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VOLUME

22

SEASON

1992-93

APRIL
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STAR TREK

THE NEXT GENERATION

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PATRICK BARRY

HERALD OF "ANGEL ONE"

By BILL FLORENCE



Trent (Leonard John Crofoot), Beata's manservant on "Angel One," helped stress writer Patrick Barry's story of reverse sexism.

Imagine a matriarchal society characterized by women as aggressively dominant as men were centuries ago on Earth. Imagine the females as the larger and stronger of the genders, and imagine that they're vastly outnumbered by the males, who have revolution on their minds. This scenario became "Angel One," a first season episode of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION*—minus the apartheid element.

Written by freelancer Patrick Barry,

"Angel One" was originally as much a tale of apartheid as it was a reversal of sexism. "The producers and staff wanted to have a story where a planet was ruled by a dominant female society," says Barry, who earned his first solo writing credit with the episode. "I had worked with [then-producer] Herb Wright before. At some point, this female-society story was dropped in Herb's lap, but he was overwhelmed with rewrites, and he said, 'Patrick is the guy for this story.'

"After a short deliberation, they said, 'OK, let's go,' and when I got the assignment, I suggested it have something to do with apartheid. 'Angel One' would not only be a reversal of the roles of the sexes, but there would also be far fewer women than men on the planet, creating a delicate balance where the men are about to revolt against the women. By revolting, the men could cease the race altogether."

Though well-received at first, the apartheid slant faded with each story revision and script rewrite. "When it came to mapping out the story, they veered away from that part," explains Barry. "There were various phases of script development. I did a couple of drafts before it went to the *NEXT GENERATION* internal staff, and then Greg Strangis [then the creative consultant] worked on the tail end. They liked the apartheid idea, but they wanted something simpler. Some of the revolutionary spirit was still there [in the final version], left over from the original idea."

Barry wasn't unhappy with the episode's simplification. "I can say it was different from the original story, but still, how could I not be happy? It's great; I'm very happy with the episode. When you're exploring men and women and their relationships with each other, it's always fun to see them in different situations."

The sexism issue was key to the story from the beginning, and Barry points out some of the obvious sexist touches in the final script. "The ruler of Angel One, Mistress Beata, makes some flattering comments to Riker, like, 'It's nice the way your costume brings out the color of your eyes.' These are things guys say to girls when they're trying to warm them up. Then, there was Trent, Beata's handservant, who plays the jealous one with the attitude. So, in a classical way, it was a role-reversal."

Barry feels that "Angel One" has a message similar to other *NEXT GENERATION* episodes which examine alien cultures. "The series looks at cultures different from ours which work," he remarks. "They have an internal

mechanism which works for them, although from our particular point-of-view, they're alien to us. Edward T. Hall wrote about it in *Beyond Culture*, where he says that our best chance at growth is to understand everybody and not make judgments at first, but rather try to understand the internal workings of *why* different types of behavior exist. We shouldn't say, 'Look, it's reverse sexism, and it has all the inherent problems that we have in real life.' Yeah, one *might* make those assumptions. But at the same time, the show begs, 'Just look at us as a culture and understand us, and don't judge us until you do understand us.' That's one of the show's basic premises, and it's intensely important to what *STAR TREK* is."

He calls "Angel One" a "Prime Directive episode" as well, since the Away Team must deal with the dilemma of whether or not to remove the rebel group led by Ramsey, one of several survivors from a freighter missing for seven years. Riker wants to beam Ramsey and his followers to the *Enterprise*, but the rebels don't want to go, and as Data points out, Ramsey's freighter wasn't a Starfleet ship, so his crew isn't bound by the Prime Directive. If they want to stay on Angel One, the *Enterprise* crew must let them.

"Those rebels can't be forced off the planet," Barry notes. "If the Away Team takes them away, they mess with the planet's society, but if they leave them there, they *still* mess with the society. That's the dilemma of the Prime Directive: You're damned if you do and damned if you don't."

The episode's "B story" addresses less heady issues. An illness similar to the common cold suddenly emerges on board the *Enterprise* and runs rampant, forcing Dr. Crusher to forbid the Away Team's return. "I did it as a

joke!" laughs Barry. "Dorothy Fontana, Herb Wright and I were sitting at a café across the street from the *NEXT GENERATION* stages. We were talking about what we could do for a B story, and I said, 'How about everybody gets a cold?' And Herb replied, 'That's great!'"

