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# Operation: Annihilate!

"**Operation -- Annihilate!**" is the twenty-ninth and final episode of the first season of the American science fiction television series *Star Trek*. Written by Stephen W. Carabatsos and directed by Herschel Daugherty, it was first broadcast April 13, 1967.

In the episode, the crew of the USS *Enterprise* must find a way to exterminate behavior-altering parasites that have taken over the bodies of residents of a Federation colony.

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## Plot

The Federation starship USS *Enterprise* is tracking a path of mass insanity that has affected several planets, causing the collapse of their civilizations. They approach Deneva, a Federation colony where Captain Kirk's (William Shatner) brother, Sam, has been stationed along with Sam's wife Aurelan and son, Peter. On entering the system, they witness a ship dive into the local sun, its pilot raving incoherently about being "free" before the ship is destroyed.

Transporting to Deneva's main city, Kirk, First Officer Spock (Leonard Nimoy), Chief Medical Officer Dr. McCoy (DeForest Kelley) and a security detail find the town quiet. A group of men armed with clubs try to warn the landing party away, and then attack. Kirk has the men stunned, but McCoy finds that their brains are still being violently stimulated. The party locates the Kirk family home; Sam is dead (William Shatner lying motionless on the floor), while Aurelan (Joan Swift) acts irrationally before passing out and Peter (Craig Hundley) is comatose. Kirk and McCoy return with the survivors to the *Enterprise*, where McCoy finds they are suffering from a condition similar to that of their attackers. McCoy gives both painkillers, and Aurelan wakes briefly to tell Kirk of horrible "things" spreading from planet to planet, using others' bodies to build

"Operation -- Annihilate!"	
<i>Star Trek: The Original Series</i> episode	
Episode no.	Season 1 <div>Episode 29</div>
Directed by	Herschel Daugherty
Written by	Steven W. Carabatsos
Featured music	Alexander Courage
Cinematography by	Jerry Finnerman
Production code	029
Original air date	April 13, 1967
Guest appearance(s)	
<div><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Joan Swift - Aurelan Kirk</li><li>Craig Hundley - Peter Kirk</li><li>Dave Armstrong - Kartan</li><li>Maurishka Taliaferro - Yeoman Zahra</li><li>Fred Carson - First Denevan</li><li>Jerry Catron - Second Denevan</li><li>Eddie Paskey - Lt. Leslie</li></ul></div>	

ships.

Kirk returns to the planet and joins Spock in search for these entities. They find a number of single-celled creatures attached to the walls and ceiling of one building. The creatures fly, and attempt to attack the humans; the landing party finds they are nearly immune to phaser fire. One makes contact with Spock before Kirk can pry it off, and Spock falls in pain. They transport back to the *Enterprise*, and McCoy determines that the creature has injected some of its tissue into Spock's spinal column; it will be impossible to remove surgically. When Spock regains consciousness, he is able to break free of his bonds and attempts to take control of the ship but McCoy sedates him in time. Later, Spock apologizes to Kirk and asserts that his mental discipline can control the pain, but that he must return to the surface to acquire a specimen to study. Kirk and McCoy agree, and Spock, on return to the colony, is able to stun a creature. Returning to the *Enterprise*, Spock determines that the creatures are part of a hive mind, and apparently indestructible. They recall the ship pilot that claimed he was free before diving into the sun, and suspect the sun's properties may harm the creatures. Despite numerous tests, Spock and McCoy fail to find a solution.

Kirk holds a senior staff meeting, asserting they must find a solution before the creatures reach the next inhabited planet, holding over a million people; a solution that doesn't kill the hosts. While using a computer, he realizes that they have not tried visible light as a means to defeat the creatures. An initial test of blinding light results in the death of the specimen in sick bay. Spock then volunteers to be exposed to an intense beam of light, without eye protection, to prove that a creature infecting a host can be killed. Though the test is successful, Spock is now blind. Analysis of the initial test shows that only ultraviolet light was necessary to kill the creature. The *Enterprise* floods the colony with ultraviolet light from an array of satellites, killing the creatures on the planet and purging the parasites from the survivors. As the *Enterprise* prepares to leave orbit, Spock reveals that his Vulcan inner eyelids had prevented permanent blindness and that he can see again.

