

= Chakotay =

Chakotay / tʃəˈkoʊteɪ / is a fictional character who appears in each of the seven seasons of the American science fiction television series *Star Trek : Voyager* . Portrayed by Robert Beltran , he is First Officer aboard the Starfleet starship USS Voyager . The character was suggested at an early stage of the development of the series . He is the first Native American main character in the *Star Trek* franchise . This was an intended move by the producers of the series , who sought to provide an inspiration as with Uhura in *Star Trek : The Original Series* for African Americans . To develop the character , the producers sought the assistance of Jamake Highwater . Despite first being named as a Sioux , and later a Hopi , Chakotay was given no tribal affiliation at the start of the series , something that was later resolved in the episode " Tattoo " .

The character first appeared in the pilot episode of the series , " Caretaker " . The character continued to appear throughout the series in a main cast role , with his final appearance in the finale , " Endgame " . He was featured in an ongoing storyline throughout the first and second seasons which featured the betrayal of his lover Seska ( Martha Hackett ) until her death in " Basics " . Following his experience with disconnected Borg in " Unity " , Chakotay was against an alliance with the Borg in " Scorpion " , nearly leading to the death of Seven of Nine ( Jeri Ryan ) . Despite this , by the end of the series , the two characters were in a romantic relationship together . In the *Voyager* relaunch novels set after the vessel 's return to the Alpha Quadrant , Chakotay is promoted to Captain of the ship but the relationship with Seven is ended .

Reviewers of Chakotay were critical of the stereotypical nature of Chakotay 's Native American heritage . This led to comparisons with Tonto from *The Lone Ranger* , and that the inclusion of " Hollywood " versions of vision quests and meditation techniques were contrary to the character 's in @-@ universe tribal background . However , he was praised as a role model for Native American science fiction and called " ground @-@ breaking " , as well as the most prominent example of a Native American character within this genre .

= = Concept and development = =

The inclusion of a Native American character in *Star Trek : Voyager* was suggested at an early stage in the development of the series . The producers were looking for an ethnic background which had not been seen before as a main character in the franchise . It was hoped that a Native American character would prove to be an inspiration in the same way that the appearance of Uhura in *Star Trek : The Original Series* later inspired Whoopi Goldberg and other African Americans . Executive producer Jeri Taylor said , " It seemed to us that Native Americans needed that same kind of role model and that same kind of boost ... the future looks good , you have purpose , you have worth , you have value , you will be leaders , you will be powerful . That was one character choice we had early on . " Taylor 's notes from the early production in July 1993 describe the character as " First Officer ? a human native American male , a ' Queequeg ' person who has renounced Earth and lives as an expatriate on another planet . A mystical , mysterious man with whom the Captain has some prior connection , not explained . " A month later , this description was expanded with the line , " This man has made another choice ? to re @-@ enter the world of Starfleet . " Chakotay was not the first Native American character to appear in the franchise , with " The Paradise Syndrome " in the third season of *Star Trek : The Original Series* showing a group of displaced humans following a Native @-@ American @-@ like culture .

The producers aimed to develop some conflict between the members of the crew to produce a scenario similar to the Bajoran / Starfleet relationship seen in *Star Trek : Deep Space Nine* , but wanted the characters to share the same ideals . To do this , the Maquis were created ? a group of Federation colonists from the Cardassian border in a disputed territory who were joined by some Starfleet officers who joined them to fight for their rights . The producers had the Maquis introduced in other *Star Trek* series before *Voyager* in four episodes ; two in *Star Trek : The Next Generation* and two in *Deep Space Nine* . It was a deliberate reference to the political situation in the West Bank .

In developing Chakotay , the producers sought the assistance of Jamake Highwater , a writer of more than 25 books of both fiction and nonfiction related to Native American myths and traditions . Highwater was a controversial choice of advisor , having been exposed by Hank Adams and Vine Deloria , Jr. as taking a fake Native American ancestry to sell books . Around September 21 , 1993 , Highwater gave seven pages of notes to producers regarding Chakotay 's backstory , but his tribal ancestry was unresolved . By the end of that month , Michael Piller drafted the first version of the writer 's bible for the series in which the character was named " Chakotoy " . By the time Piller wrote the first draft of the story that eventually became the Voyager pilot " Caretaker " , the character was known as " Chakotay " and been made a Sioux . By the third draft of the story , submitted at the start of November , he had become a Hopi , but by the following February , he once again had no tribal affiliation .

