring). And of course, Vic himself put tens of thousands of his own dollars into the production.

Trek Continues Inc. (StarTrekContinues.com) EIN: 47-2513580 Attachment to Form 1023 - Substitute for Application Page 9					
Actual & Projected Budgets (All Years Are 1/1 to 12/31)					
	First Year 2013 (actual)	Second 2014 (actual)	Third 2015 (projected)	Fourth 2016	TOTAL
Support and Revenue					
Contribution Income - Vic Mignonga	\$689	\$52,267	\$20,000		\$72,956
Grants					
Dues					
Fees for Services					
Fundraisers - Kickstarter.com	\$41,800	\$83,600	\$214,000	\$300,000	\$639,400
Carry-over of Cash in Bank Acct				\$24,247	\$24,247
Sales				(acct. bal 12/3/15)	
Dracogen/Dengler Sponsorship	\$6,500	\$9,000	\$59,000	\$0	\$74,500
Anonymous Fan Paying Building Rent		\$24,000	\$0	\$0	\$24,000
Total	\$48,989	\$168,867	\$293,000	\$324,247	\$510,856
Expenses					
Accounting/Bookkeeping		\$0	\$0		\$0
Contractual Fees to Actors		\$9,850	\$13,080	\$12,000	\$34,930
Gas Reimbursement to Volunteers		\$1,286	\$1,400	\$1,300	\$3,986
Fundraising Expenses	\$3,612	\$7,224	\$17,500	\$25,000	\$53,336
Insurance	\$1,000	\$1,730	\$2,000	\$2,500	\$7,230
Legal Fees		\$4,000	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$9,000
Sets & Wardrobe - See Note.		\$14,780	\$65,000	\$65,000	\$144,780
Audio/Video Rentals		\$4,901	\$6,000	\$5,000	\$15,901
Rent		\$24,000	\$53,000	\$60,000	\$137,000
Contract Labor (Mostly Crew)		\$41,400	\$48,215	\$50,000	\$139,615

TCI Exhibit Page 34

The the STC application for Recognition of Exemption Under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code

So yes, there were significant differences between how *STC* was compensating their people and how *Axanar* was reportedly doing so. But along with the money *Renegades* and a couple of other “professional” fan films were paying to their actors and production team, a debate began to happen both among the fans and also within the offices of CBS and Paramount about whether a “fan” film should be made up of ALL *unpaid* amateurs rather than bringing in paid professional actors and crew (even working at massively discounted rates) to work alongside unpaid volunteers.

WHY DID *STC*'S INDIEGOGO COME UP SHORT OF ITS GOAL?

It's difficult to answer that question with any degree of certainty because there was likely no single reason that resulted in the donations coming in lower than expected. Simply saying that it was all *Axanar*'s fault requires someone to ignore a LOT of other factors that were also in play at the time:

A history of **STAR TREK CONTINUES**

Donor fatigue — While 2014 was a veritable “gold rush” for many *Trek* fan films, 2015 saw a general drop-off months BEFORE the *Axanar* lawsuit hit. *Star Trek: New Voyages* had raised \$65K from 1,100 donors on Kickstarter in 2014. But in 2015, they only hit \$50,000 from less than 800 donors. *Renegades* almost missed their \$375,000 goal in 2015 after easily raising \$350,000 the year before. *Starship Farragut* struggled to just barely make their \$15,000 crowdfunding goal, while they had crossed \$20,000 a year earlier in 2014. Other fan film campaigns like *Star Trek: Anthology*, *Star Trek: Equinox*, and *Star Trek: First Frontier* failed completely to reach their 2015 Kickstarter goals.

The switch to Indiegogo — At the time, Indiegogo was getting barely one-third of the web traffic that its competitor Kickstater was achieving. *Axanar* itself saw a drop-off of 10% when they switched from Kickstarter in 2014 to Indiegogo in 2015. *STC*'s donations were following this same pattern, as they finished their Indiegogo campaign about 10% below their previous Kickstarter totals.

