

= The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr . =

The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr . , often referred to as just Brisco or Brisco County , is an American Western / science fiction television series created by Jeffrey Boam and Carlton Cuse . It ran for 27 episodes on the Fox network starting in the 1993 ? 94 season . Set in the American West of 1893 , the series follows its title character , a Harvard @-@ educated lawyer @-@ turned @-@ bounty hunter hired by a group of wealthy industrialists to track and capture outlaw John Bly and his gang . Bruce Campbell plays Brisco , who is joined by a colorful group of supporting characters , including Julius Carry as fellow bounty hunter Lord Bowler and Christian Clemenson as stick @-@ in @-@ the @-@ mud lawyer Socrates Poole .

While ostensibly a Western , the series routinely includes elements of the science fiction and steampunk genres . Humor is a large part of the show ; the writers attempted to keep the jokes and situations " just under over @-@ the @-@ top " . A large number of episodes involve the Orb , a powerful device from the future . John Astin plays Professor Wickwire , an inventor who assists Brisco with anachronistic technology including diving suits , motorcycles , rockets , and airships . The search for new technology and progressive ideas , what the writers of the show called " The Coming Thing " , is a central theme throughout the series .

Brisco was developed by Boam and Cuse at the request of Fox executive Bob Greenblatt . Impressed by the duo 's work on the script for Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade , Greenblatt suggested they develop a series that bore the tone and style of vintage movie serials . The initial ideas and proposals from the show 's writers were more often suited for film than television and had to be scaled down . Brisco was one of the last television shows to be filmed on the Warner Bros. Western backlot . Randy Edelman composed the distinctive theme music , which has been reused by the National Broadcasting Company during its coverage of the Olympic Games .

During its broadcast run , The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr . , garnered a small but dedicated following and was well received by critics . The series earned high ratings at the beginning of its season , but later episodes failed to attract a substantial number of viewers . Fox canceled the show at the end of its first and only season . In 2006 , Warner Home Video released a DVD set containing all 27 episodes . The series has been remembered fondly by critics , who praise its humor and unique blend of genres .

= = Plot = =

= = = Background = = =

The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr . , is set in a fictional American Old West of 1893 . Robber barons control the financial and industrial interests of the West from the boardrooms of San Francisco 's Westerfield Club . The famous U.S. Marshal Brisco County , Sr. (R. Lee Ermey) has apprehended a gang of outlaws and its leader , the notorious John Bly . While transporting them to stand trial , County is murdered and the gang escapes . Meanwhile , in a nearby mine , a group of shackled Chinese workers unearths " The Orb , " a large golden globe studded with rods . A worker draws one of the rods from out of the Orb , then touches several of his co @-@ workers with it . As each worker is touched with the rod he is imbued with superhuman strength which they use to break the iron chains binding them , thus freeing themselves . The murder of Brisco County , Sr. , and the discovery of the Orb set into motion the major plots of the series .

= = = Synopsis = = =

Members of the Westerfield Club hire Brisco County , Jr . (Bruce Campbell) , the son of the slain U.S. Marshal , to track and re @-@ capture Bly (Billy Drago) and his gang . The Westerfield Club 's timid lawyer , Socrates Poole (Christian Clemenson) relays instructions and financial support to Brisco . Another bounty hunter , Lord Bowler (Julius Carry) , who is known for his expert tracking

skills , also hopes to capture Bly . Bitter over the elder County 's fame , Bowler treats Brisco as a rival . The two men often find themselves reluctantly joining forces to achieve a common goal . Later in the series , Brisco and Bowler work together as partners and friends .

In the pilot episode , Brisco tracks John Bly 's second @-@ in @-@ command , Big Smith (M.C. Gainey) . In a battle on a train car , Brisco knocks Smith off the train and into a river ; he is assumed dead until he reappears later in the series . Brisco , Bowler and Socrates hunt the rest of Bly 's gang in subsequent episodes . All ten of the gang members are captured or killed , and Brisco 's pursuit of Bly , who is seeking the Orb for its supernatural power , frequently puts him into contact with the object . Each encounter with the Orb reveals a fantastic effect on people who use it . In the episode " The Orb Scholar " , Bly shoots Brisco and leaves him to die . Professor Ogden Coles , a scientist who studies the Orb , heals Brisco with the device . In the episode " Bye Bly " , it is revealed that Bly is a fugitive from the distant future who has traveled to 1893 to steal the Orb . Bly plans to use the Orb to travel back to his time and rule the world . Instead , Brisco uses the Orb to travel through time to save Bowler 's life . Brisco eventually kills Bly by stabbing him with a rod from the Orb . Series creator and executive producer Carlton Cuse said that the Orb represents faith and that depending on the intentions of those who use it , the object rewards or punishes them accordingly .

