

Starfleet Command's Seventh Fleet
 USS Kelly
 Shuttle White Buffalo

Hidden Signals

Issue # 2
 November 2012



Vessel: Shuttle White Buffalo

Registry: NAR-33247

Class: Type 11

Type Aerie Class Vessel

Affiliation: Seventh Fleet

Patrol Area: Bajoran Sector

Mission: Starfleet Covert Ops

Timeline: Post-Voyager Return

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Crew Manifest

Aaron Stevens	Lt. CMDR	Command (Commanding Officer)
Edward Schneider	Lieutenant	Command (Executive Officer)
Toven Karu	Lieutenant J.G.	Command (Second Officer)
Kacie Stevens	Lieutenant	Chief Engineer
Holly Bolland	Ensign	Chief of Operations
Tatiana Schneider	Ensign	Chief Of Security
Joseph Reiley	Ensign	Chief of Medical
Brent Bassett	Recruit	ENG
Wade Bassett	Recruit	ENG
Cheryl Careau	Crewman 2nd	ENG
John Careau	Recruit	ENG
Billie Joe Carlie	Recruit	ENG
Freeman Schneider	Ensign	ENG
Andrew Barlow	Crewman 1st	OPS
Fred Provoncha	Crewman 1st	OPS
Mylan Hainsworth	Crewman 2nd	SEC
Harold Galloway	Crewman 2nd	SEC
Clint Hutsell	Crewman 2nd	SEC
Thomas Bunting	Recruit	SEC
Sena Schneider	Crewman 1st	MED
Jennifer Careau	Recruit	Medical
Kyle Johnsen	Recruit	Recruit
James Conger	Recruit	Recruit
Mike Smith	Recruit	Recruit

News

We will now have certain events at certain people houses. So the following events will take place at the following locations;

Merit sheet nights: Holly's house

Role Playing nights: Toven's House

Planning meetings: Kacie's House

Regular events: different locations

Upcoming events:

These events will be at these locations:

Merit sheet nights: Holly's house

Role Playing nights: Toven's House

Planning meetings: Kacie's House

Regular events: different locations

Events that are coming up:

These events will be at 5 PM

December 1st Ship Planning meeting at Kacie's

December 8th Merit Sheet Night at Holly's

December 15th Christmas Party at Holly's

December 22nd Role Playing at Toven's

January 5th Ship Planning Meeting

Commanding Officers Log,

Stardate 66091.4

The last few months have been a very exciting time for our Crew. We have had 6 promotions, and 1 person receive their Orders. (All of which I need to give out, now that I have them), I wouldn't be surprised if we are the fastest growing ship in the fleet currently, with new recruits and Promotions. We are working hard to get activities that everyone will like to attend to. In the upcoming Year we have several Opportunity to do community Service, help out at conventions and have fun in General. As a Command/Senior Staff we want to Sponsor a family for Christmas, this will include presents and Christmas Dinner for the Family. We will be contacting the Agency in the next month or so to get the ball rolling for this, after all we are a service orientated Club.

With the upcoming Star Trek Movie next May we are going to see if we can do some promotional work at the Local Theater, this will include having a booth and a Holodeck arch if we can get it. We look forward to doing this and it's going to be a lot of fun, more details to follow.

We continue to do Artemis simulations to make it better and more enjoyable for all. We will be doing Artemis for Conduit Next year again, but we will not have to breakdown and setup multiple times, we have been given a room dedicated to Artemis for the Weekend, so it will be setup and teardown once only. We are looking at purchasing systems to make a dedicated Artemis Simulation set. They won't cost much per system, will take some time to get setup completely.

We are also launching a new Seventh Fleet Away Mission, the Second Life Away mission. There are a lot of members in the Fleet who play Second Life, myself included. To that end we have purchased some land in Second Life and are in the Process of building a Vanguard Class Starbase for the Fleet, If we have resources left after building the Station we will be putting the Aerie Class Ship Back up for all to use.

We are wanting to plan for Starfest and the Las Vegas Convention next year, and travel as a crew for those that can make it. We will be getting details out in a while, but we would like to share the cost of fuel, and hotel with several people to make it cheaper for us to go. This should be a lot of fun, and you get points for going to out of State Convention.

Remember the Command Staff are here to Serve you, if you have any questions, Comments etc feel free to contact me by Phone or Email.

