

= Sometimes a Great Notion (Battlestar Galactica) =

" Sometimes a Great Notion " is the thirteenth episode in the fourth season of the reimagined Battlestar Galactica . It aired on television on SCI FI and Space in the United States and Canada respectively on January 16 , 2009 and on Sky One in the United Kingdom on January 20 , 2009 . This episode is the first after the mid -@-@ season finale of the fourth season (" Revelations ") , which aired on June 2008 . The episode title is a reference to the novel of the same name , written by Ken Kesey . The episode was also the last to be written before the 2007 ? 2008 Writers Guild of America strike . It received a Nielsen rating of 1 @.@ 6 and was received positively throughout .

The episode continues from " Revelations " , where both the colonial fleet and the rebel Cylons finally found Earth , only to find it devastated by a nuclear holocaust at least 2 @,@ 000 years before , and the discovery leads to despair all across the fleet . The episode was not given an opening title sequence , but the survivor count for the episode was 39 @,@ 651 .

= = Plot = =

Both the Human fleet and the rebel Cylons are disillusioned after finding Earth devastated by a nuclear holocaust , which occurred at least 2 @,@ 000 years prior to the events of the episode . After research on the bodies found in the soil , the Cylons and Dr. Baltar (James Callis) conclude the remains are not Human , but Cylon in origin . The rebel Cylons further state the mechanical Cylon remains resemble older Centurions of theirs , but are of a kind unknown to them . Following this , they postulate that the Thirteenth Tribe consisted of a different kind of Cylon which existed over 2 @,@ 000 years ago and moved out from Kobol to populate Earth . When addressing the fleet , Admiral Adama (Edward James Olmos) never states this fact , leaving the fleet in the belief that the Thirteenth Tribe was human . Meanwhile , Samuel Anders (Michael Trucco) , Galen Tyrol (Aaron Douglas) and Tory Foster (Rekha Sharma) receive memories of their lives on Earth 2 @,@ 000 years ago . Kara Thrace (Katee Sackhoff) has Leoben (Callum Keith Rennie) help track the origins of the beacon . However , what they find is a crashed Colonial Viper , containing a corpse with Starbuck 's dog tags . After Kara recites what the Hybrid has told her , Leoben becomes scared and retreats , with Thrace wondering what she is . In shock , Thrace takes the body and burns it on a pyre , and decides to not tell anyone about what she found , making people believe she lost the signal .

In the fleet , President Roslin (Mary McDonnell) burns her book of Pythia , and is unable to address the fleet because of feeling that she led the fleet nowhere , and believing the prophecy is a lost cause . Lee Adama (Jamie Bamber) and Anastasia Dualla (Kandyse McClure) revisit their relationship , and after their evening together , Dualla returns to her quarters , and commits suicide . Devastated by this , Admiral Adama acquires a handgun from a Marine and attempts to coerce Tigh (Michael Hogan) into killing him , which fails . Adama breaks down relieved and converses with Tigh about past memories , and Tigh reminding Adama of his duties as commander of the fleet . Adama eventually steps back into the CIC , and makes an announcement that he will find a home for the fleet , gives instructions to search for any nearby habitable star systems , and invites their new Cylon allies to join them . As the fleet prepares to leave Earth , D 'Anna (Lucy Lawless) , devastated by the knowledge that history repeats itself endlessly , decides to remain on Earth to die , rather than being hunted by Cavil . Tigh walks into the sea and receives a flashback of his life on Earth ; He realizes that his wife , Ellen (Kate Vernon) , is the last of the Final Five Cylons . In the vision , a dying Ellen tells Tigh that " everything is in place " and that they will be " reborn , again , together " . They are then destroyed in this vision by a nuclear blast .

= = Production = =

= = Writing = =

This episode was written back @-@ to @-@ back with the Season 4 @.@ 0 episode , " Revelations . " According to co @-@ writer David Weddle , the title of episode was chosen as co @-@ writers David Weddle and Bradley Thompson outlined their story for the producers . The title is taken from the Ken Kesey novel , Sometimes a Great Notion . The book is one of Weddle 's favorites . While writing the novel , Kesey made notes in which he urged himself to make the novel 's protagonist quit living , and this became the theme of this episode as well . Weddle stated that he and the other writers were inspired by the idea of taking a strong , heroic character and piling misfortunes on him or her until finally the character breaks :

What happens in that moment ? Does he despair ? Does he get up and go on ? For me , there is no more defining moment for a character . We tried to do this with almost all the characters in this episode : [Adama] , Laura , Kara , Lee . We ripped everything out from under them then sat back to see what they would do . What were their individual breaking points ? And if they did break , would they stay broken or grope toward a recovery ?

The " fox in the river " story told by Admiral Adama comes from the novel , and also from real @-@ life incidents with wildlife swimming out to sea near Weddle 's home in Malibu , California .