Bad timing — While there's no “perfect” time to hold a crowd-funding campaign, some times of the year are worse than others. For example, don't try to compete with the Christmas holidays because people travel and they spend their money on presents more than donating to fan film projects. Likewise, with mainly U.S. backers contributing, Tax Day (April 15) is not necessarily the best time to ask people for money...even if you are a non-profit charity. There's simply less money available going into April (which was the second month of *STC*'s campaign). Also, one wonders what would have happened if *STC* had held their campaign directly AFTER releasing “Come Not Between the Dragons” instead of having their campaign finish BEFORE the episode premiered.



This is NOT to say that *Axanar* had nothing to do with the outcome of *STC*'s Indiegogo campaign. It's likely that a number of fans were worried that the *Axanar* lawsuit was just the first step in an impending studio shut-down of ALL *Trek* fan films, and potential supporters feared their donations might be going into a project that would never be completed or allowed to be released. But was that the only factor in play during those two months of the campaign? It's possible but unlikely.

Regardless of the reasons, *STC*'s Indiegogo finished up on May 4, 2016 with \$199,049 from 2230 backers. This ranked as the second-highest Indiegogo campaign total for a *Trek* fan film to date, and the sixth highest total if you included Kickstarter campaigns. So nothing to sneeze at!

But even though nearly \$200K was a very impressive total and the team was truly grateful for the fans' support, there was a perceptible frustration that they had so significantly failed to reach their \$350,000 goal.

AND THEN THE GUIDELINES HAPPENED...

As *STC* was trying to figure out how to apportion the funds from the latest crowd-funding campaign, and wondering whether to do two episodes or try to complete all three that were promoted in the campaign, the world of *Star Trek* fan films was changed forever with the issuing of new guidelines <http://www.startrek.com/fan-films> by CBS and Paramount.



The guidelines were announced in late June of 2016, and they carried a jolt like a quantum torpedo hit. Concerned about how fan films were taking in hundreds of thousands and sometimes even over a million dollars in donations, CBS and Paramount imposed a \$50,000 crowd-funding cap. They also limited the length of fan films to no longer than 15 minutes and not more than two consecutive parts. The words “Star Trek” could no longer appear in the fan films' title (only the subtitle “A *Star Trek* Fan Production”). No unlicensed merchandise or services could be distributed as perks via crowd-funding campaigns. And perhaps most controversial of all, fan films were now forbidden from *paying* anyone associated with the production or employing any actor or professional who had previously worked any official *Star Trek* project from episodes and movies to licensed video games, DVD releases, calendars, novels, etc.

Fans and supporters feared that these new guidelines spelled almost certain doom for *Star Trek Continues*! After all, *STC* episodes typically violated many of the guidelines:

- Full-length 50-plus minute episodes
- Crowd-funding way over \$50,000
- An ongoing fan series with more than just two parts

A history of **STAR TREK CONTINUES**

- The words “Star Trek” in the title
- Unlicensed perks, some with the words “Star Trek” on them
- Paid professionals (both actors—who were required by Screen Actors Guild rules to be paid for their participation—as well as various other contract labor)
- Use of individuals who had previously or were currently working on actual *Star Trek* episodes produced by the studios...including *Star Trek* veterans like actor **Michael Forest** (who reprised his role of Apollo in *STC*'s first episode) and VFX artist **Doug Drexler**. Heck, even Vic Mignogna himself had done voice-over work for the **Star Trek Online** game!

STC had just crowd-funded \$200,000...but they needed even more to complete the final 6 episodes of their intended 13-episode run. And of course, their average episode length was more than 50-minutes. It would be all-but-impossible to tell a proper *STC* story in just 15 minutes! And by eliminating the concept of an “ongoing” series, *STC* couldn't finish all 6 of their remaining episodes anyway.

How could *Star Trek Continues* possibly...continue?

RISK...RISK IS OUR BUSINESS

At first, fans weren't certain what to make of these new rules. The guidelines began by stating that “*CBS and Paramount Pictures will not object to, or take legal action against, Star Trek fan productions that are non-professional and amateur and meet the following guidelines.*” So that seemed to mean that any fan film that *followed* these guidelines did *not* have to fear a lawsuit or a cease and desist letter or any trouble from the studios.

