

= Space Race ( Archer ) =

" Space Race " is the two @-@ part season finale of the third season of the animated comedy series Archer . It consists of the twelfth and thirteenth episodes of the season , which were initially broadcast in the United States on FX on March 15 and March 22 , 2012 , respectively . In the installment , Commander Anthony Drake ( Bryan Cranston ) urges the field agents of ISIS to travel onto the spacecraft Horizon to aid in ceasing any attacks . After entering and defeating the resistant " mutineers " , the field agents are eventually kidnapped by Drake and his aggregation , whose real objective is to colonize and populate the humans on Mars .

" Space Race " , which was written and directed by series creator Adam Reed , is a parody of the 1979 spy film Moonraker , the eleventh film of the James Bond cinema franchise . Additionally , the episode is instilled with multiple references to science fiction cinema , including the popular films Aliens , The Right Stuff , and Star Wars Episode IV , as well as political events such as the Cold War 's space exploration competition between the Soviet Union and the United States . Cranston guest starred in the program , alongside actor Dave Willis , who reprised his role as recurring antagonist Barry Dylan .

" Space Race : Part I " received overwhelmingly positive reviews from critics , who praised the episode 's humor and character developments . Although it acquired positive critiques from commentators , the humor and general execution of " Space Race : Part II " was deemed inferior to its predecessor . " Space Race : Part I " garnered 1 @.@ 157 million viewers during its initial airing , while " Space Race : Part II " attained 1 @.@ 33 million viewers upon airing , consequently becoming the most viewed episode of Archer 's third season .

= = Plot = =

= = = Part I = = =

The international space station Horizon sends a distress signal to the ISIS agency , stating that the spaceship has been under attack . Anthony Drake ( Bryan Cranston ) , the commander of the station , has urged ISIS to assist the crew in controlling the situation . A reluctant Lana Kane ( Aisha Tyler ) is the first one to voice concern over the issue , as none of them have undergone training in preparation for a flight . Despite these concerns , Malory Archer ( Jessica Walter ) is quick to take the job for financial gain . The field agents of ISIS ? except Sterling Archer ( H. Jon Benjamin ) , who is being evaluated by Doctor Algernop Krieger ( Lucky Yates ) for medical purposes ? are subjected to basic astronaut regimens in anticipation for the flight , including a flight simulator ( which Archer makes Cyril crash ) , and weightlessness training , which causes Lana to vomit copiously because of the lack of gravity .

ISIS is forced to quit mission training due to time constraints . After the space shuttle Intrepid exits out of the Earth 's atmosphere , Drake introduces them to the blueprints of Horizon , which is overrun with so @-@ called " mutineers " . Drake 's plan is to fight past the mutineers and link up with his men on the bridge . The group is aided with an M41A pulse rifle , which is set into two modes : on kill mode , the weapon fires lethal plasma ammunition , while the weapon serves as a tranquilizer on stun mode . Indeed , stun mode can potentially initiate cardiac arrest , as proven when Archer accidentally shoots Cyril Figgis ( Chris Parnell ) , who is later revived after defibrillation . The trajectory of the shuttle is off course from Horizon , which is later found to be caused by Cheryl Tunt ( Judy Greer ) and Pam Poovey ( Amber Nash ) , who are being harbored in cargo . Archer is then put on probation in the hold , after shooting Pam with his pulse rifle . As the Intrepid lands on a port on the Horizon , Lana , Cyril , and Ray Gillette ( Adam Reed ) enter into the spacecraft with Drake . Being overwhelmed by the number of mutineers , Archer later joins their endeavors after being released by Pam . The party successfully makes it to the bridge , where it is revealed that Drake and his men are the real mutineers , and his real plan was to lure Lana onto the station to become breeding stock for the colonization of Mars .

## == Part II ==

Archer , Lana , Ray , and Cyril are subsequently kidnapped by Commander Drake and his aggregation , after finding out that his main intent was to terraform Mars . Meanwhile , Drake sends some of his crew to search for Pam , Cheryl , and Malory ? who are waiting in the Intrepid . In the holding , Lana takes off her suit in order to distract the guard with her breasts . While successfully at distracting the guard , he later activates the security breach . After escaping from their holding , the group encounter a group of scientists , who inform them that Drake 's men are making their way into the Intrepid to launch towards Mars . As Cheryl allures Drake with her self @-@ proclaimed " Martian queen " persona , Pam takes him hostage , holding a pulse rifle to his head .