The decision to have Lt. Dualla commit suicide in this episode was made after the writing staff felt there had to be fallout from discovering that Earth was a nuclear ruin . Moore explained :

There had to be a cost . There had to be a price somebody paid for that discovery . Not everybody could take that . Not everyone could just say , " OK , that didn 't work out , let 's go on to next week 's episode . " It felt like somebody would just say , " No , I 'm done . I just want to find a little moment of time where I can feel good about myself one last time , then I 'm finished with this long nightmare . " And that seemed like that would be Dualla .

Dualla fit this best because she had lost two men whom she loved , and all she had left was the hope of finding Earth . Moore also came up with the idea that Dualla 's suicide was actually an act of hope and control , not despair .

Although the network had concerns that the script was too depressing , Moore successfully defended the writing by saying that it might be the last episode of the series and that viewers who had stuck with the show for three and a half seasons would not be put off by yet another " dark " episode . Writers Weddle and Thompson considered giving the characters some leeway in interpreting what they had found . Among the options debated were giving the fleet some hope that Earth might be some other planet , allowing a character to discover a new part of the Prophecy of Pythia , giving one of the characters a vision of an Earth @-@ like planet , and placing a clue in the ruins that would direct the fleet to yet another planet . All were rejected .

Weddle and Thompson also worked extensively on the scene in which Admiral Adama tries to provoke Col. Tigh into killing him . Moore encouraged Weddle and Thompson to give the Adama character progressively crueler lines . The writers were the ones who inserted the line in the script in which Adama mentions Ellen Tigh 's sexual infidelity . On the set , however , actor Edward James Olmos changed the line from Adama saying Ellen wanted a man with " real blood in his veins " to " main vein , " then ad @-@ libbed the line in which the character said , " I could smell her . " The scenes where Dualla finds the set of jacks and where Laura Roslin holds the plant cutting were added by director Michael Nankin . Weddle notes that although Nankin usually peppers his writers with script notes , he did not do so for this script .

Cost estimates indicated that the script , as originally written , would be \$ 300 @,@ 000 over budget (about two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half times what the studio would have permitted) and a number of scenes were cut . An extensive opening segment which would have depicted the destruction of Earth was changed to the filmed segment in which Tyrol sees a flash of light and his shadow is left on a wall . However , Nankin restored the scene in which Helo , Dualla , Adama and Roslin ride back to Galactica in the Raptor .

= = = The Fifth Cylon = = =

According to showrunner Ronald D. Moore , the concept of Ellen and Saul Tigh 's relationship being more than an average husband @-@ and @-@ wife relationship went back to the pilot mini @-@

series for Battlestar Galactica but was not made part of the story arc for the two characters until the middle of Season 3 . As writing progressed on the episode " Torn , " the writing staff needed to explain why Baltar would not see all 12 Cylon models aboard the base star . Moore came up with the concept of five Cylon models that had yet to be revealed . Later , during writing sessions for the episode " Rapture , " D 'Anna Biers has a vision in which she confronts the Final Five Cylons in the opera house , and apologizes to one of them . Although Moore and the writing team had yet to formally settle on Ellen Tigh as one of the Final Five , Moore says it was his intention for the Cylon to be Ellen . When one of the final four Cylons was revealed to be Saul Tigh in the episode " Crossroads , " Moore finally decided to make Ellen the fifth Cylon because " Tigh being revealed as a Cylon was such a profound shift in that character , such a big leap for the show , that it felt really natural that she was also a Cylon . "

A clue to the final Cylon 's identity was inserted into several episodes , when Col. Tigh sees Ellen 's face on the Number Six model . Moore 's decision was revealed to the writing team at series writers ' conference which occurred between Season 3 and Season 4 . Other characters were considered as the final Cylon model , but the writing staff agreed none had the same resonance as Ellen Tigh . The decision to reveal Ellen Tigh 's true identity in " Sometimes A Great Notion " was made because Moore did not want Season 4 @.@ 5 to devolve into a guessing game about who the final Cylon might be , and because he wanted the final episode of the series to be about issues other than who the final Cylon was .

= = = Writers ' strike = = =

The script for " Sometimes A Great Notion " was the only script finished by the time the 2007 ? 2008 Writers Guild of America strike began . Revised script pages were turned in the day before the strike . Moore decided that the crew should proceed as if shooting would be green @-@ lit , and flew to Vancouver , British Columbia , to speak to the cast and crew before the strike began . The strike proved so vexing that the studio did not give approval for shooting to occur until the night before it was to begin .

The cast and crew were very emotional during filming , as they were concerned that this might be the last episode ever filmed and the series cancelled if the strike was a lengthy one . Olmos helped to work up the cast 's emotions for the shoot by telling everyone that the show was ending . According to co @-@ writer Weddle , Olmos repeatedly told the cast , " This is the end , I think we all feel that . They 're not going to bring the show back . They 'll pull the sets down . We 'll never shoot another episode . " Actress Kandyse McClure improvised the lullaby her character hums before committing suicide , and series composer Bear McCreary used the melody for part of the episode 's musical soundtrack .