The pilot episode introduces several characters who make recurring appearances throughout the series . Big Smith 's moll Dixie Cousins (Kelly Rutherford) is a saloon singer and con artist who has a brief romantic encounter with Brisco . In later episodes , Dixie becomes Brisco 's primary love interest . In his first mission , Brisco also meets Professor Albert Wickwire (John Astin) , an eccentric scientist who returns to help many times during the series . Wickwire 's ideas and inventions play into Brisco 's interest in technology and the future , something Brisco calls " The Coming Thing " . Pete Hutter (John Pyper @-@ Ferguson) is a hapless mercenary working for Bly . He has a compulsive attachment to his " piece " (pistol) , and given any opportunity will pontificate about topics such as art and philosophy . Pete appears throughout the series as a comic foil to trade barbs with the heroes . He appears to be killed three times during the series , but returns each time with a comic excuse for why he didn 't die . The second half of the series includes many episodes with Whip Morgan (Jeff Phillips) , a young cardsharp whose attempts to assist Brisco and Bowler often end up causing trouble .

= = = Signature show elements = = =

The show features classic Western motifs such as train robberies and gunfighter showdowns , in combination with atypical elements . Much of the series is devoted to the science fiction plot surrounding the Orb , and it is this mix of the Western genre with fantasy that has helped Brisco maintain its cult status . In almost every episode , the characters discover or are confronted by fantastic technology . In the pilot episode , Brisco and Professor Wickwire modify a rocket to run on train tracks . In the episode " Brisco For the Defense " , Brisco uses a slide projector to show a trial jury fingerprint evidence . Professor Wickwire returns many times in the series to assist with technology , including tinkering with motorcycles and rescuing the heroes with a helium @-@ filled zeppelin . Campbell told Starlog magazine , " It 's kind of Jules Verne meets The Wild Wild West . " The presence of futuristic technology in a Victorian era Western places the series in the steampunk genre ; it is one of the few such shows to have aired on prime @-@ time television . At least one @-@ third of the show 's episodes contain steampunk or Weird West elements . Though " technology @-@ out @-@ of @-@ time " frequently intrudes into the plots of Brisco , the fantastic machines or methods rarely appear again . Some of these out @-@ of @-@ time technologies were archaic imaginations of those prevalent in the 20th century , and two film researchers , Cynthia Miller and A. Bowdoin Van Riper , suggest that followers of the show may be puzzled that such inventions , so useful in their own lives , are not exploited further .

According to Cuse , the show was purposefully set in 1893 , exactly 100 years before the series premiered in 1993 . Brisco is meant to be aware of the imminent changes in society and technology and actively looks for them . The writers of the show , and also the character of Brisco , refer to this concept as " The Coming Thing " . Elaborating on this theme , Campbell said , " Basically this show

is about the turn of the century , when the Old West met the Industrial Era . Cowboys still chew tobacco and ride the range and states are still territories but , over the horizon , is the onset of electricity , the first autos and telephones . Brisco is in the middle of a transition from the past to the future . " The collision of cowboy characters with puzzling technology and other anachronisms generates humor throughout the series . The writers made it a point to insert scenes mirroring the pop culture of the 20th century , from the apparent invention of the term " UFO " in the pilot episode to the appearance of a sheriff who looks and acts like Elvis Presley . Speaking about the humor of the show , Campbell said , " I would say 30 percent of each episode is being played for laughs . But it 's not a winking at the camera , Airplane @-@ type of humor . We 're funny like Indiana Jones is funny ; the laughs come primarily from the wide variety of ridiculous , colorful characters that come in and out of this series . "