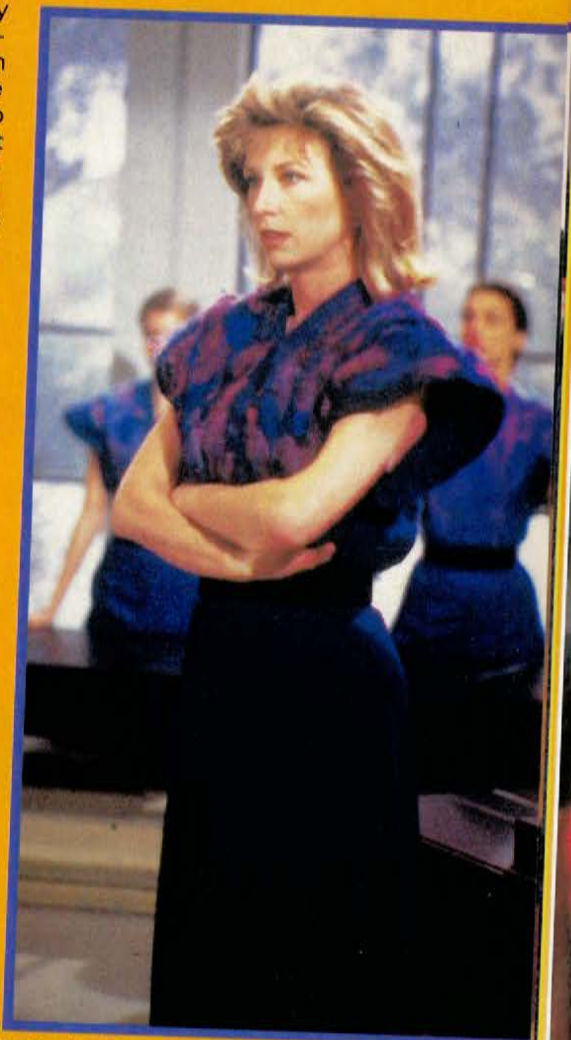
Barry acknowledges that some *STAR TREK* purists have taken exception to the cold virus story for the reason that the *Enterprise's* transporters filter out germs and other harmful elements. "That's true, common illnesses aren't *supposed* to happen on board the *Enterprise*," Barry admits. "When we were discussing the idea, I said, 'Well, there is this issue of the transporter,' but our thinking was that the virus mutated, so the transporter system would have recognized it as something benign. After it was on board, it became something else."

"We also talked about the transporter's technology and how it can only protect against organisms that are logged into its computer. Every *known* threatening biological organism is programmed into the transporter computer, and if it reads such an organism in a human, obviously it wouldn't be transported with everything else. That was the thinking behind the B story. We talked it out, and Dorothy, our resident *STAR TREK* professional, said it could happen."

The shipboard illness gave Barry the chance to touch on the Dr. Crusher/Captain Picard relationship, which at that time was still undefined. He saw that the two characters cared deeply for each other and strove to inject that into the script. The result was a scene where the doctor visits a very sick Picard in his quarters and takes care of him in a maternal way.

"They couldn't speak directly of it, but Crusher cares for Picard, and there's the background that Picard served with her husband," recalls Barry. "Picard was the one to tell her that her husband had died, and there was some resentment because he was the bearer of this bad news. In fact, it was felt that in some way, Picard might be responsible for his death. So, this scene in the captain's quarters was meant to show healing, because she had been distant with him, but here he is helpless and she cares for him."

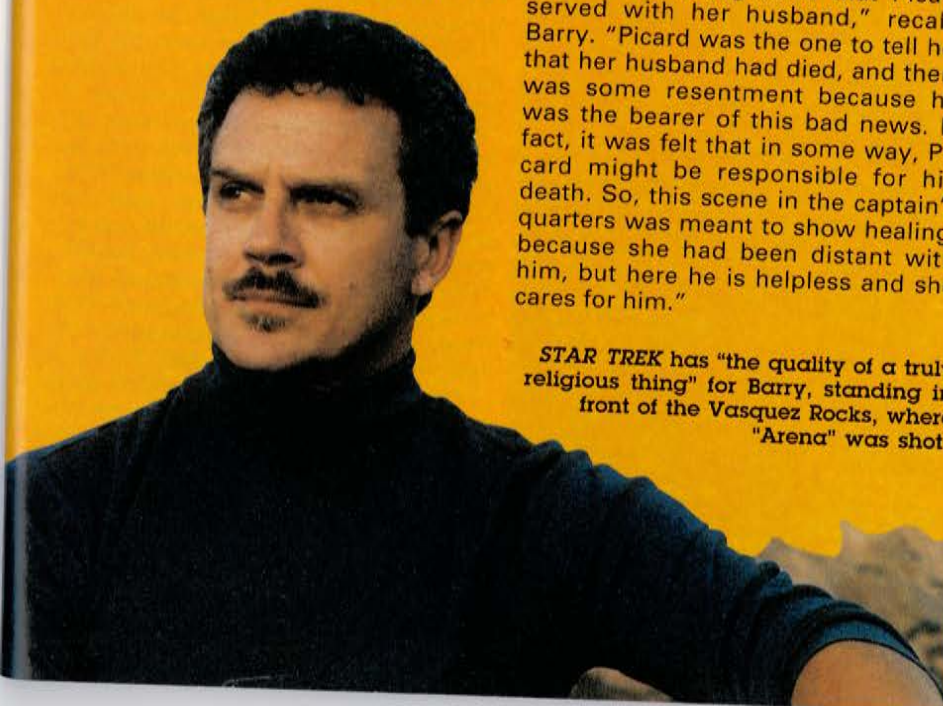
STAR TREK has "the quality of a truly religious thing" for Barry, standing in front of the Vasquez Rocks, where "Arenas" was shot.