## Production notes

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The script, which was written by Steven W. Carabatsos, was originally titled "Operation: Destroy". Aurelan was a Denevan woman in love with a man named Kartan, and it was Kartan who flew the ship into the Denevan sun in the cold open sequence. Aurelan's father was also a major character in the teleplay, and the two colonists were not infected by the "Denevan neural parasites". Instead, they helped Dr. McCoy and Mr. Spock with the research into how light could destroy the parasites.<sup>[1]</sup> The script did not originally end with the *Enterprise* crew using light to destroy the parasites. Instead, the ship learns the location of the aliens' home world, and destroys the central controlling "brain" located there. Author James Blish used this draft of the script when adapting the episode for print, and this ending appears in the chapter "Operation -- Annihilate!" in the anthology *Star Trek 2*.<sup>[2]</sup>

This was the first episode of the series to be directed by Herschel Daugherty. Daugherty would later direct Season Three's "The Savage Curtain" as well.<sup>[3]</sup> It was also the first appearance in *Star Trek* for child actor Craig Hundley, who played "Peter Kirk". He would also portray "Tommy Starnes" in the third-season episode "And the Children Shall Lead".<sup>[4]</sup>

Location shooting occurred in two places. The scene where the *Enterprise* landing party beams down to the

surface was filmed at the TRW Space and Defense Park (now Northrop Grumman Aerospace Systems) in Redondo Beach, California.<sup>[5]</sup> The entrance of Sam Kirk's laboratory is the cafeteria on the TRW campus.<sup>[5][6]</sup> The exterior of Sam Kirk's laboratory, which features white pylons, is Schoenberg Hall at the University of California, Los Angeles.<sup>[5]</sup> Filming at TRW occurred on February 15, 1967.<sup>[6]</sup>

The neural parasites were created by prop designer Wah Chang from bags of fake vomit.<sup>[7]</sup>

The episode aired on April 13, 1967, and was the final episode to air in the series' first season.<sup>[8]</sup> One scene did not make it into the episode. This scene came at the end of the story, and featured Peter Kirk (dressed in a command division tunic) sitting in the captain's chair on the bridge while his uncle, James T. Kirk, agrees to let him return to Deneva to live with Sam Kirk's research partner and friend. Although filmed, it was edited out due to time constraints.<sup>[9]</sup> This left actor Hundley with no lines in the finished episode; the character of Peter Kirk spends the entire show unconscious. It also left the episode with no explanation of what becomes of Peter.

## Reception

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Zack Handlen of *The A.V. Club* gave the episode a 'B+' rating, describing it as "a little rocky in places" but otherwise praising the alien menace and Nimoy's acting.<sup>[10]</sup>

The episode is popular for revealing new facts about Vulcan physiology. Galaxie 500, an American alternative rock band, wrote a song about the episode for their 1990 album *This Is Our Music*. The song was titled "Spook", but the band secretly used the title "Spock" since the lyrics referred to Spock's blindness in this episode.<sup>[11]</sup>

When you went blind  
Then I nearly lost my mind  
It didn't last  
'Cause you have another eyelid

In 2016, TVline ranked this as having one of the top twenty moments of Star Trek, noting the terrifying moment when the alien attacks Spock.<sup>[12]</sup>

## References

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1. Asherman, p. 65.
2. Blish, p. 82.
3. Clark, p. 221.
4. Schuster and Rathbone, p. 211.
5. Okuda, Mirek, and Okuda, p. 530.
6. Morison, Jeanette. "May I See Your Badge, Mister - Uh, Spock?" The Retirees Association. No date. (<http://tra-spacepark.org/trek.html>) Archived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20131230164513/http://tra-spacepark.org/trek.html>) December 30, 2013, at the Wayback Machine Accessed 2014-01-02.
7. Clark, p. 167, 237.

8. Schuster and Rathbone, p. 349.
9. "Peter Kirk." Memory-Alpha.org. No date. ([http://en.memory-alpha.org/wiki/Peter\\_Kirk](http://en.memory-alpha.org/wiki/Peter_Kirk)) Accessed 2014-01-02.
10. Handlen, Zack. "The City On The Edge Of Forever" / "Operation--Annihilate!" (<http://www.avclub.com/articles/the-city-on-the-edge-of-forever-operationannihilat,27102/>) The A.V. Club. April 24, 2009. Accessed 2012-07-15.
11. Wareham, p. 143.
12. Mason, Charlie (2016-07-19). "Star Trek's 20 Most Memorable Moments" (<https://tvline.com/gallery/star-trek-original-series-best-scenes-photos/>). *TVLine*. Retrieved 2019-07-04.

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## External links

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- "Operation: Annihilate!" (<http://www.startrek.com/startrek/view/library/episodes/TOS/detail/68718.html>) at StarTrek.com
- "Operation: Annihilate!" (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0708441/>) on IMDb
- "Operation: Annihilate!" (<http://www.tv.com/shows/star-trek/operation-annihilate-24914/>) at TV.com
- "Operation: Annihilate!" ([http://memory-alpha.org/wiki/Operation:\\_Annihilate!](http://memory-alpha.org/wiki/Operation:_Annihilate!)) at Memory Alpha (a *Star Trek* wiki)
- "Operation: Annihilate!" (<http://trekmovie.com/2008/02/22/operation-annihilate-screenshots-and-video/#more-1634>) Screenshots before and after remastering at TrekMovie.com

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