Winrich Kolbe , the director of " Caretaker " , was involved in casting the main cast for the series . He described the casting process for the part of Chakotay as difficult due to the lower numbers of Native Americans who were in the Screen Actors Guild . The casting process came down to two actors , and the producers decided on Robert Beltran , who until then was best known for appearing in the soap opera Models Inc. and was of Mexican heritage . Beltran was not familiar with Star Trek before auditioning , and went along on the strength of the " Caretaker " script which showed the character becoming the second in command of Voyager after both their vessels are stranded in the Delta quadrant . Beltran explained the audition experience , " I felt neutral about the audition , didn 't much care one way or the other . I went in the first time and wasn 't really trying to get the part . They asked to see me again , and they wanted to see more of an edge to the character . "

Chakotay was originally written as a " calm , stoic " character , but Beltran expanded on the character during the audition process , something that Kolbe credited him for . The writer 's bible described Chakotay as a very traditional Native American with an altar and traditional art in his quarters . It also mentioned his spirit guide , something which was picked up in the media report in TV Guide . Beltran wore a facial tattoo whilst playing Chakotay , which was applied with make @-@ up . This earned him comparisons to boxer Mike Tyson after the latter gained a facial tattoo . The design was created by Michael Westmore , who deliberately created it so it did not represent any particular tribal culture . The in @-@ universe story of the tattoo and Chakotay 's tribal origins were explained in the episode " Tattoo " .

Beltran gained the reputation on @-@ set as a comedian . Following the first season and during a group interview with The Washington Times , Beltran joked that he was asked to perform in Hamlet during the summer in Albuquerque , but had been asked to wear Chakotay 's facial tattoo . During that time he worked on the Oliver Stone film Nixon ( 1995 ) . During the period when Voyager was run by Taylor and Piller as the executive producers , Beltran gave feedback on the character which was taken into account . He later explained that this ended following the introduction of Jeri Ryan as Seven of Nine onto the cast and Brannon Braga taking over from Taylor and Piller . Beltran felt that Chakotay was one of the characters alongside Harry Kim , Tuvok , and Neelix who were left behind by the new writers , who tended to concentrate on Janeway , Seven , and The Doctor .

Beltran said that he was not aware of the effects of the interactions this was having with the crew , and described the situation , saying , " for me it was like , ' OK , you can fire me if you want to . Go ahead , and I 'll leave . ' " He compared his experience on Voyager to working in a car factory , and said that the repetitive scenes meant that it limited his creativity . Beltran explained that it did not affect his relationship with the other actors , and in the end , he felt the producers decided to keep him on the cast as it did not make " very much difference , except to a very , very small percentage of fans who maybe didn 't like what I said . "

In an interview to publicise the final episode of Voyager , " Endgame " , Beltran said , " We all had a great relationship with each other and we 've all said how much we enjoy our crew . We have a terrific crew . But at the same time , I 'm looking forward to what 's next . It 's exciting to know that something unknown is next . " The final episode introduced a romance between Seven of Nine and Chakotay . Ryan found this confusing for the characters , as although it had been suggested in the episode " Human Error " , the producers told the pair to forget about the relationship in the in @-@ between episodes until the finale .

= = Appearances = =

= = = Background = = =

Chakotay 's backstory was explained during the course of Star Trek : Voyager . He was born in 2329 on a Federation colony near Cardassian space in the demilitarized zone . While young , he was looked after by his grandfather . At the age of 15 , Chakotay visited Earth with his father , who sought to find his tribe 's ancestral home in Central America and the descendants of the Rubber Tree People . He was resistant to this , and instead dreamed of going into space and had heroes such as John Kelly , a pioneering astronaut in the early 21st century . He chose to enter Starfleet Academy against his father 's wishes , and his entry was sponsored by Captain Sulu . [ A ] He attended Starfleet Academy from 2344 to 2348 , where he engaged in the sport of boxing . After graduating , he was assigned to a starship . One of his earliest away missions resulted in a diplomatic incident on Ktaria VII , and he was also on the team that made first contact with the Tarkannans .