= = Cast = =

Bruce Campbell went through five auditions for the role of Brisco before he was hired . In his first audition with the casting director , Campbell spontaneously did a standing flip . The stunt impressed the casting director so much that during each subsequent audition , Campbell was asked to do the flip again . In his final audition , Campbell assured the network executives that if hired for the role , he would work hard to make the show a success . In an interview , Campbell said , " It 's every actor 's dream to play a cowboy , so when this opportunity came up , I mean , yeah , where do I sign ? " He added that working on Brisco provided him with acting opportunities he would not have otherwise had . Cuse said getting Campbell " was just one of those collisions between an actor and a script that was just perfect ... I can 't imagine Brisco having ever existed without him . " Writing in Auxiliary Magazine , Luke Copping claimed that Brisco was Campbell 's " last great " role before the actor fell into " a period of self @-@ parody and overt camp that he did not redeem himself from until joining the cast of Burn Notice " .

Christian Clemenson went to Harvard with Cuse but still went through the normal audition channels to get the part of Poole . Clemenson was apprehensive about pursuing one of the lead roles in a television show because of the long time commitments involved . He later said , " The similarities between this show and The Wild Wild West , and my character to that show 's Artemus Gordon , was an important hook for me . It was one of my favorite shows growing up , and as soon as I saw that Brisco County was based on the same kind of material and attitude as that show , I called my agent and said , ' I 'll do anything I have to do to get this . ' " Clemenson applied his experiences at Ivy League schools to play the uptight Poole . Praising Clemenson 's work on Brisco , Cuse said , " You can 't give him anything he 's not capable of doing . He adds the voice of intelligence and caution to balance our cast " .

Julius Carry saw great potential in the character of Bowler . He had researched black cowboys for a project in college and used that knowledge in his portrayal of Bowler . Carry said that Bowler was similar to the real @-@ life black deputy U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves , in that " Reeves always got his man and would often pull off incredible tricks to bring people in . " Carry knew Clemenson from the time they worked together on the Western television pilot Independence . He had no knowledge of Campbell , but approved of the choice for the leading man after watching Army of Darkness . He later told Starlog , " I saw that he would be very good with the physical stuff and that he could deliver a one @-@ liner . I knew the situation would be good . " The original direction for Bowler was to have him constantly oppose Brisco , but as the series progressed the writers saw the good @-@ natured chemistry between the actors and decided to make Brisco and Bowler a team . Bowler 's race was never an issue in the show . According to Cary Darling , a television critic , this attitude is different from serious Westerns and " may hew more to the truth than one might think " . He said historians have noted that black cowboys were common and that conflicts with white cowboys were rare .

Kelly Rutherford 's portrayal of Dixie Cousins , with her emphasis on innuendo and subtext , has been described as " less Miss Kitty (Gunsmoke) than Mae West " . Rutherford said that playing Dixie allowed her to fulfill her " fantasy of being Madeline Kahn in Blazing Saddles . " When John

Astin was cast he was best known for his portrayal of Gomez Addams in The Addams Family . Cuse said that he and the writers enjoyed paying homage to the television star of their childhoods : " For us , it was like , ' Oh wow , we get to meet John Astin in the guise of employing him on this show ! ' "

= = Production = =

= = = Conception and development = = =

In 1989 , Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade was released in the cinemas . It was a commercial success , earning its producers US \$ 115 million from domestic screenings . The action @-@ packed story , unfolding in a manner reminiscent of Saturday matinee movie serials , about the adventures of an archaeologist was written by Jeffrey Boam , with development and story help from Carlton Cuse ; this film was their third collaboration , after Lethal Weapon 2 and 3 . According to Cuse , Bob Greenblatt , an executive at Fox Broadcasting Company , engaged him and Boam to develop a television series " because of Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade " . Greenblatt wanted a show that had a style similar to the Indiana Jones movies . Cuse started watching old serials and noticed that many fell into two genres : Westerns and science fiction . This gave Boam and Cuse the idea to combine the genres . They decided to emulate the serials ' style ; for example , each act within an episode begins with a title , usually a pun , and ends with a cliffhanger .

