

CAPTAIN'S LOG: "Browncoats' Redemption"

I usually keep my comments in the newsletter in the *Star Trek* universe, but I know some folks are interested in the fan-made "sequel" to *Serenity/Firefly*, so I'm making a little exception this time.

A group calling themselves the Browncoats produced a feature-length film called "Redemption," which takes place in the *Serenity* universe on a different cargo ship years after the end of the previous series.

The project utilizes the concept that as humanity spreads out into the galaxy, people will revert to something like the "Wild West," as was the case more than 120 years ago in the U.S.

As a result, the series is a combination of a cowboy story with science-fiction elements, and of course, a new cast and crew

was assembled for the independent production even though a number of characters in the film made cameos so it felt like an episode of the *Firefly* TV series.

At the start of the story, the crew of the *Redemption* has just finished a difficult cargo run and is taking some "down time"



Which one is Charity?

at one of their favorite pubs, with even Captain Laura Matthews (played by Heather Fagan) taking some time to relax. You know that won't last long.

Sure enough, Feldman

(Steve Lebens), a regular customer of the ship's cast and crew, tells Matthews he has a job that will pay handsomely for the *Redemption* if the crew can agree to one spe-

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Fall back to Hard Times Café for our meeting

The next monthly meeting of the U.S.S. Chesapeake Star Trek and Science Fiction Club will be held on Saturday, October 16, at the Hard Times Café in College Park, Maryland.

We'll start the stuffing our faces about 5:00 p.m., then talk with our mouths full about 7:00 p.m.

During this month's meeting, we'll talk about what fellow club members have been up to and catch up on the latest sci-fi television shows and feature films. For directions to this month's meeting, get the latest insert. Blah, Blah, Blah. ■

CAPTAIN'S LOG: "Browncoats' Redemption" [continued]

cial provision: using a pilot of Feldman's choosing.

Even though she doesn't like that idea, Matthews agrees to the terms, which means that Miriam Pultra (Petra Jo Chen) joins the group. Right from the start, she clashes with her new captain even though she's a good pilot and needs the money the contract will pay.

Pultra gets along much better with the rest of the crew, including Cameron Alan (Guy Wellman) who serves as both medical officer and psychoanalyst; the crew's businessman, John Patrick Barry (James Banks III); and two hyperactive geniuses: Michael Levy (Brett Gray) and P. J. Megaw (Jack Haddington); and last but not least, African-American crewman Lux Lucre (Kevin Troy).

But back on Earth, Minister of Parliament Darius Turner (Ted Taylor), who is a member of the evil Alliance, enlists Lieutenant Commander Thaddeus Stevens (Kurt Skarstedt) in a strategy to clamp down on the lawlessness of people out on the frontier. With his stand-up-straight behavior and by-the-book demeanor, Stevens immediately chooses the vessel on which to start: *Redemption*.

On the ship, Pultra earns the affection of the crew by taking a route that gets the *Redemption* to the rendezvous point hours ahead of schedule, which

provides the money to enable the crew to buy enough oxygen for the ship, the captain still has her reservations.

But just after the crew finishes the delivery, Captain Matthews receives a message from Stevens, who tells her he has a long list of crimes she and her crew have committed. However, the military officer gives her one chance to save her friends: She must turn herself in to his Alliance vessel.

Matthews immediately accepts his terms of surrender and prepares to leave the *Redemption* despite her crewmates' strenuous pleading with her not to go.

Since the *Firefly* fan film (I just love writing that) is being released on something of a scattered schedule, I won't spoil the conclusion to the movie, but I will give you a few clues as to the big finish.

First, Matthews is a very good fighter, and many elements of the story are revealed in the fight between her and Stevens.

Second, I only saw two cameos, which take place in the middle of the production. There may be more, but I just recognized Captain Malcolm Reynolds (Nathan Fillion) and Adam Baldwin, who played overzealous security officer Jayne Cobb in the series. If anyone finds someone other than those, let me know be-



It's brown and it's a coat, what's your problem?

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Check out our club website: www.usschesapeake.org

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SCIENCE *TREK*: Space Race

This conversation never took place, but if it had here's how it would have gone:

Reporter: "How long have you been an African-American Vulcan?"

Doug Williams: "That concept is not logical."

We've had this conversation before, I believe, but it's worth discussing again. As we saw in the previous months' columns, race and racism may never go out of

fashion, despite the hopeful wishes of the Great Bird of the Galaxy. And then Randy said something one page back that got me thinking: take a read at the end of the paragraph by the outstretched elbow next door. I'll wait a minute for you.

