

# Star Trek: Fuck

By [David Blue](#)

## Discovery is pushing boundaries, but for what purpose?

*Discovery* may no longer be new - not even the newest *Star Trek* property - but it *is* new to me. According to the [alternate timeline exemption](#) of the J.J. movies, I've been left without "Canon" *Star Trek* television since 2005 (or 2155) with the last episode of *Enterprise*, but I've been looking forward with moderate anticipation to an opportunity to watch this new entry into "[the stodgiest and squarest of all sci-fi universes](#)." Though I am extremely well-versed in Gene Roddenberry's baby, I come to both you and *Discovery* with absolutely zero desire to analyze whether or not it is "Trek" enough, "good" science-fiction, or even "good" television - I'd like only to land on your screen between all of these institutions and their proctors in some unique insight from all of them, without the clichés, cringey jokes, or unnecessary *Trekism*. What I will strive to do is perform [my Special Duty](#) in relation to American intellectual property mastodons for which I have my own adoration: to determine whether or not [they should die](#). I know absolutely *nothing* about television writing - the same amount I know [about film](#) - so I hope I can provide something usefully unique.

I would rather *Star Trek* **not** have to die, but I wouldn't be surprised if it's necessary. Without sounding like I have to prove myself, know that the property - in particular the history of *Star Trek Online's* development

– was a very important part of my adolescent life. I have watched every episode of every series several times at least, but I know better than to entrust my entire emotional existence into the promise of a continuation like *Discovery*. It most fascinates me how revivals of old names like this go about contextualizing their dialogue and other elements for today’s audience. “[Snug as a bug in a rug](#)” is surely not an expression we should expect to survive the next 250 years of human development, and yet this is supposed to be an aspirational series? It even made it in the recap! I should confess now: it is actually *Star Trek Online* which made me curious enough to seek out a CBS All Access Free Trial. The marketing worked very well.



I tend to install the game for a few weeks or so around this time every year just to check in. This time, I was greeted by [Star Trek Online: Legacy](#) – a new expansion featuring *Voyager*’s Jeri Ryan and *Discovery*’s Sonequa Martin-Green reprising their respective characters in voiceover roles. I figured out that Michael Burnham must have been from The New Show fairly quickly, but I was disappointed to find out that the character was not in fact a trans man, but rather a female character with an unusually male name. For the most part, Burnham is simply an outlier in *The Measure of Morality* Parts [I](#) and [II](#). She accompanies one’s character (along with Seven of Nine) to several different battlegrounds and stories we’d already seen before in previous episodes – *when the budget’s running low, reuse sets*, but there is one instance where *we* are brought into *her* (*Discovery*’s) world, which feels disorienting. The whole experience plays like it was forced upon

STO by CBS in order to squeeze as many viewers into our free CBS All Access trials with as little developmental investment into the game as possible. Well, here I am!

In Season 1, Episode 4 of *Discovery*, the writers made a [very foul mistake](#)... They placed fucking Elon Musk's name alongside the aviation pioneering Wright Brothers and the fictional inventor of warp drive, Zefram Cochrane.

*How do you want to be remembered in history? Alongside the Wright Brothers, Elon Musk, Zefram Cochrane? Or as a failed fungus expert?*

I can't be timid about this – it straight up makes me *ill*. I can *guarantee* you that Orville and Wilbur Wright would have *never* watched fucking *South Park* and that I am actually going to be sick right here on this couch.

<blockquote class="twitter-tweet tw-align-center"><p lang="en" dir="ltr">I&#39;m sorry, I don&#39;t look up to anyone who watches South Park. it&#39;s just a personal rule, okay?</p>&mdash; David Blue (@NeoYokel) <a href="https://twitter.com/NeoYokel/status/1255564278247063555?ref\_src=twsrc%5Etfw">April 29, 2020</a></blockquote> <script async src="https://platform.twitter.com/widgets.js" charset="utf-8"></script>

I'll spare you further ranting, but... Jesus Christ. I will not believe that I live in a world where this sort of comparison is acceptable. I'm not going to freak out because they say "shit" and "fuck" now, though I do wonder what Gene Roddenberry (though he [wasn't all that great](#), it turns out) would say – something like "[profanity is no longer a necessary part of 23<sup>rd</sup> century language](#)." I thought [Morgan Jeffery's take](#) on this for *Digital Spy* was an interesting one:

*There's an argument to be made that the old style of Trek might feel naive in 2017. But there's another that it'd be a refreshing antidote to the times, the Trek we really need right now as opposed to the one we deserve.*

I like to watch fellow *Star Trek* enthusiasts squirm and cry "continuity" and "[canon](#)" as much as any reasonable human being, but I'm not sure this sort of boundary-pushing is actually productive. Is anything being accomplished? Other than marking *Discovery* forever as *not* "[family-friendly entertainment](#)?" Linguistically, the word "fucking" in "fucking cool" was used for emphasis, which perhaps suggests there was no other way for the character to express that level of enthusiasm. In his [IndieWire interview](#), Anthony Rapp (Paul Stamets) explains:

*"These people just put their brains to work in a really tough way and they had a breakthrough. And I imagine there's scientists in their labs who might do that any time. We didn't drop the F-bomb in 'Star Trek' by telling something to go fuck themselves. It's like we did it by saying 'this is fucking cool.'"*





If *Discovery* was “making history,” I’m not so sure what [Star Trek: Picard](#) was doing with *fucking* and *pissant*. I’m also not sure it matters at all in the grander scheme. What other freedoms should CBS feel free to explore, now that they’ve said the bad words? What else hasn’t been explored? Bathrooms? Shitting and farting? That has my vote. I really don’t remember as many colloquialisms showing up in the earlier series, but perhaps that’s just because those colloquialisms have since become part of our language. I’m not the greatest television watcher of all time, but I got lost in *Discovery*’s plot, and apparently I’m [not the only one](#).

*There turned out to be too many of those twists in Discovery’s first season, and it was frustrating to watch as the writers sidled up to new, risky frontiers for exploration, only to suddenly change course right when things were starting to get interesting.*

Season 1, Episode 7 is called “[Magic to Make the Sanest Man Go Mad](#),” and it’s the most classically *Star Trek* of what I’ve seen. One of those stuck-in-a-time-loop stories which truly makes you want to die. What’s even better and slightly meta: playback kept resetting for me at exactly 21:26 and starting from the beginning while the cat kept stepping on the delete key and destroying this paragraph. I had to keep watching the man from *The Fucking Office* continually kill the captain after the crew parties to 250-year-old West Coast hip hop and 300-year old Al Green all whilst writing this over again. I do not like Rainn Wilson invading my *Star Trek*. He gives Aquariuses a bad name and... beard. “Listen, petunia, I’ve been screwed over since the day I was born. I deserve this,” he says, and I wonder if in fact it is Rainn himself speaking of his invasion. He looks and sounds like a fucking incel. All of this makes me wonder if my entire problem with this show is simply that I do not particularly like its characters.



## The Vessel

Relying on *Memory Alpha* – a tried-and-true *Star Trek* fan resource – we can examine [the U.S.S. \*Discovery\*](#), itself. I'm not so sure about this spore drive shit. If the NCC-1701 *Enterprise* was indeed [launched in 2245](#), its existence would blatantly overlap with *Discovery*'s, now wouldn't it? I don't actually care all that much, but here are a few screenshots from [Star Trek Online](#).





Note how much larger this *Crossfield*-class ship is than the *Intrepid*-class from some [120 years into the future](#). Then again, the latter was designed for “long-range exploration missions” and *Discovery* is the fleet’s flagship(?) Its “most advanced ship,” at least. The inclusion of technologies like the [holodeck](#) and the [spore drive](#) (perhaps the show’s most potent plot device,) though, are really stretching the canon timeline’s ability to accommodate them. The decision to [include the \*Discovery\*](#) as a playable, top-tier ship in *Star Trek Online* is 100% a business one, surely. I’m not here to judge, though – after all, games are about having *fun*, right? One of *Star Trek*’s ironies has always been its existence in a capitalist society as an IP within a [debatably socialist future](#). (Everybody wants to see their [own ideal socioeconomic label](#) in this future, it would seem.) “What makes *Star Trek*’s economics fundamentally different, and, in many ways, fundamentally incomprehensible to us, is that scarcity is no longer a factor,” says [Dale Franks](#). Today, though, *Star Trek* properties still require finite resources and labor to produce, and they always have. Atari spent [over \\$50 million](#) to acquire Cryptic Studios – the original developers of *Star Trek Online* – and *Discovery* supposedly cost “[\\$6-7 million per episode](#).” Though the former is free-to-play, it’s filled with microtransactions and about 5 billion different currencies. When [Star Trek.com says](#) “*Star Trek Online* is best described as a permanent *Star Trek* convention,” they’re correct: **it is full of shit to buy.**

There is also *a lot* of combat, though *Discovery* seems to have struck a healthy balance between warfare and other intrigues. It is definitely *Trek* in many ways: redshirts die without any plot consequence and all the classic character flaw tropes are represented. There is the aforementioned time loop episode with fucking Harry Mudd and even a mirror universe arc beginning with “[Despite Yourself](#),” in which the crew actually responds to their new environment and does the research required to blend in with the Terran forces. This took an ancient *Star Trek* format and actually explored a new, interesting avenue within it (the time loop episode did not.) They even change the *Discovery*’s registry on the hull to read “[ISS Discovery](#)” instead of “USS.”

