

= Zero Hour (Star Trek : Enterprise) =

" Zero Hour " is the twenty @-@ fourth and final episode of the third season of the American science fiction television series Star Trek : Enterprise ; the seventy @-@ seventh episode overall . It first aired on May 26 , 2003 , on the UPN network within the United States . Set in the 22nd century , the series follows the adventures of the first Starfleet starship , Enterprise , registration NX @-@ 01 . Season three of Enterprise features an ongoing story following an attack on Earth by previously unknown aliens called the Xindi .

In this episode , Sub @-@ Commander T 'Pol leads the Enterprise on an attack on ' Sphere 41 ' in an attempt to destroy the sphere network within the Delphic Expanse . Meanwhile , a team led by Captain Jonathan Archer has infiltrated the Xindi weapon while it is en route to Earth . Both the spheres and the weapon are destroyed , but Archer is lost , presumed dead . Enterprise returns to Earth but the crew suddenly find that they have been sent back in time to a very different Second World War .

The episode was written by series co @-@ creators Rick Berman and Brannon Braga and was directed by Allan Kroeker . The episode took eight days to film and included a larger guest cast than normal for episodes of Enterprise , as well as two competition winners . The twist at the end of " Zero Hour " was originally conceived by the writers as a joke , but was developed over the course of the third season to become the concept of " alien Nazis " . This twist was further explained and resolved in the season four two @-@ part opener " Storm Front " . Roughly 3 @.@ 91 million viewers watched " Zero Hour " on first broadcast .

= = Plot = =

Sub @-@ Commander T 'Pol orders Enterprise to ' Sphere 41 ' , in an attempt to destroy the entire sphere network . They arrive to find that the Sphere Builders have created a distortion field around it . Doctor Phlox determines that 12 ? 15 minutes exposure will kill the crew . Undeterred , Commander Tucker modifies the deflector dish so that it can be used to destroy the sphere . As they approach , two Guardians arrive and begin damaging the ship 's systems , but they cannot prevent its destruction . It implodes , setting off a chain reaction that successfully destroys the rest of the spheres , ending all spatial anomalies in the region .

Meanwhile Captain Archer , accompanied by Lieutenant Reed , Ensign Sato , and a team of MACOs , enters the vortex created by the Xindi weapon . During the pursuit , a recovering Sato is pushed by Archer to decipher Degra 's schematics . Again Archer is suddenly pulled into the future by Temporal Agent Daniels , this time to the founding of the United Federation of Planets , but Archer is again uninterested . Arriving near Earth , Archer receives an unexpected transmission from Commander Shran , who engages and then destroys the Reptilian ship . In the chaos , Archer and his team are able to beam aboard the weapon . A fierce fire @-@ fight ensues , and as Archer and Sato try to disable the weapon , Commander Dolim attempts to stop them . He fails and the weapon is destroyed .

Sato and Reed return to Enterprise with the sad news that Archer did not make it off the weapon . Ferried on an Aquatic ship , Enterprise then returns to Earth , but they are unable to contact Starfleet . Surprised , T 'Pol orders Tucker and Ensign Mayweather to fly a shuttlepod down to San Francisco , where they are suddenly attacked by what seem to be P @-@ 51s . The final scene switches to a World War II German field @-@ hospital . A doctor summons some SS officers to examine the unfamiliar uniform of a burns patient who was recently brought in . The patient is revealed as Archer . One of the SS personnel steps out of the shadows , revealing himself to be a gray @-@ skinned alien .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing and story = = =

" Zero Hour " was the culmination of a season @-@ long storyline first introduced by the events of " The Expanse " , wherein an alien race called the Xindi attacks Earth and kills seven million people . During the course of the third season , the Enterprise went into the previously unexplored Delphic Expanse to search for the Xindi and to prevent a further attack which will destroy Earth . Executive producer and writer Brannon Braga felt that the end of the season in a three @-@ part arc composed of " The Council " , " Countdown " and " Zero Hour " , which he compared to three acts of the same story . The episode was written by Braga alongside Rick Berman . The duo were the co @-@ creators of Star Trek : Enterprise .

The idea that Enterprise would be successful in its mission was planned from the start of the development of the year @-@ long storyline . However , the producers and writing team would joke that there would be a " bizarre twist " such as the crew returning to Earth and discovering that it was now ruled by giant cockroaches . The writers decided against a Xindi @-@ based cliffhanger and sought an unusual twist . Braga said that " I can 't remember who said ' Nazis , ' but we just somehow ended up with Nazis . Then that didn 't even feel like enough , so we decided to make them alien Nazis . " He expected it would make the returning episode in season four " really interesting " , and wanted to end the series on something " wacky " . Most of the cast were not given the final few pages of the script until they were already in production . Actor Dominic Keating , who portrays Malcolm Reed on Enterprise , called the ending a " lovely twist ... that just makes you scratch your head and wonder at what you 've just seen . " The twist was wrapped up at the start of season four with the two @-@ part episode " Storm Front " .