He was assigned as an instructor in Starfleet 's Advanced Tactical Training and achieved the rank of lieutenant commander . Following the death of his father in 2368 while defending his colony from the Cardassians , Chakotay resigned his Starfleet commission and joined the Maquis . At the time of his resignation , one of his students was Ro Laren . After he joined the Maquis , he became captain of a vessel named the Val Jean , with a crew which among others included his lover Seska ( Martha Hackett ) , B 'Elanna Torres ( Roxann Dawson ) , and Tuvok ( Tim Russ ) .

= = = Star Trek : Voyager = = =

= = = = The Kazon and Seska = = = =

In the pilot episode of Voyager , while the crew on the Val Jean seek to evade a Cardassian vessel captained by Gul Evek ( Richard Poe ) in the Badlands , the vessel is transported some 70 @,@ 000 light years across the galaxy into the Delta Quadrant by the creature known as the Caretaker . After the Federation starship USS Voyager is also trapped in the Delta Quadrant and Tuvok was revealed to be a Starfleet agent , Chakotay agrees with Captain Kathryn Janeway ( Kate Mulgrew ) to work together to find two of their missing crew . Following an attack by the Kazon , Chakotay destroyed the Val Jean to save Voyager and the Maquis crew joined the Federation ship . Chakotay was given a provisional rank of commander and named executive officer , the second @-@ in @-@ command of the vessel and the crew seeks to return home to the Alpha Quadrant .

The Kazon continue to be a hindrance during Voyager 's initial period in the Delta Quadrant , with Chakotay dismayed in " State of Flux " when Seska is revealed as a Cardassian spy who has been providing technology to the Kazon to seek an alliance . She escapes Voyager and sides with the Kazon @-@ Nistrim , one of the factions within that species . Chakotay is rendered brain dead , but is made into a disembodied spirit able to possess other crewmembers in " Cathexis " . The incident occurs while Tuvok and he were investigating a dark matter nebula , and he sought to prevent the ship from returning there , as an alien species wants to feed on the crew 's neural energy . After Voyager enters the nebula , Chakotay possesses Neelix ( Ethan Phillips ) and guides the ship out using a medicine wheel as a map . Shortly afterwards , The Doctor ( Robert Picardo ) is able to restore Chakotay 's mind into his body . At the end of the first season , Chakotay supported Tuvok 's aim of helping the former Maquis crew adapt better to life on Voyager in " Learning Curve " , by showing them the enforcement techniques of the Maquis .

In the second season episode " Tattoo " , Chakotay meets with an alien race who influenced the ancestors of his tribe . They perceived Voyager as a threat because they had thought his people had been wiped out . He was able to resolve the problem using the teachings of his father . The

Kazon returned and attacked Voyager in " Maneuvers " , where they stole a transporter control module . Chakotay took it upon himself to retrieve the device , recognising that Seska was behind it . He managed to destroy it , but was captured and tortured by the Kazon in the process . He was rescued by Voyager , and shortly afterwards , he was contacted by Seska , who informed him that she had impregnated herself with his DNA . In " Resolutions " , Chakotay and Janeway are infected with a virus which requires them to quarantine themselves on a nearby planet . The two began to show signs of affection for each other , but their stay is short @-@ lived after Voyager under the captaincy of Tuvok agrees a deal with the Vidlians for a cure . The pair agree to return to the status quo on Voyager , but remain good friends .

Chakotay was contacted by Seska in " Basics " to say that his son had been born , and the Kazon were threatening to condemn her to the life of a slave . Voyager attempted to extract Seska and the child , but it was a trap and resulted in the Kazon boarding the vessel and stranding the Federation / Maquis crew on a nearby planet . While Tom Paris ( Robert Duncan McNeil ) , The Doctor , and Lon Suder ( Brad Dourif ) , along with allied Talaxian forces , sought to retake Voyager , Chakotay was instrumental in the crew 's survival on the planet . He saved Kes ( Jennifer Lien ) from a local tribe , and built an alliance with them . The crew retook Voyager , and in the process Seska was killed . The child was discovered not to be Chakotay 's , but instead a Cardassian / Kazon hybrid and the son of the Kazon @-@ Nistram leader First Maje Culluh ( Anthony De Longis ) .