But what about the reverse? If a fan production violated the guidelines, did that mean that they *WOULD* be sued? The *STC* team didn't see it that way.

By August of 2016, **STC** had made a bold decision. They would use the money they had crowd-funded to produce a final **FOUR** episodes (not six)...at an accelerated pace. This would save on studio rent costs to the tune of about \$40-\$50,000, and the rest would come from a combination of careful and frugal production choices.

And what about the guidelines?

Here's where *STC* decided to take a risk. They would produce their final four episodes the way they had their previous seven. In short, *STC* would be ignoring the guidelines and boldly going where their fan production had gone before.

Were they nuts???

Actually, this was a very carefully considered decision. In their view, the team saw the guidelines as *NOT* saying that, if a production *failed* to follow the guidelines that they *would* be sued. If a fan production decided, as *STC* was deciding, to release something that did not follow the guidelines, CBS and Paramount could choose to take action—or *NOT* take action—at their discretion.

Over the years, *STC* had maintained a courteous, respectful, and proactive relationship with the folks at CBS Licensing. Although unconfirmed, it is generally accepted that *STC*'s producers reached out to their CBS contacts and promised to wrap up just as soon they fulfilled their commitment to the fans. *STC* would produce and release just four more episodes, as quickly as possible, maintain a positive and supportive attitude toward *Star Trek*, CBS, and Paramount (as they had been doing all along), and then shut down completely.

It was quite a gamble. But would it work?

Next time: the history of *Star Trek Continues* concludes with a closer look at their final episodes, reaction from CBS and Paramount, and some exclusive video footage from the discussion panel at L.A. Comic Con where Vic and the *STC* team premiered their eleventh and final episode. And among the questions asked by the audience: what happens to those amazing TOS sets now that the fan series is finished?

All of the amazing offerings of *STC* can be found on their website at this page:

<http://startrekcontinues.com/episodes.html>

PART SIX

WARNING! SPOILERS AHEAD!



Last time, an Indiegogo crowd-funding campaign in early 2016 gave the *STAR TREK CONTINUES* team just under \$200,000 to produce more episodes of their fan series. But a new set of fan film guidelines <http://www.startrek.com/fan-films> released by CBS and Paramount threatened to stop the production in its tracks by limiting episode length to 15-minutes, blocking ongoing series, and forbidding the use of paid professionals and *Star Trek* alumni on any fan production. *STC*'s episodes had been regularly violating several of these new guidelines, and while the new rules were not retroactive, they would apply to anything produced by *STC* going forward.

But the *STC* team decided to forge ahead anyway, arguing that the guidelines were only that — guidelines — and not some kind of new “law.” They only said that fan productions that followed these guidelines would *not* be sued by the studios, NOT that those who didn't follow the guidelines *would* be sued.

So *STC* announced their intention to produce four new full-length episodes with professional actors and crew, release all four in 2017, and then shut down their fan series for good. The hope was that their amicable

relationship with CBS would convince the studios to allow them to finish up, shut down, and go out on the high note. It wasn't the most optimum solution, of course. *STC* had initially wanted to produce 13 episodes, and now they would only go to 11. However, considering the harsh constraints of the new guidelines on fan films, being able to produce four full-length episodes — assuming the studios would let them do so without a cease and desist letter or a lawsuit — seemed to be more of a victory than a defeat.

But would CBS and Paramount allow then to actually do it?

EPISODE #8 — “STILL TREADS THE SHADOW”

The first episode of *STC* to be released post-guidelines was their seventh episode, “Embracing the Winds,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1eALLj_D37Q&feature=youtu.be which debuted in September of 2016 (three months after the announcement of the guidelines). However, that episode had been filmed back in 2015 and was well into post-production when the guidelines came out. So most fans assumed it would be “grandfathered in” and not count.

The real test would come the following April (2017) with the release of their eighth episode, “Still Treads the Shadow.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2RkUKpTYzM&feature=youtu.be> In addition to being 54 minutes long, continuing an ongoing series, and using “Star Trek” in the title, the episode also featured two people who worked professionally on actual studio-produced *Star Trek*. The first was **Judy Burns**, who had co-written the TOS episode “The Tholian Web” back in 1968. It was actually really cool having her write this episode, as “Still Treads the Shadow” served in many ways as a sequel to “The Tholian Web.”