Phone 435-850-9188

Email co@shuttlewhitebuffalo.org

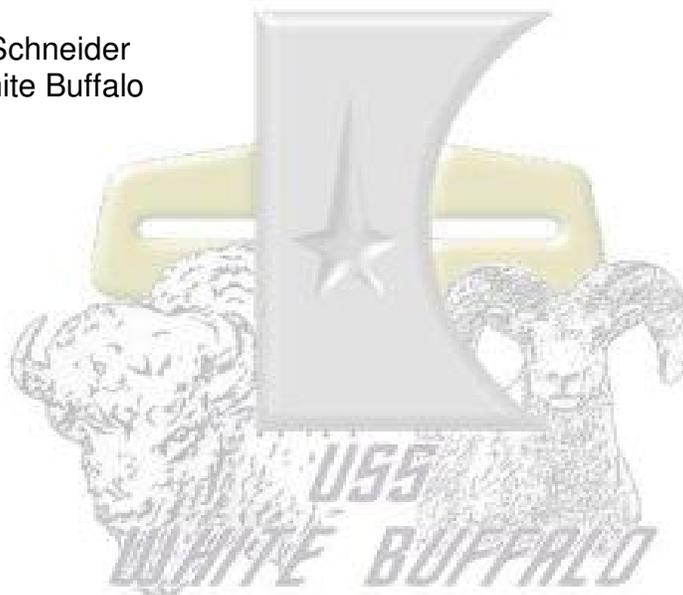
The XO's Corner

It has been a busy time for us, we had a great time at Conduit running the Artemis Bridge Simulator. We not only met Tim Russ, we enjoyed his participation in the Simulator as captain of the USS Excalibur. He obviously enjoyed the experience as he intended to stay for fifteen minutes and command one mission but instead commanded two missions and stuck around for two hours talking with us. The experience was incredible

In other areas, we have volunteered to run the Gammig department for Conduit in 2013 as well as being involved in their planning meetings. We have ideas and they want to hear them.

We are working on improving communications within the ship and to this point I ask everyone to make sure their email address are up to date. If you wish to receive notification on your phone by text message, let Lt. Cmdr. Aaron Stevens know your number and carrier.

Lt. Edward Schneider
XO USS White Buffalo



Senior Operations Officers Report (2nd Officer)

For the past few months it seems that little has happened, but hopefully soon we will be able to pull together the members of this chapter whom for some reason or another cannot or will not attend.

We need to try to figure out what it was about Star Trek that brought us all together, and what we can do to get or keep us all together.

If there is anything I can do to help please feel free to contact me at:

tovenkaru@gmail.com

For some reason the webmail for the shuttle white buffalo has not been sending or recieving anything so please do not contact me at soo@shuttlewhitebuffalo.org

Thank You.

LtJg. Toven Karu



Shuttle White Buffalo

Infiltrator - Part II

Written By: White Buffalo Crew

0815 Hours – 63081.3

Everyone waited patiently to hear what Lieutenant Ganloso to start.

It was clear that he was in charge of whatever this particular mission would be.

Ganloso was reading from a PADD that had been given to him by the communications officer who had received the contents of the PADD from Starfleet Covert Ops, decrypted it, and upon orders had deleted it using the Admiral of Covert ops personal command code. Zharaina Balar now sat in on the meeting. Lieutenant Ganloso asked Lieutenant Cadrial to step into the front compartment of the shuttle, as he stood and left the compartment. The Denobulan cocked his head to the side thinking that this could either be good news, or really bad news, but he followed anyway. In the front compartment Ganloso waited as Cadrial stepped in. He couldn't tell from Dellborg's expression what was in store and Dellborg being android had no expression to read. An Exocomp had been assigned to the mission as well, and had been working on the flight check, and disembarking process.

Back in the aft compartment everyone continued to wait, and were clearly starting to get bored.