= = = Filming = = =

The producers intended for this episode to be the last to star Lucy Lawless , who portrayed Number Three . They only had Lawless for one day during the filming of the episode . Most of the Earth scenes were shot on and around Centennial Beach , in Tsawwassen , British Columbia . Two days before the shoot much of the location set was destroyed by a rain storm with 90 kilometres per hour (56 mph) winds , but the art department crew repaired it in time for the shoot to occur on schedule .

The final shots for the episode " Revelations " were filmed in the three hours immediately preceding the shooting of the beach scenes for " Sometimes A Great Notion . " Director Michael Rymer , who helmed " Revelations , " and Nankin agreed that all Earth sequences should be reminiscent of the work of film director Ingmar Bergman , so wide camera lenses were used , the color was desaturated , and long rather than short takes were used .

The scene in which Adama goads Tigh was scheduled to last a day . Originally the segment was to be shot in small bits and flashbacks edited between each line , but the scene was instead shot as one long take . Actors Olmos and Michael Hogan struggled for several hours to find the right

emotional tone . Moore said that the audience should accept the irradiated planet as Earth . " They have found Earth . This is the Earth that the 13th Colony discovered , they christened it Earth . They found Earth . "

= = Reception = =

" Sometimes a Great Notion " was seen by 2 @. @ 1 million total viewers in the U.S , earning the episode a 1 @. @ 6 household rating . This included 1 @. @ 3 million adults age 18 @- @ to @- @ 49 (the show 's target demographic) , and 1 @. @ 4 million adults age 25 @- @ to @- @ 54 . The episode was the top cable program in the 10 p.m. slot among men age 18 @- @ to @- @ 49 and men age 25 @- @ to @- @ 54 the night it premiered . The ratings for the episode increased 23 percent over the Season 4 @. @ 0 average in household ratings and total viewers , increased 21 percent over the same period for adults age 18 @- @ to @- @ 49 , and increased 15 percent over the same period for adults age 25 @- @ to @- @ 54 . According to Nielsen live @- @ plus @- @ seven @- @ day ratings data , an additional 0 @. @ 7 million viewers watched the episode via time @- @ shifted digital video recorder , a 32 percent increase over the day @- @ of @- @ delivery airing . Time @- @ shifted viewing added 540 @, @ 000 adults aged 18 @- @ to @- @ 49 (a 38 percent increase over same @- @ day numbers) and 500 @, @ 000 viewers aged 25 @- @ to @- @ 54 (a 35 percent rise) .

Eric Goldman of IGN gave " Sometimes a Great Notion " an " incredible " rating of 9 @. @ 5 out of 10 . The reviewer quoted the episode as " stronger and sadder than ever , " and was executed " extremely well . " Goldman felt that the episode did not back down from the deeply powerful storylines from the past , and praised the emotions of the fleet after finding Earth in ruins . The Guardian received the episode positively , stating how many events happened during the course of the episode , and felt that the episode played fair with its audience , despite the number of new questions being addressed . It was anticipated that Dualla would play a big part in the episode after her appearance from the cold open . Her suicide was compared with Boomer shooting Adama in the closing scene of season 1 in a dramatical sense . The Guardian also praised the performance between Edward James Olmos and Mary McDonnell 's characters , as well as the standoff between Adama and Tigh .

Matt Norris of Cinema Blend stated that most of the events portrayed in the episode were unexpected , including Dualla 's suicide , Starbuck finding her own supposed body , discovering the thirteenth tribe were Cylons , and that Ellen Tigh is the final model , but still thought the episode was among the top five Battlestar Galactica episodes in its run . Marc Bernardin of Entertainment Weekly stated that a lot had been going on in the episode , but criticised the writers ' decision of having Ellen as the fifth Cylon . While Dualla 's suicide was surprising for Bernardin , he was critical about the Adama scene after her suicide , stating it as " some of Olmos ' worst acting in the series " , and that the answered questions for the episode raised more questions , but felt the episode was good overall . Alan Sepinwall of The Star @- @ Ledger commented : " What really grabs me about the show (as I discussed in today 's column) is its humanity , the way its characters react to situations the way you imagine real , contemporary people might " and felt that " as the stakes for the characters has risen , so has the intensity of [the actors '] performances , " with even the extras in character . Maureen Ryan of the Chicago Tribune praised Nankin 's directing , particularly " the moment in which we see Kara Thrace , silhouetted in black against a dark blue sky , preparing to burn ? her ? body ? that ? s sent a shiver down my spine . That was just such a beautifully operatic image , spot @- @ on in tone and perfectly executed . "