As Beata, Karen Montgomery wasn't the Elected One in Barry's eyes. "There was something very distant about her acting style."

The guest cast performed adequately, according to Barry, although he saw more fire in the character of the rebel leader, Ramsey, than actor Sam Hemmings brought to the role. "He was *friendly* when the Away Team greeted him," Barry laments. "I'm not saying he wouldn't be friendly, but this guy is a rugged star freighter captain who goes his own way, and he doesn't take to anybody telling him what to do. Hence, it would have been more natural for him to be played as a dangerous type of revolutionary influence. I thought we should have seen more of his dangerous side."

Mistress Beata, the Elected One, as played by Karen Montgomery, also missed the mark, in Barry's view. "There was something very distant about her acting style. I understand her interpretation of the character, which was the cool, controlled thing, but she kept it up even when there was a chance for that mask to fall away, like when she was intimate with Riker. It would have been nice to see something more of her. I would



have liked her to be touched in a deeper way, so we could see some sort of effect. That would have better explained the softening of her position at the end, when she decides to put the rebels in exile rather than execute them. I was just looking for something that would distinguish her more as a leader."

Jonathan Frakes earned his highest praise. "One of the things the producers wanted to work on with Frakes was a quality of his graceful presence that needed more balance," Barry offers. "Someone used the simile that he moves like a ballet dancer. They wanted Riker to be more of a man and see a different presence in how he moved, and 'Angel One' was an opportunity for him to try this. Even though he was dressed as a sexual toy, he was still focused and determined, and he still carried his command nicely and his masculinity expertly. Even though Tasha and Troi were laughing at him, he kept it up."

The *NEXT GENERATION* regulars weren't the only *STAR TREK* actors to help bring about "Angel One." There was another who, obliquely, had his own effect on Barry on the eve of the writer's scripting efforts. "This being my first solo credit of a live action thing, it was a really big event to me, but I was also scared," he reflects. "I'm a guy who watched *STAR TREK* as a kid and learned to split my fingers in the Spock salute. All this *STAR TREK* stuff had the quality of a truly religious thing.

"I watch the hawks in nature and look for signs," he states matter-of-factly. "I have a habit of going for walks in the hills near my home in Studio City, and I was getting so filled with stress on the day I got the script go-ahead for 'Angel One' that I had to take a walk. I had to think, get my mind clear and get into this project. On my way to the hills I was waiting at a stoplight, thinking, 'Oh my God, how am I going to do this?'

"I began to look for some sign of optimism. This was an afternoon, and there was nobody at the stoplight—no cars coming down Laurel Canyon from the Hollywood side, except for one lone Mercedes-Benz which had the green light. I was stopped there at the corner, waiting for the car to go by, and that's the only thing I'm looking at." Barry pauses dramatically. "It was *Leonard Nimoy*," he says softly. "This is God's truth. He drove by, and as I crossed the street, I knew everything would be OK. I got all this optimistic energy, and I knew ['Angel One'] was meant to be."

Unfortunately for Barry, neither Nimoy nor any other classic *TREK* veteran unwittingly showed up as an omen of success while he worked on an earlier *NEXT GENERATION* story idea. Titled "The Crystal Skull," this story dealt with an archaeological expedition on a distant planet where a civilization had mysteriously collapsed. There, the *Enterprise* crew finds an artifact.