Boam and Cuse did not intend for the series to be historically accurate . Their aim was to create an action @-@ adventure with a modern feel . Cuse told USA Today , " We 're not approaching this show as if we were doing a period piece . We see it as a contemporary program . Our characters just happen to be living in the West with 1990s sensibilities . The Indiana Jones movies were period pieces too , but you never thought of them that way . " Anachronisms and pop culture references were intentionally inserted into the series . The show was intended to be family friendly , so violence was minimized in favor of having Brisco think his way out of dangerous situations . Boam said , " In the two @-@ hour pilot Brisco doesn 't even once have to shoot his gun . Our violence is cartoonish . There is no pain and suffering . " Bruce Campbell was prominently featured in advertisements , billboards , and even a trailer shown in movie theaters . When the series was being promoted in the summer of 1993 , Fox Entertainment chief Sandy Grushow said that if Campbell " isn 't the next big television star , I 'll eat my desk . "

= = = Writing = = =

Cuse served as show runner and head writer . Boam , who served as executive producer , also contributed scripts for the show . The writing staff included John Wirth , Brad Kern , Tom Chehak , David Simkins , and John McNamara . They followed Cuse 's informal instruction that the tone of the show remain " just under over @-@ the @-@ top " : the series would be humorous but not too campy . Every member of the staff participated in breaking down and analyzing the stories they conceived . Worth commented , " there was a very high percentage of ideas that worked in the room and got translated to paper that worked when you put them on film . That doesn 't always happen . " Cuse described long hours writing the show , including several overnight sessions . Each episode of Brisco was filmed in seven days , so the turn @-@ around time for scripts was one week . McNamara said that he became a " student of TV history " while writing for Brisco , reviewing old episodes of Maverick for inspiration on using humor in the Western genre . He said the writing team felt the television audience was ready for a " trans @-@ genre form " , because much of the audience grew up with Lethal Weapon , Star Trek , and The Wild Wild West . Researchers Lynnette Porter and Barry Porter acknowledge the writer 's familiarity with Mark Twain 's novel Pudd 'nhead Wilson . Porter and Porter describe the novel as an " ancestor text " , because the characters of Brisco and Bly both refer to it , and say that this type of literary device is used again by Cuse in Lost .

One of the challenges the writers faced was scaling down their ideas to make them feasible for production . Cuse said that he let such ideas flourish because of his relative inexperience with writing for television series . An example given by the writers was Boam 's idea for a full @-@ sized " pirate ship on wheels " . The writers quickly realized they needed to scale the idea down to something the production designers could create . They settled on putting a full pirate crew on a stagecoach with cannons . Kern said it was better to " shoot past the mark , and come back to it , rather than start below it . " He elaborated on this , saying , " if you envision the 40 @-@ foot galleon and go back from that , you 'll always end up with more than if you start out with a pirate on a horse . "

As the series progressed during its broadcast season , the writers received frequent notes and directives from Fox network executives calling for increases and decreases in the science @-@ fiction , comedy and traditional Western elements . Cuse said , " I think we did a particularly good job of maintaining continuity with all the schizophrenic notes we were getting from the network . " However , midway through the first season , the writers made a thematic shift from science @-@ fiction to more comedy and adventure . Cuse said , " We were biting off more than we could chew ... we were trying to do a comedic action adventure Western , with tongue @-@ in @-@ cheek humor , genuine drama , plus science fiction . All these things added too many elements to serve simultaneously . " By the final third of the series , the writers had wrapped up the science @-@ fiction plot with the Orb and focused more on traditional Western motifs .

= = = Production design = = =

The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr . , was filmed primarily on the Warner Bros. soundstages . Town and street scenes were staged on the Western backlot , known as Laramie Street . It was one of the last Western shows to use the backlot . Cuse said that logistics were a problem because so many of the Hollywood Western sets and towns had been torn down by the 1990s . Outdoor scenes were shot on the Warner Bros. ranch in Valencia , California ; Bronson Canyon in Los Angeles ; and the Valuze Ranch in Santa Clarita , California . Some of the locomotive scenes from Brisco were filmed on location at Railtown 1897 State Historic Park in Jamestown , California . A painting used in the show as a backdrop to create illusions of greater depth perspectives is exhibited at the park .