Crewman B'kana stated sarcastically "Well, this may take awhile." in an annoyed tone. Ensign Karu smiled slightly and continued to play 3-D chess on his PADD. Zharaina looked up with an annoyed look for a moment from her hardback copy of Moby Dick. The book was in surprisingly good condition considering that it was not a replicated item. Everyone else in the compartment stared around the room blankly as they waited. A moment later the Lieutenants walked back in. Dellborg still had no expression to display. When Cadrial came out he had a concerned expression which seemed to be contagious as the same expression was suddenly adopted by those in the compartment who had been staring around idly. Dellborg was the first to sit, and he started with "Your all fired!" Everyone stared in annoyance as the clearly not funny statement fell on impatient ears. Dellborg continued with "Thank you all for attending this meeting, and for participating in this unusual mission." The annoyed expressions in the room softened as everyone realized that it was about time that the meeting got started. "Tomorrow we will be disembarking from the USS Kelly in this Type 11 Shuttlecraft in route to the Trill Sector of space in an attempt to infiltrate the Orion Syndicate. You have all been obviously selected for this mission due to your unique skills, talents, and your Starfleet psychological profile for professionalism, and secrecy." Everyone seemed to take an interest in what was being said at this point, and few in the room were still bored. Dellborg went on to say, "Starfleet Covert Ops has selected each person for a specific department posting, these were officially listed as suggested postings, however I will stick with their

suggestions and see how well each of you perform in these postings.” Everyone, including those who were bored were now paying full attention as the android continued. “We will start from those who will be in operational command of the away mission, and on.” Everyone looked around at each other for a moment wondering who was going to do what duties, and what posting they were going to be assigned. B'kana hoped that she wouldn't be assigned to the science department since she had been training for security. Toven went back to playing chess on his PADD once again bored as he really didn't care what posting he was assigned. Zharaina was hopeful about getting the operations assignment but hid her expression from everyone. Cadrial was more concerned about other matters to worry about his posting, already knowing what his posting was going to be, although he was hoping for the engineering posting while on this mission. Dellborg sat taking in the thoughts of everyone in the room as he focused in on them individually. Since he did not have an Emotion chip, and his Psionic Chip was experimental the thought of this being an invasion of privacy never occurred to the

Lieutenant, nor did the idea that it was unethical to read peoples thoughts without their knowledge. The group noticed that the shuttle suddenly lifted up off the shuttle bay's pad, and launched from the USS Kelly. Dellborg stated “Well it's clearly too late for anyone to turn back now, and quit this mission, so I will continue with everyone assigned tasks for this mission.”

Lieutenant Cadrial was assigned to be the second in charge, Ensign Toven Karu Drey has been selected for the crucial role of infiltrating the Syndicate, and downloading the entire database from the main computer of a stolen Aerie Class vessel. Lieutenant Aki Chandra has been selected to serve as the mission engineering officer. (((JOE REILEY))) was selected for medical officer. Zharaina

Belar was selected to be the operations officer. B'kana was selected to be the security officer. Jesser Ki'haif-Torsu was selected to be Mission Counselor. Clint Hutsell were assigned to the security team. Dellborg Ganloso finished telling everyone their assignments, and told them to start learning or researching their duties. B'kana, Zharaina, and Aki Chandra all joined 315 in the cockpit section for their assignments, as 315 reported that they were almost 3 days away. Everyone sighed at this news.

Launching from the USS Kelly–A during her shakedown cruise they had to launch near Terra Nova since the Kelly was going to be heading back to Utopia Planetia to finish its construction. It was clear that this was going to be an even longer mission than they all had thought.

The Devout Followers of Q – II

We the Followers of the Great and Powerfull Q herby honor his majesty by once again publishing an article of faith in the Almighty Q.

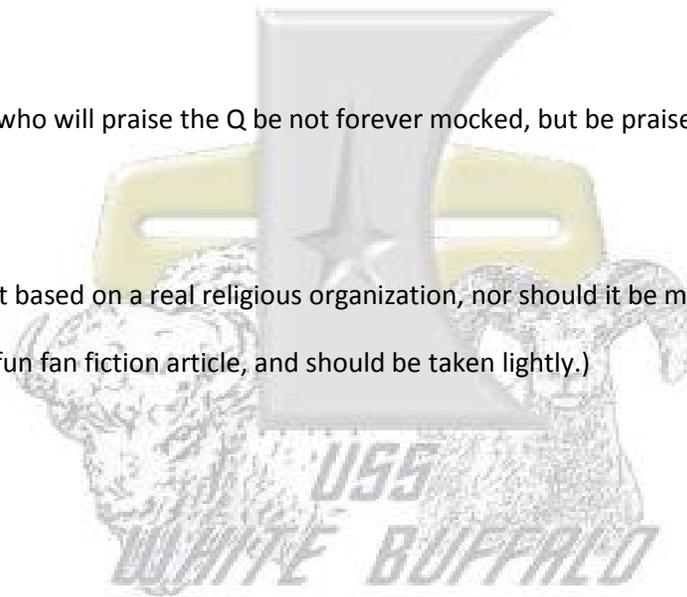
His mighty whimsy be praised, and respected, for if the Supream Q be angry they whom have upset him may surely be punished.

