

= Mind Meld =

Mind Meld : Secrets Behind the Voyage of a Lifetime is a 2001 American documentary film in which actors William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy discuss the Star Trek science fiction franchise and its effects on their lives . Shatner and Nimoy portrayed the characters James T. Kirk and Spock respectively in the 1960s Star Trek television series , the 1970s animated television series , and their film sequels . They talk about differences they had with Gene Roddenberry , the creator of Star Trek , and about the strained relationships between Shatner and some of the other cast members . It was in this film that Nimoy first publicly revealed that he had struggled with alcoholism while he was acting in the original television series . Shatner talks about the death of his third wife , Nerine Kidd , who accidentally drowned in a pool in 1999 after suffering from alcoholism .

Mind Meld was produced to advertise Shatner 's personal website . Filming took place at Nimoy 's home on September 5 , 2001 , and Billy West narrated the title sequence . The film 's title refers to a fictional practice in Star Trek ? a mind meld is a telepathic link that Vulcans are able to create with other organisms . Mind Meld was released for sale on Shatner 's website on November 6 , 2001 , coinciding with the release of the director 's cut of Star Trek : The Motion Picture . Mind Meld attracted some notoriety because of an unintended sound in one scene that became a popular subject of flatulence humor among Star Trek fans and on morning zoo radio programs . Shatner denied being the source of this sound in multiple interviews ; he and Mind Meld 's director , Peter Jaysen , attributed it to equipment on set .

The film received mixed reviews from critics . Scott Brown of Entertainment Weekly gave the film an " F " , and said that the only people likely to watch the film were extreme Star Trek fans and people interested in hearing Shatner 's supposed flatulence . Laurence Lerman of Video Business praised the film for not " rehash [ing] anecdotes that have long been staples of Star Trek conventions and behind @-@ the @-@ scenes memoirs " , and instead for dealing with such topics as alcoholism , career difficulties , and conflicts on the set of Star Trek .

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William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy respectively portrayed James T. Kirk and Spock in Star Trek , first in the 1960s television series (later retitled Star Trek : The Original Series) , then in the 1970s television series Star Trek : The Animated Series , and subsequently in several Star Trek films between 1979 and 1994 . In Mind Meld , they discuss the Star Trek media franchise and its enduring success . The film is , except for the title sequence , composed entirely of Shatner and Nimoy in conversation . Many of the topics they discuss were inspired by online questions from fans . The film starts in Nimoy 's backyard , where the two sit on patio chairs , and then moves into Nimoy 's library , which is filled with souvenirs .

The film focuses on the effects Star Trek had on the lives of Shatner and Nimoy , with each actor interviewing the other about his fame . They talk about Star Trek 's origins and the death of DeForest Kelley , who had portrayed Leonard McCoy in both The Original Series and The Animated Series . Shatner and Nimoy also discuss interactions between themselves and others on the set of Star Trek , including conflicts . Both Shatner and Nimoy describe having had strained relationships with Gene Roddenberry , the creator of Star Trek , and attest to other members of the Original Series cast disliking Shatner . Only one of these cast members is referred to by name : Nichelle Nichols , who portrayed Nyota Uhura . " I never fully comprehended what it was that was bothering them " , says Shatner .

Both men describe Star Trek as having put personal pressures on them that negatively affected their family lives . The conversation is mostly guided by Shatner , who prompts Nimoy to discuss issues he had regarding the legitimacy of consistently portraying an extraterrestrial , and other struggles with his acting career at the time . " It took me a while , " Nimoy says , " but I got rid of all that anger when I realized that I never had to worry about work ever since Star Trek went on the air . " Nimoy reveals that he was an alcoholic at the time of the original Star Trek series ? something that was not publicly known before Mind Meld . He developed " a major drinking habit , probably during

the second or third year " of the series , he says , and had his secretary bring him alcohol in paper cups at the end of each day of filming . Nimoy suggests that he became dependent on alcohol because of the deterioration of his marriage to Sandra Zober , his first wife . He says that , since divorcing Zober in 1987 and marrying actress Susan Bay in 1988 , he has been a teetotaler .