Back already? Did you see what I'm talking about: "...and last but not least, African-American crewman Lux Lucre (Kevin Troy)." Maybe in this case it's true, but it still started the old hamster-a-running—if the guy isn't from Earth or doesn't trace his ancestors back to those continents or countries, then how can we call him African or American? I'm just saying, is this what they called "political correctness" back on Earth in the old days?

Tuvok wasn't the first to be called an "African-American Vulcan." That honor falls on the actress Fran Bennett who portrayed one of Amanda's midwives during Spock's birth in a scene cut from the theatrical release of *Star Trek V* (but restored on disc).

When the sci-fi soup boils off, we are left with this truth: there are no aliens on TV or on the movie screen. They're just people in funny masks or as Rick Berman preferred silly putty on their faces. (That

is, unless some of them really are aliens, but that's a column for another month). In the end science fiction (good science fiction) is not about the gee-whiz science or the whiz-bang technology, it's about

the human condition. Who are we, really? What do we really believe and why? Is cherry brandy really the nectar of the gods?

This is all not to sat that African-American Vulcans are impossible. Had Amanda Grayson

been from say, Kenya, and Sarek one of the tired, poor huddled masses that emigrated to America, then Spock would indeed be an African-American Vulcan. Just like that guy who lives at 1600 Pennsylvania downtown. ■

Web Notes:

<http://groups.google.com/group/>

rec.arts.startrek.current/msg/89e9b231964099eb?pli=1

<http://www.bscreview.com/2009/01/race-and-science-fiction-part-i-by-sarah-zettel/>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Vulcan

<http://schwabelstudio.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/wpид2547-DSC0007-Edit-Edit-2.jpg>



Hanna-Barbera's African-American Vulcan.

ART CREDITS:

<i>Bt3a.com</i>	3
<i>Chicagofree.info</i>	6
<i>gmroper.mu.nu</i>	
Insert - front	
<i>fanpop.com</i>	?, 6
<i>Randy Hall</i>	1,2,5
<i>YouTube</i>	4, 6
<i>Wikipedia.org</i>	
3, Insert - back	

Second Officer Phil Margolies

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REFLECTIONS: *Andromeda*, Season Two, Part II

“A Heart for Falsehood Framed” –
Ethlie Ann Vare

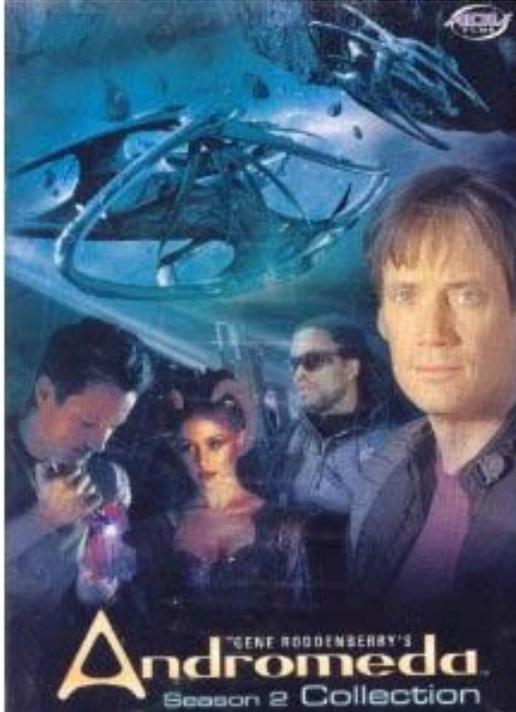
The crew choose to lead negotiations to resolve the return of the Hegemon’s Heart, a relic held sacred by the Than and stolen by Doge Miskich.

Welcome to Pierpont Drift, space station for the criminal, the dishonest and the wayward soul. A place where theft is legal, if you’re a resident, illegal if you’re just visiting. A place where a known thief, smuggler and confidence man (Laydon Bryce Hawkins played by Anthony Lemke) is the Chief of Police. Also a place that’s about to be attacked by the Than Military.

Dylan is there to negotiate the return of the rare gen stone and avert a war. Doge Miskitch is kind of the Mayor, but more like the Head Crook. He refuses to give it back, even though the Than has amassed a small army to get it back. Bekka, with Trance’s help, plans to steal the gem and replace it with a perfect replica. The plan actually goes off smoothly, until they discover the Hegemon’s Heart they stole was actually a fake.

Further complicating matters, Bekka seems to be quite taken with Laydon Bryce-Hawkins and he with her. And why not, as Harper pointed out to her, they are exactly alike.

He is a male version of her and their mutual attraction may jeopardize the mission.



Which one is Charity?