The Magnificent Q do more punctual works than those of the Sisko, and have more of a punch than those of the Picard. The Temple was constructed, and will be reconstructed again, with an even larger monument to please the Q.

Let he or she who will praise the Q be not forever mocked, but be praised for rembering these godly trek beings.

(This publication is not based on a real religious organization, nor should it be mistaken as one.

This was written as a fun fan fiction article, and should be taken lightly.)



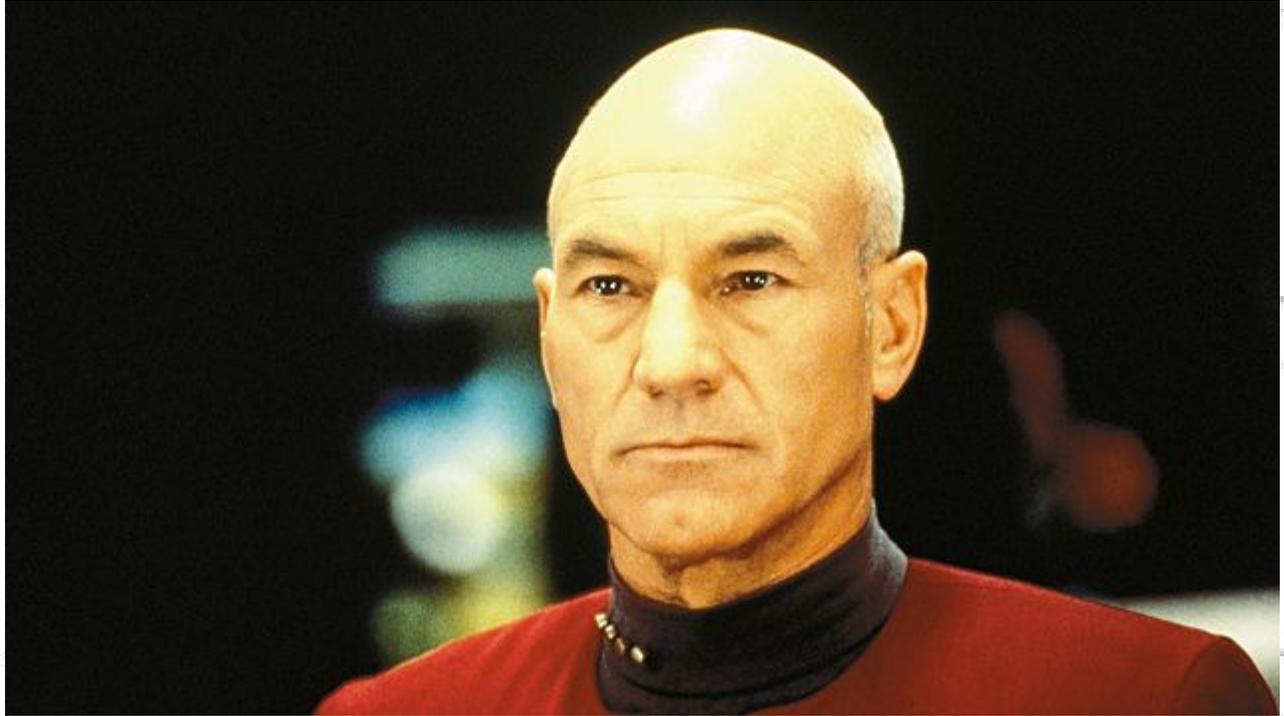


Star Trek: The Next Generation

Season 1 (1987-1988) 26 episodes aired in first-run syndication.