Comet was portrayed by five horses , each with a different talent . The main horse was Copper , chosen by veteran wrangler Gordon Spencer because it was calm and gentle . Campbell nicknamed the horse " Leadbelly " due to its ability to remain calm during action or dialogue scenes . Another horse , Boss , was used for long @-@ range shots , chase scenes , and elaborate stunts , such as leaps through windows . Ace was called in when the crew had to shoot scenes in which the horse reared . Near the end of the season , a horse named Comet was trained , its name chosen so that the horse would get used to hearing it on set . The " true show horse " was Strip , which was adept at doing tricks , such as lip movements , head nods , and hoof stamping . According to Spencer , all those stunts " as well as tying the knots and opening the door and going into rooms and all of that " were done by Strip . For these scenes , Spencer would stand off @-@ camera and use a stick to signal Strip . Campbell had a special pocket sewn into his costume and filled it with grain to reward Strip after every take . No other horse had more scenes than Strip and Copper . With white colorings on his nose and legs , Strip 's appearance was chosen for Brisco 's steed ; Copper and the other horses were touched up with " clown white " greasepaint to match Strip 's markings .

Foley artist Casey Crabtree provided sounds for horse hoof movements , work that was praised by sounds effects industry expert David Yewdall . He said of Crabtree 's work on Brisco , " Her horses sounded so natural and real ? their hooves , the sound of their hooves on the texture of the ground , the sound of saddle movement , bridle jingles ? it was as good as anything I would want for a feature film , and this was episodic television . " The make @-@ up on many of Brisco 's episodes was done by veteran artist Mel Berns , Jr .

Two props of the Orb were made . One of the prop Orbs was used for stunts and had retractable rods . A second version was manufactured from cast bronze , making it heavy : " You really didn 't want to have to handle it , " Campbell said . The rocket car seen in the pilot episode was built by

special effects coordinator Kam Cooney and was a working vehicle with an internal combustion engine and throttle controls . Some items used in the show had been repurposed from older productions , and some would later be used in other shows . For example , the steam locomotive seen in the pilot episode was the same as the one used in Back to the Future Part III . Two of Carry 's prop guns ? rifles whose barrels were sawed @-@ off in fashion of the Mare 's Leg ? were later reused in the science fiction television series Firefly .

= = = Music = = =

Stephen Graziano and Velton Ray Bunch composed original music for the series . Composed by Randy Edelman , the distinctive theme music gained recognition beyond the show 's following ; in the mid @-@ 1990s , the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) hired Edelman to provide music for its sports coverage , including National Football League games and the Olympics . The music samples Edelman sent NBC included the Brisco theme , and by 1996 it was being used during coverage of the Olympics . NBC used it again as the theme for their coverage of the 1997 World Series . Edelman said , " It was original , and it seemed to have the right spirit . It 's got a very flowing melody , it 's triumphant , and it has a certain warmth . And it has at the end of it , what all television things like this have , a ' button , ' an ending flourish that works really well if they need to chop it down into a 15 @-@ second thing . " Cary Darling said that the " booming " theme song was " part Magnificent Seven , part Aaron Copland and as grand and wide as ' Big Sky Country ' " .

= = Reception = =

= = = Pilot episode = = =

In July 1993 , Brisco 's two @-@ hour pilot was screened for television critics in Los Angeles . Initial critical reaction to the pilot was positive and focused on the humor and the science fiction plot points . USA Today 's Matt Roush enjoyed the campy humor and the cast of the show , saying it worked on many levels and would " please all but the family curmudgeon . " Calling Brisco " one of the best shows of the fall season " , Jennifer Stevenson of the St. Petersburg Times praised the show 's " intelligent , satirical asides " . Kay Gardella wrote in the New York Daily News that the pilot set itself " apart from others of genre " with its humorous script and sight gags . The Los Angeles Times called Brisco " gratifying nonsense " , and praised Campbell and the supporting cast for supplying humor without " going over the top " . Some critics , such as Walter Goodman of The New York Times and David Hiltbrand of People , found the supporting characters " weakly cast " and not as strong as Campbell in the lead . Other reviewers praised the overall look of the show , such as Todd Everett of Variety , who approved of the " strong comic @-@ book visual style " and the pilot 's high production values . Writing in the Washington Post , Tom Shales said that the pilot 's production was " more movielike than serieslike " .