"This crystal skull, as suggested in ancient myth, had particular powers," explains Barry. "Here we got to see what the skull did and how it affected an individual. Basically, Riker became a charismatic leader as a result of the skull's influence, and he was starting to use the *Enterprise* for his will. The skull created a particular vibration that caused Riker to act on certain instincts in himself. It took him out of balance, and he became a driven character."

Barry wrote two drafts of the "Crystal Skull" story before the producers cancelled it. "It never went to script," he relates. "Some of the people realized they had very strong opinions about *not* doing stories which look into the past."

Although "The Crystal Skull" was never produced, "Angel One" is not Barry's only contribution to *STAR TREK*. He also wrote the story for the *STAR TREK* attraction at Universal Studios, "The Perceptor Encounter." "A friend of mine, who happened to be working over at Universal's amusement division, was asked if he knew any good writers, and he suggested me. So, they called me in, and I ended up writing the *STAR TREK* attraction." He points out that he is now one of the few writers who have written produced dialogue for both Captain Kirk and Captain Picard.

Having watched *STAR TREK* and read plenty of science fiction as he was growing up, Barry says writing for *THE NEXT GENERATION* came fairly easily. "Every TV show has its unique group of written rules and invisible rules, and, of course, *THE NEXT GENERATION* is no exception," he says. "The *STAR TREK* series'



Troi and Tasha Yar weren't only on the dominant side of Angel One's population, they even had a laugh at Riker's expense.

'bibles,' are just your beginning reading materials to get up to speed. But I was up on *STAR TREK* stuff anyway. Science fiction is part of my world of imagination, so to be paid to take this journey to the stars was exciting."

Many *NEXT GENERATION* writers have expressed chagrin at working within the confines of the series' many rules. Barry sees the situation in another light. "I don't find the rules binding, I find them *defining*. You've got to do it right; you've got to sweat the details. You're being paid a handsome fee to do it, so you do it! Do your homework."

Angel One" has been his only foray into *THE NEXT GENERATION*. "I pitched the following season, and by that time Herb Wright had left to work on other stuff. My agent got me in there to pitch, and they liked two of my pitches enough to say, 'We'll get back to you,' but nothing happened. Herb came back to the series in its fifth season, and I came back to pitch to him and [fellow producers] Ron Moore and Joe Menosky. Again, they liked two of my stories, and they recommended them to [co-executive producer] Michael Piller, whom I've never met. Herb was having creative differences with Mike, and Herb left again. What has been officially said in regard to my two pitches is that Mike looked at them and didn't want them."

He admits that pitching stories for *THE NEXT GENERATION* can be difficult, especially if a prospective writer hasn't seen a number of episodes. "There are so many specifics that need to be considered, and the show is six years old, so many of the equations of relationships have been run. And the staff has heard it *all*. In Joe Menosky's office, I saw a bulletin board that had hash marks on it. It listed all the different categories of stories that have been pitched, with hash marks next to the stories for each time they had heard the idea. It looked like a whole team of convicts had been doing time there. They've heard so many story ideas, and they can hear them coming. You can go in there and be three words into a pitch, and they know it," he remarks.

Barry's other writing credits include three episodes of *War of the Worlds*: "Among the Philistines," "The Second Seal" and "The Prodigal Son," all first season shows. "I enjoyed doing those," he says. "But there was a change of management for the second season, and the show eventually got cancelled.

"I pitched to the series in its second year, and I mentioned a whole bunch of things to the producer, like, 'Are you going to be concerned about this story that has already been



The *NEXT GENERATION* producers wanted Riker "to be more of a man and see a different presence in how he moved," notes Barry.

done?' And he said, 'Oh, that's not a problem, we haven't even read or looked at the first season.' They ignored some stuff already set up and went for a different look and a different agenda. There wasn't a smooth transition from the first year to the second year, and I think that was the beginning of the end."

He also wrote a few episodes of the animated SF program *Spiral Zone* (his only comment: "That was really weird, dark stuff"), and he's presently waiting to hear if his script about CIA brainwashing activities, *Wrong Time Wrong Place*, will be an HBO film.

And, he says, he may yet return to the world of *STAR TREK*. "I would love to go back and write for *THE NEXT GENERATION* again, or *DEEP SPACE NINE*," he states. "*STAR TREK* is a great thing. Its effect is international, and the ideals that are expressed in it have a universal appeal. We identify with characters; they're human, they're good role models, and they are people we like.

"*THE NEXT GENERATION* is one of the glowing jewels among a writer's credits," says Patrick Barry. "To have written 'Angel One' is truly an exciting thing to me."