== == Entering Borg space == ==

The first indication that Voyager was approaching Borg space was shown in the episode " Unity " . While investigating a Federation distress call in a shuttlecraft , Chakotay was injured by the natives of a planet . Another group saves him , and Chakotay discovers that the colonists are former Borg whose access to the main hive @-@ mind was disrupted . He is linked to a local hive @-@ mind to help him to heal , and after being returned to Voyager , he is forced against his will to reactivate the colonists ' former Borg Cube . Chakotay is released from the new " cooperative " after the Cube self @-@ destructs , leaving the planet with a hive @-@ mind separate from the main collective . Chakotay is captured by the Voth scientist Gegen ( Henry Woronicz ) in " Distant Origin " , who is seeking to prove his hypothesis that the Voth came from Earth . When Gegen is placed on trial by his people , Chakotay seeks to argue in his defense . Ultimately , Gegen is forced to back down to save Voyager after the Voth threaten to destroy the vessel . Before they depart , Chakotay gives a model globe of the Earth to Gegen as a present .

His experience with the disconnected Borg resulted in Chakotay being against a plan to ally with the Borg against Species 8472 in " Scorpion " , causing conflict between Captain Janeway and him . The alliance results in Seven of Nine and a number of other Borg drones being placed on Voyager and Janeway injured . Although he was ordered to continue with the alliance , Chakotay seeks to renegotiate the alliance , but Seven refuses any changes . When she opens a rift to Fluidic Space , Chakotay decompresses the cargo bay , sending all the Borg drones out into space with the exception of Seven . Later , when the Borg attempt to double @-@ cross Voyager , Chakotay activates his localised neural link , confusing Seven and allowing Torres to disable her link to the Collective permanently .

During the " Year of Hell " , Chakotay is captured by the Krenim scientist Annorax ( Kurtwood Smith ) on a Time Ship . The two first attempt to work together as Annorax agrees to restore the now damaged Voyager if Chakotay complies with his demands . After Annorax wipes out a species , though , he helps to disable the ship , allowing Captain Janeway to destroy it by ramming Voyager into it . This results in the timeline being reset , and the events of the episode were undone . In " Unforgettable " , he falls in love with Kellin ( Virginia Madsen ) , a member of a xenophobic race who have developed a technology to prevent others from forming long @-@ term memories of them . As such , he is informed that they were previously in love when she was on Voyager a month earlier , and rekindle their relationship despite Chakotay not remembering the earlier encounter . Another member of her race removes Kellin 's memories of Chakotay and installs a virus to remove all records of their race . Chakotay takes to writing out his memories of Kellin on paper so that he will

not forget them .

He was placed in command of Voyager after Seven was captured by the Borg in " Dark Frontier " and destroyed a transwarp conduit . Chakotay is later one of the members of the crew who were captured by Borg children in " Collective " and was saved after Seven 's intervention . Initially , Chakotay and Seven did not get along , but he would come to realise that he was mistaken in that opinion . Towards the end of the seventh season in " Human Error " , Seven simulates a relationship with Chakotay on the holodeck . A Borg implant was preventing her from feeling strong emotions without any physical ill effects , which prevented her from seeking a romantic relationship with the real Chakotay . By the time of the series finale , " Endgame " , The Doctor had managed to remove the implant , allowing Seven to pursue a relationship with Chakotay . The alternative future seen at the start of the episode showed that Seven and Chakotay were eventually married , but she died while Voyager was still travelling home . Chakotay died following Voyager 's return , and Admiral Janeway visits his grave marker in that episode . This future was undone by the future Janeway travelling back in time to Voyager to return it to Earth sooner .

= = = Voyager relaunch novels = = =

In the noncanonical Voyager relaunch novels , written by Christie Golden , Chakotay is promoted after the ship returns to Federation space , and becomes Captain of Voyager . He and Seven of Nine break off their relationship . In Old Wounds , the first of the Spirit Walk two @-@ book series , the crew goes on their maiden cruise under Captain Chakotay and is joined by his sister , Sekaya , who 's become a spiritual leader in their tribe . In the second book , Enemy of my Enemy , Chakotay is replaced by a Founder who was previously pretending to be his first officer . Meanwhile , the real Chakotay and his sister are being held by a deranged Cardassian doctor , forcing Chakotay to undergo a spirit walk to save them both .