After the ISIS agents reunite and Drake 's mutinous crew agrees to surrender in order to prevent his death , Drake has a mental breakdown , declaring humanity to be doomed and killing himself with Pam 's rifle . Cyril , startled by the sudden gunfire , opens fire himself , killing three people ( one of whom was the only capable pilot of the shuttle other than Drake ) . To worsen the situation , Barry Dylan ( Dave Willis ) challenges Archer to fight him in space . Despite the rigorous taunting and demeaning from Barry , Archer ultimately declines his offer . After Archer makes an act of humility , Cyril aims the launches at Barry 's jet , subsequently stranding him on Horizon . As the group nears the airstrip , Archer , who wishes to take credit for the landing , messes with the steering shift , causing the spacecraft to crash . Afterwards , every ISIS agent except for Archer is shown to be injured as a result , especially Ray , who is now paralyzed from the waist down ( which he ironically had pretended to be earlier in the season ) .

## == Production ==

" Space Race " was written and directed by Archer creator Adam Reed . American actor Bryan Cranston guest starred in " Space Race " as Commander Drake , an industrious and fastidious astronaut whose main objective is to fight in order to " quell a mutiny on the space platform " . Cranston 's appearance was formally announced by series creator Adam Reed in January 2012 , while being interviewed by The Huffington Post . While Reed didn 't reveal much on the background of the installment , he teased : " I love it when everybody gets to go [ on a mission ] , so a lot more people than you would think get to go to outer space . "

" Space Race " is imbued with various references relating to music , cinema , media , and other popular culture entities . The episode title gives homage to the synonymously named era of space exploration between the Soviet Union and the United States , which coincided during the Cold War . The episode plot gives homage to the James Bond film Moonraker ( 1979 ) . In preparation for the mission , the field agents at ISIS undergo an extensive training regimen similar to the exercise in The Right Stuff ( 1983 ) . In addition , the episode 's narrative is evocative to that of the aforementioned film , as well as the British horror film 28 Days Later ( 2002 ) . To Jesse Carp of Cinema Blend , the characters " drops weird name references " to figures such as American eugenist Charles Davenport and Grace O 'Malley . After main character Sterling Archer is sent into the space brig , he crafts an ode to The Great Escape ( 1963 ) .

As the second part of " Space Race " commenced , Carp asserted that Drake 's opening dialogue was nostalgic of a villainous character from the James Bond film series , particularly Hugo Drax . " ' SR : P2 ' tried to clear up this flimsy plot point from ' P1 ' during the opening ' Bond villain ' like speech from Drake , " the Cinema Blend writer iterated , " where he proclaims in a Thank You For Smoking ? esque throwaway line that Lana was the perfect and only candidate for the project . " In one of Barry 's first appearances on the space station , he is taunting " Archer , come out to play " , while banging beer bottles together , directly referencing David Patrick Kelly 's Luthor in The Warriors . The design of the spaceship emulates the iconic designs of aircraft from varying films ; the trash compactors were modeled after the Star Wars universe , while the robots were reminiscent to those in the 1986 film Aliens . As Cheryl declares herself as the " Martian queen " , she creates and sports a costumes that closely resembles Björk 's swan dress .

= = Reception = =

= = = Ratings = = =

" Space Race : Part I " was originally broadcast on March 16 , 2012 in the United States on FX . Upon airing , the episode attained 1 @.@ 157 million viewers and a 0 @.@ 7 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , indicating that 0 @.@ 7 % of spectators between ages 18 and 49 who watched television viewed the episode . It garnered the twentieth highest ratings among the 18 ? 49 group out of any cable program of the day , according to the Nielsen Media Research , tying with television programs such as The Daily Show on Comedy Central and Family Guy on Adult Swim . Ratings and total viewership for the episode showed significant increases from the previous installment , " Skin Game " , which acquired 1 @.@ 04 million viewers and a 0 @.@ 5 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic . " Space Race : Part II " aired the following week on March 23 , 2012 . Ratings and total viewership considerable increased from its predecessor ; 1 @.@ 326 million spectators watched the episode during its initial airing . Concurrently , it obtained a 0 @.@ 8 rating in the 18 ? 49 demographic , thereby becoming the eighth highest @-@ rated cable program of the night .

