

Doctor Who Column by Aaron Hayes

TOTAL RECAP (plus new tidbits)

For those of you new to the Science Fiction Tattler, the Fox Television network is working on a pilot of Doctor Who for airing in May, 1995. Here is a recap of what's going on.

As stated earlier, Fox is working on a pilot for a Doctor Who series here in the states. Working with Amblin Entertainment, the show will be produced by two producers from Amblin. Philip Segal and Peter Wagg, who are both British will produce the pilot. Steven Spielberg is not directly involved (just like he isn't directly involved in Sequest, Earth-2 or ER).

Wagg production background includes "Max Headroom" and a pilot for CBS (that never sold) called "Cyberforce." Segal, who was an exec at ABC, helped develop "Twin Peaks", "Thirty-Something", "Young Riders" and "Young Indiana Jones."

The first draft of the script was written by John Leekley, with the rewrite being done by Robert DeLaurentis. [The new script](#) was turned in on December 16th. Fox and execs at Amblin and the BBC now will try to give an answer (thumbs up) by the second week of January 1995.

The story itself will deal with the Doctor's origins, family and flight from Gallifrey. Terry Nation has signed and ok'd an agreement with Amblin, allowing use of the Daleks. It is not known if [Davros and the Master](#) has survived the rewrite.

Again, hiring of actors (the word used all-inclusively here) will not happen until the script is deemed final. My sources know who Amblin would like to hire for the [role of the Doctor](#), but can't say until contacts are signed (I know, it annoys me too). But, they do say he is British. That takes care of one of my worries...

Production starts in March, barring any major hang-ups. Shooting should take about three weeks, with five days in a studio. All locations will be in the United States, which will stand in for Gallifrey. Post-production will take about eight

weeks. Amblin Imaging will do all digital effects. Official announcement of whether or not the pilot goes into production comes in January.

Concerning [theme music and production designs](#), there is nothing official. The only thing known is that updating will be done, but the original concepts will stay intact (like "Star Trek" to "the Next Generation"). The producers don't want to give everything away.

It was stated, so I have heard, that Doctor Who Magazine (#220) states that the BBC has announced that [Amblin will follow the continuity of the original series](#). Jean-Marc and Randy Lofficier are quick to point out that this won't necessarily be easy. The pilot will look like a new show. When and if the show goes to series, Amblin will weave the new show into the framework of the old show. They can't say how, but they do say "don't assume anything; you will be surprised."

You can write letters of support to:

Mr. John Matoian
President
Fox Television
10201 West Pico Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90035

or Foxnet@Delphi.com (remember to include Dr. Who in the Re: line)

That is the whole story as far as I know at this time....

MORE RUMORS

First, some debunking of rumors: Amblin will not be dissolved, at least not as quickly as some have had you think. Many have taken Steven Spielberg's signing with ABC as the end of his relationship with other networks. As many of you know, in corporate life, one just can't end business relationships. Amblin currently works with Universal, Warner Brothers, and Disney, as well as NBC, Fox, and now ABC. Amblin has too many contractual obligations to shut down right now. All contracts will be honored. Also, this reshuffling will not have any short term effects on our favorite Time Lord and his new show. It could affect shows that are planned for one or two years down the road though.

Yes, the BBC will launch a new U.S. cable network on February 1st. It will be called the Worldwide News Channel, similar to CNN, no doubt wanting to compete. A similar channel by the BBC is available to the rest of the world, similar to CNN's world channel. Personally, I think it is about time, since CNN can get rather American-centric. Nothing like seeing a Texas flood while I am vacationing in France! But the new BBC channel will run BBC new reports and possible some documentaries. It will not be an entertainment channel.

But there is a BBC Entertainment channel in the planning stages, that will bring over current British TV from BBC, Thames, and others. Doubts are high on the

rebroadcast of Doctor Who.

ore actor rumors: From Visions '94 the only actors who could make the crossover from old Who to new Who are John Levene (Sgt. Benson of UNIT) and Peter Davison. This is due to that fact that they both have green cards. It was implied that Levene may come over to play a role (not the lead). While I see the implications, I wouldn't think it would be hard to get a green card for Sylvester McCoy. I could be wrong. I'll check with immigration.

NEXT TIME:

I know I promised to list the new Fox video releases. I couldn't get it. It was the general "we not sure" thing. But I am working on a comprehensive list of where who is shown across the U.S. I have this info, and will have it for the February issue!

If you have questions, comments, or any other Doctor Who information I could use, please forward them to Tim here at the magazine, and he will forward them on to me. Thanks!