



What Lies Ahead for Farscape: Rockne O'Bannon Speaks

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SYDNEY, Australia -- After surviving a cliffhanger [season finale](#), the newfound bonds between [Crichton](#), [D'Argo](#), [Aeryn](#) and the rest of Moya's crew may not last long, says [Farscape](#) creator Rockne O'Bannon.

"Part of the joy of the show is that we stick dynamite in the script, which blows some characters apart and some together," said O'Bannon in an interview with SPACE.com.

"You'll see some interesting pairings occur in the second season."

Charting the course ahead

Now roughly halfway through production of the second season, O'Bannon and other scriptwriters have general themes sketched out for most of the remaining episodes, plus a good idea of how the second season will end.

O'Bannon says he and the other writers work hard to inject unpredictability into the series. They monitor Internet chat groups as they develop the show, but never let the reactions there affect the way they write characters or develop plots.

"We take notice of what people say, but we're cautious never to take any specific suggestions," he said.

Mostly, he says, they just monitor the groups to see how audiences relate to character developments as episodes screen.

"Sometimes we're totally surprised by the reactions we get," he said, noting specifically the almost protective relationship some viewers have developed toward Pilot.

More Michael Whelan than Chesley Bonestell

When he first started developing the series, O'Bannon told the show's special effects crew that he wanted the series to look more like the fantasy covers of science fiction books, and less like the strictly technological worlds of previous SF film and television classics like *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*.

"We really wanted to push this series into the realm of fantasy," he said. "We wanted worlds

that were almost both impossibly ancient, and yet futuristic at the same time."

He also said he wanted to avoid the well-ordered hierarchy and defined mission of the *Star Trek* universe. In short, he wanted to create a confused world in which a single earthling had to find his way, with few rules and little preparation.

From aliens among us to us among aliens

As such, O'Bannon said the series proceeds from a totally different premise of previous science fiction epics such as *Alien Nation*, which he worked on previously.

"Both *Alien Nation* and *Farscape* examine the human condition by bringing aliens into the mix, but in the case of *Alien Nation* the story revolves around a finite number of aliens on Earth and how they must try to integrate into human society and how humans react," he said.

"In *Farscape*," he continued, "we see the opposite side of the coin: how does one of our kind react when thrust unprepared into a totally alien world?"

"For John Crichton, not only is he thrust into a part of the universe none of us knew about until the moment he arrived -- he's also forced to be a fugitive on the run."

"Tell me, Muse, of that man..."

In developing the show, O'Bannon said he and others struggled to inject certain mythic qualities and Odyssean elements into the hero and the story. He believes these themes resonate with today's audiences.

"We're in an age now where there aren't as many opportunities to be grandly heroic, as there were in past generations," he said. "For instance, we have no wars, and so there aren't these traditional arenas for these kinds of behaviors to happen."

John Crichton expresses a bit of this as he says goodbye to his astronaut father in the [premiere episode](#), O'Bannon says.

"John looks to his father and says: 'I can't follow in your footsteps,'" O'Bannon says. "But the younger Crichton gets a chance to prove himself in a different way!"

Beyond the chick with the gun

O'Bannon said [Claudia Black](#)'s tough Aeryn Sun character developed as the scriptwriters were looking around to build the right mix of qualities and capabilities among the characters thrown together by fate in the series.

"One of the things I'm most proud of as I watch the first season is the distance Aeryn has come in 22 episodes," he said. "In the first episode, she's the straightforward icon of the 'chick with a gun' and there's only one spark of a moment of vulnerability."

"But as we get into the second season you'll see a very different character emerging," he says.

While O'Bannon says he hopes the series will have a long run, he does have some well-defined ideas how he wants the overall series to end. He's only revealed his ideas to one other person: Executive Producer and writer David Kemper.

Farscape usually airs on the Sci-Fi Channel at 8 p.m. Friday nights. The second season will premiere Friday, March 17.

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