

= Where No Fan Has Gone Before =

" Where No Fan Has Gone Before " is the eleventh episode in the fourth season of the American animated television series Futurama . It originally aired on the Fox network in the United States on April 21 , 2002 . Set in a retro @-@ futuristic 31st century , the series follows the adventures of the employees of Planet Express , an interplanetary delivery company . In this episode , the Planet Express team and most of the main cast of Star Trek : The Original Series face a court @-@ martial after visiting the forbidden planet Omega 3 .

An existing idea to feature the cast of Star Trek : The Original Series was scrapped and replaced with a new script written by David A. Goodman , after the newly hired writer was identified as the biggest Star Trek fan on the staff . All of the main cast of The Original Series agreed to appear , with the exception of DeForest Kelley (who had died in 1999) and James Doohan , resulting in the creation of a new character called Welshie . " Where No Fan Has Gone Before " was received positively by critics , with praise directed at the various Star Trek homages . The script was nominated for a Nebula Award , losing to The Lord of the Rings : The Two Towers .

= = Plot = =

Fry learns that Star Trek has been forbidden since the show became a worldwide religion in the 2200s ; all of its fans were killed during the Star Trek Wars and the " sacred " tapes of its 79 episodes and six movies were burned , with the sole remaining copies sent to the forbidden planet Omega 3 . Outraged , Fry takes Leonard Nimoy 's head from the Head Museum and convinces Bender and Leela to join him in a mission to recover the Star Trek tapes from Omega 3 .

On Omega 3 they find several original sets from Star Trek , and most of the original cast with their bodies and eternal youth . An energy being named Mellvar appears and explains that he became an obsessed Star Trek fan after watching the dumped tapes over and over again . Mellvar gives Nimoy a body , and orders the actors and the Planet Express crew to participate in a Star Trek convention until the end of time . Welshie is killed in a show of force to force their obedience . While Mellvar forces the cast to perform his fan script , Bender , Leela and Fry escape in the Planet Express Ship . Fry convinces the crew to attack Mellvar to save the actors , but Mellvar destroys the ship 's engine as he drags it back to the planet .

After seeing the Planet Express crew 's attempt to defeat him , Mellvar wonders if they are more worthy of his adoration than the Star Trek cast , and decides to settle the question with a battle to the death . After several minutes of fighting , Mellvar 's mother appears and makes him come home for dinner . While he is gone , the two groups combine the engine of the cast 's ship with the hull of the Planet Express Ship to escape . To lose enough weight to lift off , the cast jettison their bodies . Mellvar follows the crew into space with his own ship , a Romulan Bird of Prey . Zapp Brannigan boards the Planet Express Ship and holds a court @-@ martial of the occupants for trespassing on Omega 3 . Leela points out that while the court @-@ martial is in progress Mellvar is still chasing them . Fry convinces Mellvar that he cannot spend his life watching Star Trek , and Mellvar agrees to end the chase . The crew and cast return to Earth .

= = Production = =

The writer for this episode , David A. Goodman , said that making this episode was a " dream come true " for many members of the crew including himself . At the time he was hired onto the staff , they were already talking about creating a Star Trek @-@ centric episode . The initial idea was to have a giant Kirk and Spock fighting over New York @-@ New York Hotel and Casino . Executive producer David X. Cohen assigned the writing task to Goodman , as they agreed he was the biggest Trek fan of the group . They agreed to drop the story idea with the giant characters and gave him two weeks to write the script . The deadline was complicated as Goodman had to spend the first week on jury duty , and then broke his ankle . Despite this , he described " Where No Fan Has Gone Before " as the most fun he has ever had writing a script .

Series creator Matt Groening stated that while he is a fan of the Star Trek franchise he has never seen an episode of The Original Series in entirety , but has seen Star Trek : The Motion Picture . But director Pat Shinagawa said that there was a certain amount of jealousy among the crew that she got to work on this episode . All of the living members of the original Star Trek cast agreed to appear in the episode with the exception of James Doohan , whose agent replied with " No way . " Because of this , the episode 's working title was jokingly named " We got everybody but Scotty " and so Scotty was replaced with " Welshie " . William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy recorded their lines together , which was unusual as actors usually record solo . Following his work on Futurama , Goodman went on to join the writing staff on Star Trek : Enterprise .

A number of designs for the energy being were considered for this episode ; however , the final version was decided upon due to a desire to keep the design simple . Shinagawa noted that even so , the final design for Mellvar is more sophisticated than some energy beings featured in the original series .

= = = Cultural references = = =

This episode contains many story elements based on episodes of Star Trek . In the DVD audio commentary , Goodman noted his pride in having included a large number of quotations from The Original Series , particularly those items which he claims " the people on the internet " had not found on their own . He noted that in " Shatner 's Log " , based on Star Trek 's " Captain 's log " , the line " The impossible has happened " quotes the opening log in " Where No Man Has Gone Before " .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

Although the episode was not the last episode produced for season four , it was used as the season finale for the fourth broadcast season , being broadcast on April 21 , 2002 , on Fox in the United States . The episode was subsequently nominated for a Nebula Award in 2004 for best script , but lost to the 2002 film The Lord of the Rings : The Two Towers .

Prior to the broadcast , Dusty Saunders previewed the episode for Rocky Mountain News , calling Futurama " under @-@ appreciated " and that this episode had " Lots of fun and fantasy at the expense of the noted sci @-@ fi series . " Zack Handlen , while writing for the A.V. Club , gave the episode an ' A ' grade . He said that the storyline could have been seen as " pretty mean @-@ spirited if there wasn 't such a clear thread of Trek love running through the episode " . He felt that having the framing device set during the event rather than afterwards as " delightful " , and that the Star Trek references were both " relevant to the story and funny in their own right " . Andy Wilson reviewed the episode for BigShinyRobot , calling it the " greatest animated homage to Trek ever " and " one of the best episodes of Futurama " .

IGN ranked the episode in tenth place in their list of the top 25 episodes of the series in 2006 , calling it " ultimate fan service episode " , but " one that any sci @-@ fi fan , Trekker or otherwise , can still enjoy " . The popularity of this episode combined with the large volume of Star Trek references has made this episode a touchstone among Trekkies according to Chris Baker at Wired.com. This episode , along with " Teenage Mutant Leela 's Hurdles " , was the great moments of the fourth season by David Hofstede in his book 5000 Episodes and No Commercials : The Ultimate Guide to TV Shows on DVD . " Where No Fan Has Gone Before " was included in the Volume 4 release on DVD , including several deleted scenes , which was first released on August 24 , 2004 , in the United States .