Title:	Stardate:	Airdate:	Director:	Writer(s):
Encounter at Farpoint	41153.7	09-28-87	Corey Allen	D.C. Fontana & Gene Roddenberry
The Naked Now	41209.2	10-05-87	Paul Lynch	J. Michael Bingham & John D.F. Black
Code of Honor	41235.25	10-12-87	Russ Mayberry	Katharyn Powers & Michael Baron
The Last Outpost	41386.4	10-19-87	Richard Colla	Herbert Wright & Richard Krzmeien
Where No One Has Gone Before	41263.1	10-26-87	Rob Bowman	Diane Duane & Michael Reaves
Lonely Among Us	41249.3	11-02-87	Cliff Bole	D.C. Fontana & Michael Halperin
Justice	41255.6	11-09-87	James L. Conway	Worley Thorne & Ralph Wills
The Battle	41723.9	11-16-87	Rob Bowman	Herbert Wright
Hide and Q	41590.5	11-23-87	Cliff Bole	C.J. Holland & Gene Roddenberry
Haven	41294.5	11-30-87	Richard Compton	Tracy Torme & Lan O'Kun
The Big Goodbye	41997.7	01-11-88	Joseph L. Scanlan	Tracy Torme
Datalore	41242.4	01-18-88	Rob Bowman	Robert Lewin & Gene Roddenberry
Angel One	41636.9	01-25-88	Michael Rhoades	Patrick Barry
11001001	41365.9	02-01-88	Paul Lynch	Maurice Hurley & Robert Lewin
Too Short a Season	41309.5	02-08-88	Rob Bowman	D.C. Fontana & Michael Michaelian
When the Bough Breaks	41509.1	02-15-88	Kim Manners	Hannah Louise Shearer
Home Soil	41463.9	02-22-88	Corey Allen	Robert Sabaroff
Coming of Age	41416.2	03-14-88	Mike Vejar	Sandy Fries
Heart of Glory	41503.7	03-21-88	Rob Bowman	Maurice Hurley
The Arsenal of Freedom	41798.2	04-11-88	Les Landau	Richard Manning & Hans Beimler
Symbiosis	Unkwn	04-18-88	Win Phelps	Robert Lewin, Richard Manning & Hans Beimler
Skin of Evil	41601.3	04-25-88	Joseph L. Scanlan	Joseph Stefano
We'll Always Have Paris	41697.9	05-02-88	Robert Becker	Deborah Dean Davis & Hannah Louise Schearer
Conspiracy	41775.5	05-09-88	Cliff Bole	Tracy Torme
The Neutral Zone	41986.0	05-16-88	James L. Conway	Maurice Hurley





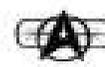
Paramount Television

Computer Love

Looking back at *Star Trek: The Next Generation* on its 25th anniversary

By [Brian Phillips](#) on September 28, 2012

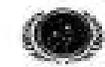
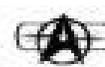
We had orange carpet in our living room in Oklahoma where, on regular weeknights, I would stay up, semi-religiously, and watch *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, usually instead of doing my algebra homework. My seventh-grade algebra teacher was a smug, straw-haired, lip-smacking wearer of short-sleeve dress shirts named Mr. White, whom I remember because his method of reacting to classroom disturbances involved flexing his biceps one at a time and saying "I call *this one* Thunder, and I call *this one* Lightning. Let me know if you'd like an introduction." Mr. White spent the first part of every class bivouacked behind his desk reading *Whitetail Bowhunter* magazine, which gave me time to get caught up, imperfectly, if I'd skipped a problem set the night before. We had orange carpet in the living room, and on the wall across from the TV my parents had hung a couple of large 1930s advertising posters for Royal Mail cruises, so that when the black reaches of space appeared on the TV screen during *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, you could see the posters' reflections in the glass — the *Enterprise* sliding at its usual bold angle out of the starry darkness, SOUTH AMERICA BY ROYAL MAIL, with its big blue-and-black ocean liner and flaming tropical sunset, coruscating like a nebula all around it.



Me in pajamas on the couch. Sometimes my dad would watch with me; sometimes the rest of the house was asleep.

I wasn't a Trekkie, not really. The minutiae of setting, which is the language of the truly devout, mostly left me cold. I didn't know the rules of tri-dimensional chess or care about Romulan politics. I'd tried watching the original *Star Trek* and found its cartoon-bright universe — the soundstage brawls, the sonar blorps, the happy overacting — almost incomprehensible. For some reason, though, *The Next Generation* awakened in me a feeling of terrible and suffocating yearning — that hopeless childish escape wish that's the wake of a certain kind of fantasy. That feeling that in a different world you'd be happy. I carefully recorded each episode on our VCR — I remember buying the VHS tapes, in cellophane-wrapped three-packs — and typed out labels on an enormous electric typewriter. One VHS tape held two *Next Generation* episodes, plus commercials, so I had to fast-forward through the first episode in order to get the episode-length timings. "Who Watches the Watchers 0:00:00" b/w "Deja Q 0:58:59." This seemed extremely important, possibly because so many *Next Generation* episodes themselves hinged on matters of fine timing, radiation leaks with critical exposure imminent, warp jumps that had to be calculated to the nanosecond (yet somehow always involved a character yelling "Now!"). Except to get the episode lengths, I don't think I ever played the tapes. None of my friends watched the show, or at least we never talked about it. For me, the series was just a strange, fleeting ritual, an hour here or there when everything hushed and got bright.