Janeway and Chakotay became romantically involved after their return from the Delta Quadrant , and following her death after her assimilation by the Borg in the Star Trek : The Next Generation novel Before Dishonor , Chakotay resigns his commission and Afsarah Eden becomes the new Captain of Voyager . However , in the very next novel by Kirsten Beyer , Unworthy , Eden is promoted to fleet commander and Chakotay is restored as captain of Voyager .

= = Reception = =

Some criticism was directed at Chakotay 's character development during the series . James Lileks for the Star Tribune said that " Chakotay , the rock @-@ solid First Officer , remained rock @-@ solid " , but also suggested that " [ a ] ll of the characters ended the series as they began . "

Critics commented on the relationship between Janeway and Chakotay , with psychologist Richard Borofsky 's views published in The Boston Herald . He suggesting that by several seasons into Voyager , Chakotay had come to terms with his feelings for his Captain , but she was hesitant about entering into a relationship with a member of her crew . For the relationship to work in the future , it was said that Chakotay should not try to lead the relationship and Janeway needed to be more vulnerable . Following the end of Star Trek : Enterprise , the romance between Chakotay and Janeway was described in The Chicago Tribune as the one most wanted to be seen on screen in any of the Star Trek series , but that " it never panned out . Dang ! " Chakotay 's relationship with Seven was also commented on , and both UGO and io9 complained that the relationship appeared at random .

= = = Themes = = =

Chakotay 's inclusion in the main cast of Voyager was seen by critics as one of several who was used to highlight the diversity within the series . This was highlighted during the episode " Faces " in which one scene showed Janeway , Tuvok , Harry Kim , and Chakotay in a single camera pan . Chakotay 's individual position was that he was " continually positioned as an exotic native other in

relation to the white female Captain Janeway " , and was used to " help the white protagonist and progress the internal narrative . "

The placement of a character of indigenous peoples descent in science fiction was highlighted in the media . Drew Hayden Taylor said that Chakotay was " [ p ] erhaps the most well @-@ known " . Of Chakotay 's origin , he said , " They never actually say what nation he is , but I do believe it 's some Central American tribe . " Hayden Taylor wrote in a later article in 2012 describing the rise of Native American characters in the Twilight film series that Chakotay was still the sole popular example of a Native American character in science fiction . Chakotay was also described as " the only First Nations role model around in a futuristic setting " in the 2005 book , " Indian " Stereotypes in TV Science Fiction : First Nations ' Voices Speak Out , but was also referred to as the " quintessential Tonto in outer space " . A similar criticism was highlighted of the character in Medicine Bags and Dog Tags : American Indian Veterans from Colonial Times to the Second Iraq War ( 2008 ) , which called Chakotay " a creature of white fantasies " and suggested that he was " far more stereotypical than Tonto " as " at least Tonto was heroic and saved the Lone Ranger once in awhile " .

Although religion was referenced during the Star Trek franchise , such as in the Star Trek : The Original Series episode " Who Mourns for Adonais ? " , it did not take a more prominent role until later in the series , with Star Trek : Deep Space Nine exploring the Bajorans ' beliefs and Voyager concentrating on those of Chakotay . These included vision quests , and other interpretation of Native American culture which were described by critics as showing a " very Hollywood version of Plains @-@ culture religion " .

The appearance of a medicine wheel in the episode " Cathexis " was described by Sierra S. Adare as showing Chakotay in the " ' good Indian ' in the classic Pocahontas sense " . Chakotay is seen attempting to introduce rituals and meditation techniques to other crew members , something they failed to understand . These were said to be contrary to the tribal history described in " Tattoo " , which was said to say that Chakotay 's tribe descended from a pre @-@ Mayan culture in Central America . Adare attributed this to Euro @-@ American / European writers writing inaccurate information into scripts . However , the appearance of the character was described as " groundbreaking " .