= = = Critical response = = =

Commentators commended the first half of " Space Race " . The A.V. Club columnist Todd VanDerWerff approved of several aspects of the episode ? mainly its animation , character development , and dialogue . In his A grade review , VanDerWerff felt that the producers were playful with the concepts of space . " Archer , of course , takes place in a weird blend of past and present , " he professed , " but ' Space Race ' goes out of its way to toss ' future ' into the middle of that mix as well . There are so many jokes that come just from the characters hanging out in anti @-@ gravity , for God 's sake , including a ping pong paddle strategically covering Pam 's breasts . " Commenting on the program 's animation , The A.V. Club journalist thought that its emphasis on the convergence of various science fiction techniques resulted in aesthetically pleasing visuals . VanDerWerff stated , " Everything about this one gleams , and it makes for an Archer that will almost certainly look great in HD . " Furthermore , he adulated the episode 's dialogue , avouching that even the characters with very limited screen time were given opportunities to shine with humor . Although Marcos Canales of Screen Invasion opined that " Space Race : Part I " contained far too many one @-@ liners and jokes , he praised the storyline and was keen to the character progression of Lana . " Usually , she ? s the best agent ISIS has and can do pretty much anything , " explained Canales , " so putting her in a situation where she was not a bad ass gave the character some added depth which is something most animated shows don ? t prioritize . " Cinema Blend 's Jesse Carp ? despite criticizing the show 's " nonsensical " narrative ? declared it to be hilarious .

Despite positive assessments , " Space Race : Part II " produced more variety within critical opinion . In his " commendable " 8 @.@ 6 out of ten rating review , Ross Bonaime of Paste asserted that the program displayed some exceptional dimension into the characters ? from Lana 's apparent self @-@ consciousness , to Cheryl 's eccentric and " odd " persona , and Krieger 's past . Ultimately , Bonaime professed that " Space Race : Part II " was slightly inferior to its predecessor ; " ' Space Race , Part II ' doesn ? t have some of the big laughs that the first part featured . By that , I mean Archer never rode Cyril through waves of Lana ? s puke joyously . It is a step down from the first part comedically , but the episode does give us a few fun moments for each member of the cast . " Analogous sentiments were echoed by Blair Marnell of CraveOnline , who concluded : " The space adventure had some fun moments , but it seemed to lack the punch provided by the two episodes that proceeded it . Even though it was good to see Barry again this season , his appearance in this episode seemed pretty tacked on . " VanDerWerff affirmed that the episode was a superb conclusion to Archer 's third season , despite not being as " relentlessly entertaining " as " Space Race : Part I " . While deeming the episode as a hilarious finale , TV Overmind writer Kevin

Fitzpatrick claimed that " Space Race : Part II " left many unanswered questions to the audience . Conversely , Eric Hochberger of TV Fanatic applauded the episode , issuing it a 4 @. @ 7 out of 5 stars . " Archer ended its third season tonight with the conclusion to its two part episode , ' Space Race ' . And , man , from the second Archer announced he left his light saber in his other space pants , you knew you were in for a solid ending . "

Cranston 's performance was a frequent topic in the critiques . Even prior to the airing of the episode , James Hibberd of Entertainment Weekly suggested that the actor 's voice would be perfect for an animated television series . VanDerWerff and Carp were amongst the journalists who issued favorable assessments of Cranston 's acting . Carp noted that " Cranston 's work is even more impressive when you consider that he not only plays the hero and villain but manages to be funny as both . " In addressing " Part II " , Carp concluded that " as early as the stunning end of the world sequence , the actor plants the hint of suppressed craziness in Spaceman Drake and it was soon obvious that the just crew would not only be manning a mission to help him combat the mutineers but probably get wrapped up in this nut 's dream to terra form Mars . " For VanDerWerff , " Cranston is the very best kind of guest voice , fully inhabiting his character but also having a lot of fun with the jokes . It ? s a nice reminder of just how funny Cranston can be , and I hope he gets even more bizarre stuff to do next week . " Jonah Gardner of Ology later said , " Bryan Cranston remains a god among men . "