It's 25 years old now, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, 25 this week — the first episode premiered on September 28, 1987. Hard to believe, in all the usual ways. I recently rewatched the whole run, all 178 episodes, which was a long exercise in critical nostalgia. One of the problems in revisiting sci-fi is that, sooner or later, every voyage into the future becomes a voyage into the past. Traveling to *The Next Generation's* 24th century sent me hurtling backward at about Warp 9. That's partly because the show is bound so strongly in my memory with those solitary misfit hours of adolescence, but also because *The Next Generation* itself is helplessly, and kind of movingly, of its time. You can't help but notice this, watching it now. The first sign is that, for a franchise that famously defines space as an extension of the Old West, *The Next Generation* very quickly dispenses with almost any sense of a frontier. Captain Kirk's *Enterprise* was a ship of phaser-happy explorers always pressing onward toward the next undiscovered planet on which they could stage a fistfight; in comparison, Captain Picard's *Enterprise* is a calm, sleek vessel of end-of-history galactic administration — a kind of faster-than-light embassy, complete with chamber music concerts. There's very little fighting; there's a great deal of personal growth and trade-pact negotiation. Many, many episodes turn on the decidedly nonstandard TV plot of *something has gone wrong with a diplomat*. In "Sarek," for instance (Season 3, Episode 23), Data's performance of the Brahms string quintet makes Spock's father, a powerful ambassador, cry, which isn't supposed to happen to Vulcans; in "Loud As a Whisper" (Season 2, Episode 5), a deaf diplomat loses his telepathic interpreters and has to teach the aliens whose peace treaty he's brokering sign language. There's an only-global-superpower, world-policeman feel to most of this: The Klingons, the wild, violent others of the Kirk series, are now allies of the Federation. Everything's running smoothly. The crew's heroic quest is just to keep it that way.



So they transport medical supplies; they help overextended colonies fix their weather-control systems. Gene Roddenberry's guiding vision of the *Star Trek* franchise was, famously, that it would offer an optimistic vision of humanity's future. The Soviet Union collapsed a couple of years into the filming of *The Next Generation*, and the show's optimistic future became startlingly coterminous with the optimistic present of the George H.W. Bush administration. Where else but space could you find a thousand points of light? The grand adventure of the NCC-1701-D was no longer to spread civilization, or even defend it; it was just to keep the machinery oiled. Remember 1991, America?

And it breaks. Oh, how often the *Enterprise* breaks. Geordi LaForge, who is the chief engineer but who still has to crawl on his hands and knees through the ship's cramped interconnecting Jeffries tubes to spot-fix most problems himself — well, let's please note that after a couple of weeks of welding between-decks trifusium relays in order to prevent cascading sensor-pattern overruns from harmonically generating a reactor-core breach, I would not retain Geordi's amiable disposition. No siree. One of my uncles was a tech geek who lived in a geodesic dome house and built (and subsequently crashed) his own airplane. One Christmas, not long after I discovered *Star Trek*, he gave us a towering beige computer — it must have run MS-DOS, if that — and gave me a quick course in hacking the autoexec.bat file. I was the only one in my family who used this PC, which I remember as physically fortress-like, and it was always broken, and always broken in some complicated and hard-to-define way. It would work, but loading programs, or whatever it was I was trying to do with it, would be elaborately difficult. If the constant malfunctions Scotty had to cope with on the first *Star Trek* series were drawn from large-scale stuff, war experience and manufacturing and the rapid expansion of infrastructure — let's get this tank/aircraft carrier/highway system running, boys — Geordi's troubles seem to reflect the small-scale nightmares of late-'80s personal computing. Machines — nanobots, space stations, the ship itself — are constantly becoming sentient. ("This thing has a will of its own!") Whole episodes revolve around arbitrary glitches and bugs: The Iconian virus that nearly blows up the ship in "Contagion"; the signal error that traps Picard, Data, and Dr. Crusher in the Holodeck in "The Big Goodbye." As well as every other episode in which anyone goes into the Holodeck, ever.