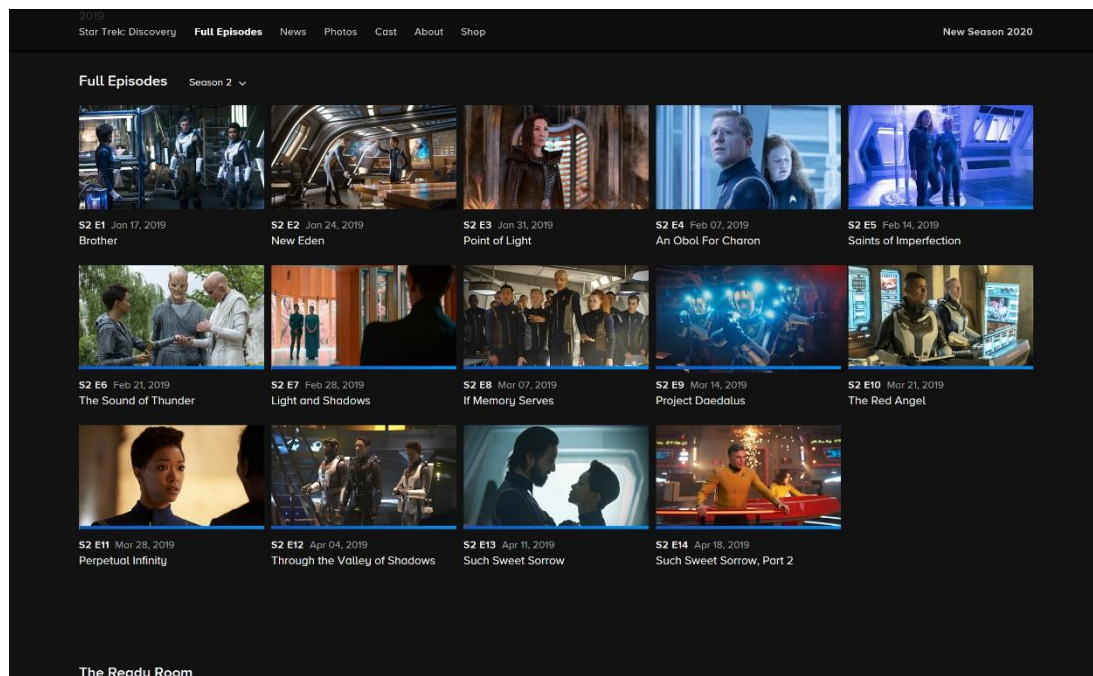


*Every moment is a test. Can you bury your heart? Can you hide your decency? Can you continue to pretend to be one of them? Even as, little by little, it kills the person you really are.*

## Complaints

There's a reason we all hate Captain Lorca, and why he says things like "[sometimes the ends justify terrible means](#)" and "[there's no way we're asking these neighbors for a cup of sugar](#)." I do not believe in Spoilers, but there's not much reason for me to tell you why, specifically. Perhaps it is racist and/or misogynist to say so, but I found it difficult to get as attached to *Discovery*'s characters as I have to those of series past. Michael is great, of course, though my girlfriend Sierra surmised that her purpose in the show is to illustrate that "nobody listens to black women." Sierra was also quite aggravated by the misunderstanding and mistreatment of the tardigrade. When Paul Stamets mentioned that his uncle Everett participated in a Beatles cover band, we both despaired, for we discovered an entry in *Memory Alpha* for "[The Beatles](#)." If I were to standardize a system of measurement for my television ratings, *Discovery*'s **cringe factor** would be 9/10. The holodeck hasn't been invented yet!

Also, CBS All Access' user interface is the worst I've ever seen from a streaming service, across iOS, desktop browser, and my Samsung television. It's impossible to scrub, really, or to dictate a preference for high definition. One cannot navigate backward between episodes without re-searching the title and navigating through an incredibly clunky menu sequence. I was able to cast to both my Samsung TV and Sierra's Chromecast from my iPhone, at least.



## Compliments

Despite its failings (including Rainn Wilson,) *Discovery*'s acting is superb. [James Frain as Sarek](#), especially, is the best of the three. I thought it was especially thoughtful that for the most part (at least in Season 1,) the Klingons *actually spoke Klingon* to each other. Given that [Dr. Marc Okrand](#) spent the time and effort to construct a fully-functional Klingon language, it seems only reasonable to include as much of it as possible. I also love [Hugh Culber](#)'s doctor's uniform and the "cinematic" cinematography of the whole thing. It's very much an action show, yet not quite obnoxious.

So, **should *Star Trek* die?** Perhaps it shows my extreme bias, but no, I do not think it need perish quite yet. From my (white, male, cishet) perspective, *Discovery* does an okay job at remaining thoroughly *Trek* whilst [acknowledging the present context's social issues](#). It remains a very capitalist enterprise and wholesomely cringey generation X cultural mastodon, but I think it's still worth our time.