It was the third time that Nazis had appeared in the Star Trek franchise . The first was in the episode " Patterns of Force " in Star Trek : The Original Series , and then again on the holodeck on Star Trek : Voyager in the two @-@ part " The Killing Game " . In the episode , T 'Pol states that " Zero Hour " takes place in 2152 , a statement which contradicts other episodes . Manny Coto , executive producer and show runner for the following season , explained that this was a mistake in the script . It was later stated in the timeline published in Voyages of Imagination by Jeff Ayers that the events of " Zero Hour " took place on February 14 , 2154 , a day after the setting of the episode " Countdown " .

= = = Direction , filming and guest stars = = =

Allan Kroeker directed the episode . He had previously directed the season two closing episode " The Expanse " , and the first episode of season three , " The Xindi " . Previously in the franchise , he had directed the finale of both Star Trek : Deep Space Nine and Star Trek : Voyager . Production began on March 5 and was completed eight working days later . Because there was no ability to shoot scenes using a second unit during the production of a following episode , ten pages of script were shot on the final day of filming instead of the normal seven or eight . " Zero Hour " was the final episode of Enterprise to be shot on film stock , as for the following season , the decision was made to switch to high @-@ definition digital video .

Scott Bakula stated in an interview on The Wayne Brady Show that there were three endings to the episode filmed . This was later denied by Dominic Keating while on stage at Creation Entertainment 's Grand Slam event in Pasadena in March 2004 . He did clarify that the script for the final scene was delivered to his house in three envelopes , accompanied by a security guard with a dog . Bakula explained later during an online chat for the official Star Trek website that only one ending was ever filmed .

" Zero Hour " featured a guest and stunt cast larger than usual for episodes of Enterprise . For the final day of filming , there were 35 extras on set . The additional actors appearing in " Zero Hour " included J. Paul Boehmer , who portrayed an SS agent at the end of the episode . Boehmer had appeared several times previous in the Star Trek franchise , and his first part ever as an actor was as a holographic Nazi Captain in the Voyager episode " The Killing Game " . He had also previously appeared in Enterprise as the Vulcan Mestral in the episode " Carbon Creek " . Boehmer returned to reprise his role from " Zero Hour " during the two @-@ part " Storm Front " in season four .

In addition to the actors appearing on the episode , two members of the public made walk on appearances as Starfleet crewmen on the engineering set . These were Amy Ulen , who had won the prize on KZOK @-@ FM . She was a high school English and drama teacher . Joining her was DJ Bob Rivers from the Seattle @-@ based UPN affiliate radio station . Also appearing was Brian D 'Arcy who gained his role through a charity auction held by Wired magazine to benefit the Starbright Foundation . Ulen would later have a cameo in the fan production Star Trek : Of Gods and Men .

= = Reception = =

= = = Broadcast = = =

" Zero Hour " was first broadcast on May 26 , 2004 , on the UPN network within the United States . It was watched by 3 @. @ 91 million viewers . It received a Nielsen rating of 2 @. @ 5 / 4 percent , which meant that it was seen by 2 @. @ 5 percent of all households , and 4 percent of all households watching television at the time of the broadcast . " Zero Hour " placed UPN in fifth place in the ratings during the timeslot . The episode was first broadcast in the UK later that year on June 7 , on Sky One .

Prior to the broadcast of the finale of season three , there were rumours that the series was going to be cancelled . UPN decided to renew the series , but moved it for season four to Friday nights , and so " Zero Hour " was the final episode of Enterprise to be broadcast on a Wednesday evening .

= = = Critical reception = = =

Michael Westmore , make @-@ up supervisor on Enterprise , was nominated for Outstanding Makeup for a Series , Miniseries , Movie or a Special (Prosthetic) at the 2004 Emmy Awards for his work on " Zero Hour " . The award instead went to James McKinnon for his work on an episode of Nip / Tuck .

Michelle Erica Green , in her review for TrekNation , found the ending of the episode amusing , describing it as an " insane left hook of a cliffhanger " . She praised the character development elsewhere in the episode , but kept returning to what she described as " EVIL ALIEN NAZIS " . Jamahl Epsicokhan , at his website Jammer 's Reviews , gave the episode two and a half out of four stars . He said that the episode featured several science fiction clichés , such as having the Xindi weapon destroyed in Earth 's orbit . He said that the final scene of the episode was the " Ultimate WTF ending " and compared it to the " jarring " finale of Tim Burton 's version of the film Planet of the Apes .

In David Greven 's book , Gender and Sexuality in Star Trek , the author states that the declaration by Daniels that Reed and Hoshi were unimportant to future events meant that " racial and cultural Others were not important to the future " . But by saying that Archer was indeed required for the future to proceed as expected , it was a statement about the need for " institutional white male power " . Greven asserted that this was part of the writing on Enterprise which changed following the new political direction after the September 11 attacks , whereas the previous post @-@ Star Trek : The Next Generation series had been progressively multi @-@ cultural during the period of the Bill Clinton administration .

= = Home media release = =

The first home media release of " Zero Hour " was as part of the season three DVD box set , released in the United States on September 27 , 2005 . The Blu @-@ ray release of Enterprise was announced in early 2013 , and season three was released on January 7 , 2014 . Jay Chattaway 's music for the episode was released as part of the four disc Star Trek : Enterprise Collection on December 2 , 2014 , including the orchestral pieces " Sphere Builder On Board / Andorian Offensive / Sphere / Final Showdown " and " My Captain " .