The Next Generation drew something like 20 million viewers a week in its heyday, practically an *American Idol* number, and the penetration of the show's keywords — energize, engage, Number One, I am Locutus of Borg, resistance is futile, make it so — was light-years beyond insane for a syndicated sci-fi show. But in a way, it's no wonder. The *Enterprise* crew was driving a misfiring IBM PC in the service of a quasi-neoliberal agenda, and at the same time, so were we.

But why, then, that yearning? No one lies awake at night longing to be transported to a convincing imaginative representation of early-'90s social themes, or if they do I have yet to find their chat rooms. It's obviously the case that the great subject of almost all American television — family¹ — is also at large on the bridge of the *Enterprise*. Like *The West Wing*, the show offers a fantasy of smart friends working together and supporting each other that's designed to make you want to join them. When you're a skinny 13-year-old who's scared a third of the time and bored another third, the idea of roaming the constellations with Captain Picard, whom adventure follows like a shadow and who always knows what to do, will obviously have a certain appeal. And as the show advanced through its run, *The Next Generation* became

extremely good at fusing its thematic concerns with the kind of intense fan service a long-running sci-fi series probably can't do without. Loneliness barely exists in it; characters who are depicted by themselves are usually about to be attacked by glowing balls of light or semitransparent children. By the third or fourth season, the showrunners had realized that *TNG*'s two major themes, the android Data's ongoing inquiry into "what it means to be human" and Picard's personification of enlightened humanism, could just as easily be explored around a poker table, or while feeding Data's cat, as they could during computer meltdowns and alien standoffs. Data's little visor and Troi's relationship with her mother and Picard and Crusher's breakfasts and Geordi's dating woes and Picard's discomfort around children — all of this stuff seemed peripheral, but assuming you wanted to hang out with these people in the first place, it was a delight. As the writers knew it would be, of course, but when you're 13, or if you have an imperfect heart, it's impossible not to respond to it.

But I think *The Next Generation*'s underlying appeal went beyond the image of happy, smart people saving you a seat in Ten Forward. As an example here, think about the *Harry Potter* series. One of the reasons J.K. Rowling's books exerted such an appeal over every sentient creature on earth is that they resolved, indeed fused, a cultural contradiction. She took the aesthetic of old-fashioned English boarding-school life and placed it at the center of a narrative about political inclusiveness. You get to keep the scarves, the medieval dining hall, the verdant lawns, the sense of privilege (you're a wizard, Harry), while not only losing the snobbery and racism but *actually casting them as the villains of the series*. It's the Slytherins and Death Eaters who have it in for mudbloods, not Harry and his friends, Hogwarts' true heirs. The result of this, I would argue, is an absolutely bonkers subliminal reconfiguration of basically the entire cultural heritage of England. It's as if Rowling reboots a 1,000-year-old national tradition into something that's (a) totally unearned but (b) also way better than the original. Of course it electrified people.

Star Trek does something similar, though with an American contradiction that's arguably even more fundamental. It was already possible, by the early '90s and actually long before them, to trace the terms of the current partisan divide in America. Conservatives — think in Jonathan Haidt-ish terms here — value tradition, authority, and group identity; liberals value tolerance, fairness, and care. Or whatever; you can draw the distinctions however you'd like. The point is, *The Next Generation* depicts a strict military hierarchy acting with great moral clarity in the name of civilization, all anti-postmodern, "conservative" stuff — but the values they're so conservatively clear about are ideals like *peace* and *open-mindedness* and *squishy concern for the perspectives of different cultures*. "Liberal" ideals, in other words. You could say, roughly, that the *Enterprise* crew is conservative as a matter of method and liberal as a matter of goal. They sail through the universe with colonialist confidence sticking up for postcolonial ideals. I mean, Starfleet has a Prime Directive ... but it's explicitly non-interventionist! This is so weird that it's almost hard to notice; your mind just sort of slides over it. But it's fascinating in numberless ways. Picard is both indisputably the most patriarchal *Star Trek* captain and indisputably the least likely to punch anyone in the face. No one is more individualist than the individuals of the *Enterprise*,² but their individualism has led them to reject most forms of private property (because it actually holds them back, they're so boldly individualistic) and embrace ultra-centralized health care. The show is able to indulge a serious jones for the classical Western canon — Shakespeare, Mozart, et al. — without really running against the grain of multiculturalism at all, at least by late-'80s standards. Data will be listing some violinists whose

style his programming can mimic, and some of them will be Heifetz and some of them will be aliens a guy just made up for the script. It's totally nuts, but it's also a fantasy of the American psyche that, if you can get into it, makes a lot of fine things suddenly seem possible, and makes some debilitating anxieties just sort of fall away.