The other professional to also work on studio-produced *Star Trek* was **Rekha Sharma**, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0788907/> who would be playing Security Chief Landry on the new *Star Trek: Discovery* series. (She had also appeared in the recent *Battlestar Galactica* reboot series.) However, in this at least, *STC* could be given a pass, as Reka had not yet even been announced as appearing in the new *Discovery* TV series when the eighth episode of *STC* was filmed.

Some detractors complained that the episode featured too much Kirk or that the make-up on the older Kirk looked fake. But for me, this was one of my favorite *STC* episodes to date. The tapestry of the story was beautifully woven, inspired by Samuel T. Coleridge's timeless epic poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. Show-runner **Vic Mignogna** gave a tour de force performance as three different Kirks. And in my opinion, the make-up on the ancient mariner Kirk was amazing, and far superior to almost anything achieved in other fan productions...of any genre.



It should be noted that this episode featured a quiet and very tender series of scenes between actress **Michele Specht** (who plays ship's counselor McKennah) and Vic portraying both old and young Kirk. The reason I mention this is that Michele and Vic recently got engaged

(according to Vic's Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/vicmignogna>), and I would like to congratulate both of them. While their characters never developed any romantic involvement, they've been a couple off-screen for a number of years. And the love and support between the two actors is very evident.



Vic Mignogna, Michele Specht, and Vic Mignogna

The episode was released, and fans held their breaths. Would CBS and Paramount take any action against *STC*? The answer was no. One episode down, three more to go...

EPISODE #9 — “WHAT SHIPS ARE FOR”

Fans didn't have to wait long. While previous episodes of *STC* had usually been separated by six month gaps (two per year) “What Ships Are For” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3VEZH8bqytA&pbjreload=10> debuted just four months later at the end of July. Written by **Kipleigh Brown** (who had played Lt. Barbara Smith since the third episode of *STC* and also appeared in a third season episode of *Star Trek: Enterprise*), and directed by Vic himself (his first direction since episode 5, “Divided We Stand”), this episode looked to be pushing the limits of the guidelines even more. The reason was the main guest star: none other than actor **John de Lancie**, <http://delancie.com/> who had played “Q” on *TNG*, *DS9*, and *Voyager*. This wasn't a writer from one 1960s TOS episode. This was a major actor from multiple *Star Trek* series.



Joining de Lancie was actress **Anne Lockhart**

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0516860/>, daughter of June Lockhart from *Lost in Space* and best known to sci-fi fans herself as Sheba from the original *Battlestar Galactica*. Rounding out the supporting cast was guest star **Elizabeth Maxwell**, <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1752885/> a friend of Vic's from voice-over acting circles.

Although the previous episode contained no reference to the ongoing story arc that was leading toward the 2-part finale, this ninth episode began with a transmission from an admiral at Starfleet Headquarters back on Earth...wearing the new style of uniform from *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*. Like Chekov's promotion to Lieutenant (JG) in the eighth episode of *STC*, “Embracing the Winds,” this was a hint of things to come post-TOS. It was mentioned in this scene that Nurse Chapel was back at Starfleet earning her doctorate (she was Dr. Chapel in *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*). Also, another two starships — *Yorktown* and *Republic* — had



accidents and would need to be rebuilt. Constitution-class starships remaining in service: just four!

A history of **STAR TREK CONTINUES**

Some fans were expecting an episode titled "What Ships Are For" to deal with this ongoing mystery of what was destroying the fleet. But it turned out the meaning of that title was different and would be revealed in the climactic final (and emotionally touching) speech by Kirk. While the first half of the episode was a little slow to get going, the payoff in the second half was worth sticking with it. John de Lancie's performance, especially at the end, is magnificent. And again, the episode plucks a current social issue from the headlines and shines a light on it through the lens of science fiction.