The pilot 's science @-@ fiction plot elements were appreciated by New York magazine , which wrote favorably about the " millenarianism " of the show , including Brisco 's use of a rocket to travel on railroad tracks . While Rod Dreher of the Washington Times liked the " nifty " Orb subplot , some critics responded negatively to the Orb . The Washington Post 's Shales called the Orb " hokey supernatural bunk " . Other reviewers complained generally about the broad mix of genres and number of subplots in the pilot . While TV Guide 's Jeff Jarvis roundly praised the quality of the pilot and called Brisco his favorite Fox show of 1993 , he criticized the pilot for being " padded with outlaws and mysterious orbs " . Diane Werts of Newsday similarly said that Brisco " just about hits the bulls eye " with its " sharp wit " and " thrill a minute " action , although she noted that the pilot was over @-@ packed with characters and subplots . Writing in The New York Times , Goodman said , " The writers try everything , including some business involving raiders of a lost orb , without much of a payoff . "

Entertainment Weekly 's Ken Tucker enjoyed the " nervy attempt to do something different with the

TV Western " in the pilot and said that " Brisco County is less a satire of the Western 's cliches than a revitalization of them . " Writing in the Toronto Star , Greg Quill said that the pilot introduced Brisco as " a western in the loosest use of the term " . Quill noted that the pilot includes " every cliché in the western movie arsenal " , but that " everything , from characters to plot turns , is skewed away from the norm " , and that the pilot episode rose above the level of western spoof to become an " outrageously confident tribute to ... the best of the genre " .

= = = Broadcast run = = =

During the broadcast run of The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr . , TV Guide featured a positive review of the show in its Couch Critic column and wrote , " It 's as funny as it is exciting , which is not an easy combo to pull off ... it 's fresh and funny and different , and that 's why we like it . " The magazine twice listed Brisco as a family @-@ friendly TV program : " Back when some of us grew up , Westerns were synonymous with great family entertainment , but ? let 's be honest ? some of them were dull as dust . Not this one . Brisco is a Western with a sense of humor , filled with impish action for kids and adults . "

The Wall Street Journal reviewed a host of Westerns from 1992 and 1993 and said that Brisco was " the most sheer fun of the bunch " , calling it " a period piece with slick production values and a mix of drama and humor , fast pace and high camp . " In an article on the 1993 television season , the Toronto Star 's Greg Quill wrote that Brisco was a program that represented " American TV craft at the top of its form " . In contrast , Elvis Mitchell of Spin magazine gave Brisco a scathing review , calling the show 's premise a " tedious ... rickety gimmick " . Mitchell acknowledged the show 's " quick reflexes " , but said the humor was " uncomfortable " with a " cynical quickness " . He added , " Brisco County relieves us of the burden of laughing . It spends too much time looking at itself in the mirror , admiring its own adorable dimpled half @-@ smile . "

Viewership figures for Brisco fell as its season progressed and in 1994 , it was listed in TV Guide 's annual " Save Our Shows " article . Readers were requested to write in and vote to save one of the four listed shows ? one from each television network ? that were in danger of being cancelled . The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr . , won with 34 @. @ 7 percent of the 72 @, @ 000 votes cast . Cuse said the vote " reaffirms for me a feeling I 've had ? namely that the Nielsens aren 't accurately reflecting people 's interest in this show , " adding that , given Fox 's then relatively small share of the market , it was notable that the show got more votes than any of the programs from NBC , CBS , and ABC .

Writing in USA Today , Matt Roush encouraged readers to watch the low @-@ rated show , saying that families should watch it rather than " that interchangeable T.G.I.F. tripe " . He said , " Brisco is mighty lavish but even more mightily loony , happily saddled with broad sight gags and tortured puns . " Bruce Fretts of Entertainment Weekly speculated that mainstream success eluded the show because of its mixing of genres . He said , " Brisco refuses to behave like a normal Western , mixing in sci @-@ fi , slapstick , and ... kung fu . " The Chicago Tribune 's Scott Williams praised Brisco for its " strong supporting cast " and " superb physical comedy and crisp dialogue " . He said the show should have been a hit , but that the Friday night time slot hampered its ratings .