The biggest surprise is that Dylan actually came up with the plan to heist the Hegemon’s Heart. This in and of itself is totally unlike Mr. Hunt. His negotiation skills and his patience is severely tested when dealing with Clarion of Loss (The unreasonable Than played by Nicole Parker Smith, a pretty big actress these days) and Miskich, the low-life thief. Just seeing Trance hanging from her tail when lifting the Heart from its resting place is worth the price of admission.



Which one is Charity?

Conn Officer Lorenzo Heard

CAPTAIN'S LOG: "Browncoats' Redemption" [continued]

cause I think it's cool for them to take part even a cameo as a gift for the fans.

I'm putting on my Clint Eastwood

watching an "independent production." Speaking of good things, the special effects by NEO f/x were as mind-blowing as their work in the *Starship Farragut* live-action and animated episodes.

I hope we'll get another Browncoats independent production. I particularly thought the crew did their best to make this an enjoyable experience.

I have to admit that the movie is fairly long, not just because of the storyline, but at the end, when more than 1,000 *Serenity* supporters were listed in row after row after row.

The Bad: There were a few goofs, mostly dealing with the difference between outside lighting coming into a building, which

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I'm not going to write a thesis here, but I'm telling you as an aerospace engineer that this thing just ain't aerodynamic. Then again, neither is a bumble bee.

space cowboy hat, so let's get reviewing.

The Good: I really enjoyed this fan film. The production values were very good throughout, and I regularly forgot I was

BOOK REVIEW: *Seven Deadly Sins*, 'Work is Hard'

This final morality tale, from this anthology, focuses on sloth and the Pakleds, if anything, are definitely very slothful. Those of us who watched *ST: Next Gen* might remember the episode, "Samaritan Snare", when Geordi was taken hostage by members of this species. This story takes place after that episode.

This particular Pakled crew is heading to Deep Space Nine, in a ramshackle ship that has been cobbled together with parts from a variety of other ships ranging from Cardassian, Jaradan, Andorian, Bajoran and who knows what else. One of the pieces of technology that they "borrowed" is a warp drive, which they barely understand if they are fortunate enough to think that far ahead. Unfortunately, when it came down to doing routine maintenance, having back-up systems, preventive upgrades, fail-safes, routine reports, etc. that this type of tech-

nology requires, the Pakled philosophy would usually be: "I'll get 'round to it later" because "work is hard". As a result, too many things get neglected too long and it comes back to bite them in their amply lazy behind!

When their patchwork quilt of a ship is damaged by colliding with a sector filled with quantum filaments, their lack of maintenance puts them all in danger of a warp-core breach. To make matters worse, there are NO escape pods because they assumed they would NEVER need them so they left them behind at another planet! (Oy Vay!) When they send out a "Mayday" signal, the closest ship in the sector is, of course, the Enterprise-D with Captain Jean-Luc Picard and crew.

When the distress signal is received, everyone is immediately suspicious, wondering if

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Let's see...David is obvious, but which one is Patrick?

COMING EVENTS

Tomorrow..... Time for our next monthly meeting! We'll be at the Hards Time Café in Terrapin Park, Maryland. We'll start eating at 5:00 a.m., then our club meeting about 7:00 .p.m.!

A Picture is Worth 1,000 words



Charity, right?

CAPTAIN'S LOG: "Browncoats' Redemption" [concluded]

clashed a few times and a few outside shots from above bleached out the ground during the final fight. These are all common elements for a first film, and I'm sure they'll improve in their next production.

The Ugly: There's no way I can do this without saying that the whole run of *Firefly* started out with two strikes against being successful. Replacing *Dark Angel* in the last-minute change, the concept was approved on the strength of one script from Whedon. That put the *Serenity* crew in a deep hole because they were always

behind schedule.

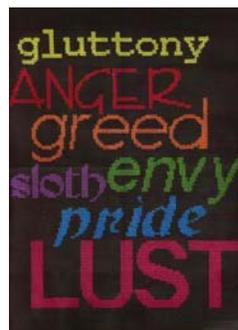
And *Firefly* only aired its pilot episode after the rest of the series was aired. What kind of programming schedule is that?

One of the best things about this project is that any money made from it will be given to one of five charities. If you want to know more about the effort, point your Web browser to <http://browncoatsmovie.com/>. ■

Captain Randy Hall

BOOK REVIEW: *Seven Deadly Sins, 'Work is Hard* [concluded]

this is another situation of "the boy who cried wolf" and being told the same lie twice, similar to what Garak had pointed out to Dr. Bashir in *Deep Space Nine's* "Improbable Cause". Things do get interestingly hairy in this en-



joyable yarn. Do the Pakleds learn from their mistakes? Who knows? ■

Pat McCoy, Xenobiologist and Xenopsychologist