Perhaps the most interesting aspect of this episode is something many fans might not have even noticed: the new planet set! Funded with money raised in their second **Kirk**starter campaign, a rocky and barren alien planet set (similar to what TOS had 50 years ago on the Paramount lot) needed to be built for the final two-part episode. However, seeing as how this ninth episode would also involve a landing party on a new planet, Vic added a scene to the beginning of the script that could use the new planet surface set...although not a rocky and inhospitable one (more on that shortly).

The new set itself posed some challenges for the production — most notably where to put it! Almost all the space in the studio/warehouse was already filled by the sprawling TOS sets. And what wasn't a standing set was being used by make-up, wardrobe, props, tools, and materials storage. There wasn't anywhere left!



They say that the Good Lord provides, and in this case, it was kinda literal. There was room available that had recently been vacated by a local church that had used it for weekly gatherings. It was perfect! And so Art Director Greg Dykstra and a team of about a dozen volunteers built an alien planet set made up of two permanent, strategically-placed rocky ridges made out of styrene foam, 12 feet high, along with a ground plane that sloped up as it neared the green-screen back wall.

That worked fine for the two-part finale, but episode nine required something less rocky and more green and lush. Show-runner Vic Mignogna explained how they managed the transformation:



A couple of our volunteers went to Wal-Mart and found a bed sheet set that had a print of fall leaves and twigs. So we emptied that store of their camouflage sheets and stapled those sheets to our latex, dirt ground. Then, our team filled many trash bags full of dead leaves and twigs and we covered that set with actual foliage. Thankfully, wintertime in southern Georgia produces lots of dead leaves. We used the leaves to break up the pattern of the bedsheets. And it works like magic. It looks so real, and so good onscreen. And then we dug up or cut down small trees near the studio and made criss-cross wooden bases so that we could strategically place the trees wherever they were needed.

We couldn't use a green screen for this episode, because the trees — as well as Kirk's command-variant uniform — are green as well, and would 'clip' when adding a background in post-production. We couldn't use a blue screen either, because McCoy and Spock's tunics are blue. So out of necessity, a wonderful solution was born. I went online and looked up theatrical backdrops. That's what you rent if you're doing a stage play and need to be in the middle of a forest — a mural filled with pine trees and redwoods. You'll be surprised how realistic it looks on camera.

Once again, the episode was released, fans gushed (a few kvetched, but most gushed), and CBS and Paramount remained silent. Two down, two to go.

EPISODES #10 and #11 — “TO BOLDLY GO”



Dating all the way back to their first full release, “Pilgrim of Eternity,” *STC* has always premiered their new episodes first at conventions — from Phoenix, AZ to Sydney, Australia — before releasing them publicly onto the Internet. And thus was the plan with the two-part series finale. “To Boldly Go, Part I”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCBuaTnDsQs> was set to debut at Salt Lake City Comic Con the weekend of September 21-23 and “To Boldly Go, Part II”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=29L8P1XwnaA> would premiere two weeks later at New York City Comicon the weekend of October 5-8.

But then CBS announced the premiere date for *Star Trek: Discovery* would be September 24. *STC*'s penultimate episode would be debuting just as the world would be focused on the first new Star Trek to hit television screens in a dozen years!

Obviously, the timing of the two releases within a day of each other would NOT be in the best interests of CBS or *STC*.

So the convention premiere dates were changed. An announcement was made in late July that *STC*'s tenth episode would debut in New York City on October 8 (and released online 10 days later) and the finale would be screened live at L.A. Comic Con on October 29, with the public release two weeks later.

“To Boldly Go, Part I” quite simply blew away fans. It drew from *Star Trek*'s very earliest Kirk episode, “Where No Man Has Gone Before,” with a plot line involving ESPers being enhanced by a trip through the energy barrier at the edge of our galaxy. In fact, fans finally discovered what had been destroying all of those starships throughout the preceding episodes...and it was pretty terrifying.

In the weeks leading up to the release of Part I, *STC* shared the identities of two of the episode's guest stars. **Nicola Bryant** <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0117197/> had played the companion of both the fifth and sixth Doctors on Doctor Who back in the mid-1980s. **Cas Anvar** <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0117197/> had recently rocketed to sci-fi genre notoriety playing the Martian navigator Alex Nicola Bryant and Cas Anwar Kamal on *The Expanse*. But the announcements left out one very important guest star.