= = = Level of violence = = =

Brisco was criticized early on for the violence it portrayed ; meant to be comical , a scene in the pilot in which four villains accidentally kill each other in a crossfire troubled critics instead . Cuse insisted that the show was still appropriate for children , saying , " I think we 're very conscious of violence and I think we 've made an effort to avoid violence in the pilot and in the future episodes " . Halfway through the season , U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan singled out Brisco as the most violent show on television based on a study at Minnesota 's Concordia University , in which students watched 132 hours of network and cable programming , during the week of September 28 to October 4 , 1993 . The students tallied each act of violence , and found that Brisco had 117 violent acts per hour . The study deemed Brisco more violent than the film Beverly Hills Cop , which was also viewed for the

study . Cuse called the criticism " patently ridiculous , " noting that only one episode of the show was viewed , in which a boxing match takes place . Each punch and jab was counted as an act of violence . Cuse spoke out against legislation to curb television violence , saying that politicians were " chasing a false objective . " He said it was the job of a show 's producer to control the moral content of a television program and the parents ' duty to monitor what their children watch .

The Los Angeles Times printed a story about Senator Dorgan 's efforts to elicit a response from the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) with the title " Fox Tops Tally of Violence on Major TV Networks Media : Study of a week of prime @-@ time shows also lists ' Brisco County ' as bloodiest series . Senator wants FCC to issue report card , name sponsors . " Cuse responded by writing a letter to the editor . In the letter , entitled " ' Brisco County ' Is a Family @-@ Oriented Series " , Cuse objected to the newspaper story title labeling Brisco as the " bloodiest series " . He said that Senator Dorgan 's press release did not mention blood and that the show 's violence should be viewed in context . Cuse added the show had been listed as family friendly in other publications , and that he read every viewer letter sent regarding the show . " The overwhelming majority praise " Brisco County " for being a show that the entire family can watch together . After 15 original airings , I have not received one single letter criticizing the show on the grounds of violence or violent content . " When the US Senate discussed forcing broadcast and cable networks to regulate violent programming , Cuse said that self @-@ regulation within the industry was a positive move . As he operated on his " own internal moral principles " , the measures would not affect his week @-@ to @-@ week work .

= = = Post @-@ cancellation = = =

Writing in People magazine in 1995 , Craig Tomashoff said the cancellation of Brisco was " one of the tragedies going into [the 1994 ? 1995] TV season " . Tomashoff suggested that the show influenced UPN 's Legend , another Western series with comedy and science fiction elements . Reflecting on the show in the Orange County Register in 1996 , critic Cary Darling lamented Brisco 's cancellation , saying that the show " stood way out from the rest of the broadcast pack . " Darling reviewed the show , describing it as " a witty , multiracial Western that tempered its fisticuffs with fantasy , its innocence with irony , and its romantic vision of the Old West with an abiding New World faith in the future 's infinite possibilities . " Writing in Entertainment Weekly , Ken Tucker called the show a " one season wonder " that was " ahead of its time " .

When the series was released on DVD , critics remembered it fondly . Video Librarian called Brisco " criminally short @-@ lived " and " wildly entertaining . " Ken Tucker of Entertainment Weekly gave the series an " A- " , calling the show " smart @-@ alecky and witty , suspenseful and absurd . " IGN DVD called the DVD set " impressive " and said that the series was " a satisfying show that hits its mark " . Auxiliary Magazine called Brisco " one of the greatest sci @-@ fi / Western epics in television history " and compared it favorably to the more well @-@ known sci @-@ fi / Western shows , Firefly and The Wild Wild West . In its 2006 gift guide , the Christian Science Monitor gave Brisco a positive review , saying , " Folks , there are so few comic sci @-@ fi / Westerns , they should be celebrated , not canceled prematurely . "

= = Broadcast history = =

The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr . , premiered on the Fox network at 8 : 00 pm on Friday , August 27 , 1993 , with a two @-@ hour pilot movie . To bolster viewer interest in the show , Fox rebroadcast the pilot two days later at 7 : 00 pm . Both airings of the pilot returned strong ratings . Brisco 's ratings for the pilot and first episode were high , particularly with the demographic of adults aged 18 ? 49 . The series was aired in Canada , including on Global Toronto (channel 29) .