The thing I can't shake, having recently finished all 133 hours of the series (a fact that fills me with something between relief and mourning), is that Data's positronic brain doesn't have Wi-Fi. When *The Next Generation* wants to impress you with the superhuman information-retrieval capabilities of a 24th-century android, it shows him, um, reading really fast. Not that you expect a late-'80s TV show to be remotely accurate with respect to near-future technology, but there's something about *TNG's* enormous pass on networking, that total failure to see it as part of the Federation's eventual culture, that seems more revealing than any of the technology — [warp fields](#), [the iPad](#) — it did successfully predict. There are episodes, kind of a lot of them, actually, in which Data has to be shut down for one reason or another, and one of the other crew members (usually but not always Geordi) pushes the hidden catch on his head that opens his cranial access panel, and a little square of hair swings up off his scalp and you see his metallic skull. And there are tiny banks of Christmas-type LED lights blinking on it in more or less rhythmic sequence, almost like the lights on a wireless modem. But the main impression you get is of the *enclosedness* of Data's head, its protected separateness. The idea seems to be that the model for a thinking computer should be not a cloud of information, but a hard shell containing a thoroughly distinct self.

By contrast, when Picard is kidnapped and assimilated by the Borg, the race of hive-minded albino cyborgs that poses the major existential threat to the Federation during the series, what's emphasized is the physical violation this entails, how Picard's body is ripped open to receive the Borg implants that erase his individual consciousness. *The Next Generation* is surprisingly anxious about the idea of sharing thoughts in general. With the exception of the telepathic Betazoids, who are mostly seen positively through ship counselor Deanna Troi, a half-Betazoid, creatures that communicate through mind reading or centralized consciousness are either seen as villainous or as so remotely alien that they can't be comprehended. (This, in a series that usually treats alien races as exaggerations of particular human traits, is exactly the same way that Carrie's friends on *Sex and the City* are all concentrated versions of single aspects of Carrie.) Networking, either natural or technological, transgresses against *Star Trek's* ideal of individualism, in which personal development is always toward independence, uniqueness, and competence. Picard's first officer, Will Riker, gains the captain's trust in the very first episode by turning off the computer's auto-docking routine and bringing the ship into space-dock by himself. Technology is meant to be a tool that you can use or not; it's not supposed to change the way you think. No one is ever alone on the *Enterprise*, but there are depths to which togetherness can't penetrate.

Star Trek: The Next Generation aired its final episode in 1994, the year before I got my first e-mail address. Watching it again over the last couple of months, I've had moments when I didn't intuitively know whose future I was supposed to be imagining. I mean, series lore suggests that we, the current denizens of Federation Sector 001, Sol System, are going to grow up to become the self-reliant, fencing-class-taking, light-to-casual computer-employers of 24th century. On the other hand, I've seen a race of electronically linked humanoids who share information in a vast



decentralized net to which they all have access; who see data as a kind of neutral atmosphere, like air; who use technology to share thoughts and impressions at all times; who are never out of contact with one another; and who react to the briefest removal from their shared consciousness with an itchy, frantic eagerness (cf. "Hugh") to get back. Remind you of anyone? They fly around in giant cubes and occasionally wipe out whole civilizations, like Apple Maps.

I have no idea whether the heroic (but responsible!) individualism of the *Enterprise* crew is a relic, a quaint throwback that was already being assimilated by the Internet while *Star Trek* was busy articulating it, or whether the kind of humanism Captain Picard represents can survive the transition to online culture more intact than *TNG* wants us to think. Part of me desperately wants to believe the latter. But *The Next Generation* is 25 years old, and what I'm certain of is this: I am Locutus of Borg. Resistance is futile. And — another part of me wants to add — oh, God, make it so.