About halfway through the episode, jaws dropped when the female Romulan Commander from the TOS episode “The Enterprise Incident” materialized on the transporter platform. It wasn't simply that *STC* had found just anyone to play this iconic role — actress **Amy Rydell**



Nicola Bryant and Cas Anwar



Joanne Linville in 1968 and Amy Rydell in 2017

http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0753065/?ref_=fn_al_nm_1 looked so similar to the original actress **Joanne Linville**

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0513269/> that they could have been mother and daughter! Take a look (left). In fact, they WERE mother and daughter! Vic had tracked down the daughter of 89-year-old Joanne Linville and prodded her into joining the cast for the two-part finale. At the live screening in Los Angeles, Amy choked up a little while telling the story of watching the episode with her mother...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mE4m6L_DBE

A history of **STAR TREK CONTINUES**

An interesting moment came during Part 1 in a scene involving Security Chief Drake, a character played by Co-Executive Producer **Steven Dengler**. This self-made Internet millionaire, Trekker, and Canadian angel investor had given tens of thousands of dollars in support of *STC*, and in return, he was “rewarded” with a role (that he asked for) on the fan series.



Steven Dengler as Security Chief Drake

And the inside joke was that, with all the money Steven Dengler had put into the series, the character of Drake was likely the safest red-shirt ever! Well, as the series reached its final two episodes, the curse of the red-shirts, shall we say, remained intact...

While many fans noticed Steven Dengler as Security Chief Drake the costumes (especially the Romulan uniforms), the Romulan bridge set, and the very well done VFX to make the eyes of the ESPers glow, one thing that wasn't as apparent was how much work went into subtly altering the very familiar TOS background music that accompanied many scenes. Some of the score was original, composed by **Andy Farber** and recorded live by an orchestra in Rochester, NY. But other pieces of music were taken directly from the original TOS episode scores and then meticulously adjusted by Vic Mignogna himself, who in addition to acting, writing, directing, and editing many episodes, also works closely with music and sound during the editing process.

Between the premieres of Part I and Part II of “To Boldly Go,” *STC* released the last (at the time of writing) of their

“Our Crew” spotlights, this one featuring Vic and demonstrating how those all-too-familiar musical cues that you hear in the background on *STC* episodes might not be quite as familiar as you think...and you probably didn't even notice!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7LPFN40q5sU&t=13s>

The series finale of *Star Trek Continues* was released to the general public on November 13, 2017...and so far, like the other final four episodes, CBS and Paramount have taken no public action. And thus has this legendary and groundbreaking *Star Trek* fan production come to a bittersweet conclusion.

So now what?

Many fans have begged, pleaded, wept, and bellowed for more episodes from this team. But alas, *STC* is indeed shut down as a fan series. But what about those amazing sets???

Fortunately, I was in the audience at L.A. Comic Con for the live screening of the series finale, and Vic called on me to ask that very question (sorry about the shaky video, folks)...

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0VF_v-UTHEI

It's been an amazing run for *Star Trek Continues*, and Vic and his entire team are to be commended and applauded... and we did! While some people — a very small few — have tried to belittle and minimize the significant accomplishments of this dedicated group and their outspoken leader, the fact is that these folks have done something no other fan group has ever done. They have produced eleven full-length episodes of a *Star Trek* fan series on practical physical sets, with real professional actors and production crew, some originally composed and recorded music, top-notch visual effects, make-up, lighting, costumes, sound design, writing, directing, and editing...all within five years.

They worked hard, played hard, never gave up, and had a blast. And the world of *Star Trek* fan films will always be all the richer for it. **This is why we're here!**

I will end this look back by handing the microphone back over to Vic Mignogna himself, as he brings down the curtain on this series that has meant so much to him over the years... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=000ANcvKekQ>

All of the amazing offerings of *STC* can be found on their website at this page:

<http://startrekcontinues.com/episodes.html>