The pilot movie was followed by 26 episodes , each 45 minutes long and airing at 8 : 00 pm on Fridays . Fox Entertainment chief Sandy Grushaw openly touted Brisco and its star Bruce Campbell . The network fully expected the show to be its breakout hit of the year , a distinction which eventually went to Brisco 's follow @-@ up , The X @-@ Files . Hoping that more viewers would

follow Brisco as it progressed , Fox approved producing an entire season of the show , despite post @-@ pilot low ratings . Subsequent episodes failed to attract more viewers and the show was cancelled at end of its first and only season . After the series ended , Fox retransmitted the show on Sunday nights at 8 : 00 pm during July and August 1994 . The show was later broadcast for a short time in syndication , airing on the U.S. cable channel TNT .

= = = Episodes = = =

= = = Cancellation = = =

As the season progressed , the ratings declined , greatly hurting the show 's chances of being renewed . Writer John McNamara partially blamed Brisco 's low ratings on its Friday 8 : 00 p.m. time slot . He said not many people watch television at that time , so " fighting for numbers " then was " like being stuck on Normandy beach " . Grushaw acknowledged the high quality of the show and the vocal support from its small fan base . " Obviously the viewers are very passionate about the show ... and when you read some of the things they have to say , it gives you real pause , " Grushaw told USA Today in 1994 . By May of that year , Grushaw said renewing Brisco was a 50 ? 50 call . At the end of its season , Brisco was one of the lowest rated shows of the year , and Fox confirmed its cancellation in June .

Brisco 's writers were planning for another season before the show 's cancellation . They had not penned the ending of the first season as a finale for the series and had broad ideas for the second season , which would have featured Brisco settling in as the sheriff of a small town . In his autobiography , Campbell mused , " To explain why a TV show is canceled is almost impossible . Ironically Brisco , with its off @-@ kilter humor , wouldn 't have been developed on any other network , yet the appeal of ' Westerns ' was still rural ? not the side Fox 's urban bread was buttered on . "

Writer and supervising producer Brad Kern reflected on the show 's cancellation , saying , " Ten years later , everybody you talk to ... they all love the show . I think that was the biggest disappointment about the show not coming back . We knew we were doing something special . " Told of the show 's success in the TV Guide " Save Our Shows " poll , Sandy Grushaw said , " Obviously I 'm happy and not entirely surprised , " but added , " You can 't dismiss a season 's worth of ratings . " Kim Manners , director on nearly a third of the Brisco episodes , said working on the series gave him an opportunity to grow creatively . He told writer Joe Nazzaro , " It really woke me up as a director , almost spiritually , " and that directing for Brisco was a large contributing factor to his success as a regular director on The X @-@ Files . Manners said , " When they didn 't give it a second year , I was devastated , " adding that he wished Cuse would have made a feature film based on Brisco . Considering the show 's short life , Cuse later commented , " If the show could have survived into a second season , I think it could have ended up running for actually a long time . Some shows just sort of fall through the cracks in the right away and they kind of stay on the air long enough to aggregate an audience . I think if circumstances had been different , Brisco could have had a much longer life . " Cuse also said the Friday night time slot hurt Brisco 's chances of building an audience , saying , " We were on at 8 p.m. on Friday night , which is sort of a death slot ? I mean people do still go bowling ? few shows have succeeded in that slot . "

= = Home media = =

In 2005 , Kirthana Ramisetty of Entertainment Weekly posted that The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr . , deserved to be released on DVD . Gord Lacey , the creator of the website TVShowsonDVD.com , told the New York Daily News that Brisco was among the five most requested shows on the site . Lacey spent several years lobbying industry contacts to get Brisco released on DVD . This led to correspondence with Cuse , who also wanted to get a DVD set produced . On July 18 , 2006 , Warner Home Video released The Adventures of Brisco County , Jr .

: The Complete Series on DVD in Region 1 , an 8 @-@ disc DVD set that contains all 27 episodes of the series . The release includes commentary tracks from Campbell and Cuse ; an interactive menu of Brisco 's signature references narrated by Campbell ; The History of Brisco County , Jr . , documentary ; a feature called A Reading from the Book of Bruce ; and another gallery hosted by Campbell focusing on the gadgets from the show .