Shatner says that acting in Star Trek was " life @-@ consuming " and left him " barely any time for family " , and that this was the reason for his divorce from Gloria Rand , his first wife . He describes a subsequent succession of sexual partners , including , he says , Star Trek actresses . He also talks about the death of his father , Joseph Shatner , and of his third wife , Nerine Kidd , who accidentally drowned in a pool in 1999 , losing a battle with alcoholism . Shatner recalls that Nimoy had expressed concern about Kidd 's alcoholism and warned him about marrying her . Another topic is Nimoy 's fine @-@ art photography , which deals with spirituality and sensuality . Both Shatner and Nimoy say that , while they are glad that Star Trek became successful , they wish their subsequent fame had encroached less on their privacy . They also describe having been typecast as a result of their roles in Star Trek , and say that this has had repercussions on their respective acting careers . Shatner recounts his initial surprise that , at science fiction conventions , the fans seem to like each other more than they like the science fiction actors . The film concludes with Nimoy putting his arm around Shatner 's shoulder and saying , " You 're my best friend . "

= = Production = =

Mind Meld was produced as a way of advertising Shatner 's personal website , williamshatner.com , which offered features including the Shatner and Friends fan club 's quarterly newsletter , semi @-@ regular updates on Shatner 's life , and a photograph of Shatner with the gorilla Koko . Shatner said that another reason they decided to make the film was because Nimoy was visibly getting old . Shatner asked Nimoy if he would be willing to discuss his experiences with alcoholism in the film , and Nimoy agreed . Nimoy later said that no one had ever asked him about this part of his past , and that discussing it in Mind Meld " was an opportunity to put out some information that might be helpful to some people . "

Filming took place on September 5 , 2001 , in high @-@ definition video at Nimoy 's home , under the direction of Peter Jaysen . There was no script ; the conversation between Shatner and Nimoy was ad lib . The title sequence of Mind Meld is narrated by veteran voice actor Billy West , who had previously voiced such characters as Zim in the television series *Invader Zim* , Ralph in *Joe 's Apartment* , and Elmer Fudd in *Looney Tunes : Back in Action* . While the filming session resulted in approximately two hours of footage , a significant portion of this was not used , resulting in a final runtime of 75 minutes . In an interview with science fiction magazine *Starlog* , Shatner said , " I don 't think ... that anything was cut because it was too personal or inflammatory . Edits were only made for time . " The title of the film refers to a fictional practice in Star Trek ; a mind meld is a telepathic link that Spock is able to create with other organisms because he is half @-@ Vulcan . Shatner summarized the film as being " two friends talking one @-@ on @-@ one " .

= = Release = =

Mind Meld was released on VHS and DVD for sale on Shatner 's website on November 6 , 2001 , coinciding with the release of the director 's cut of *Star Trek : The Motion Picture* , a film that Shatner and Nimoy agreed was not as good as they had hoped it would be . Mind Meld was produced by Creative Light Entertainment , a company that produced another filmed interview the following year ? Stan Lee 's *Mutants , Monsters & Marvels* , an interview of Marvel Comics publisher Stan Lee by film director Kevin Smith . The Mind Meld DVD offers widescreen and fullscreen options , Dolby Digital surround sound , and a five @-@ minute " making of " featurette . Mind Meld T @-@ shirts were available on Shatner 's website . The film 's release prompted Wil Wheaton , who had portrayed Wesley Crusher in *Star Trek : The Next Generation* , to change the name of his comic science fiction improvisational theatre company from " Mind Meld " to " EarnestBorg9 " .

Shatner referred to The Original Series as " cartoonish " in Mind Meld , but later , upon questioning

by a reporter , said , " I never thought it was a cartoon ... I never thought it was beneath me . " In a February 2002 interview on Larry King Live , Shatner said Mind Meld was similar to My Dinner with Andre , and indicated that he and Nimoy were hoping to produce more films of a similar nature . Nimoy said of the film , " This is the most personal insight the fans will get into our relationship and into aspects of Bill and myself they 've never heard before . " In April 2002 , Mind Meld was screened at the Newport Beach Film Festival . Two years later , Mind Meld was included in the bonus material when the first six Star Trek films were re @-@ released as a special edition box set .

= = = Alleged flatulence = = =

Around 52 minutes and 47 seconds into the film , when Shatner is talking about the other Original Series actors disliking him , he shifts in his chair and a sound evocative of flatulence is audible . This sound , apparently unnoticed by the filmmakers , was first mentioned in the media by Adam Buckman in the New York Post on October 10 , 2001 . Buckman wrote that he played the sound for more than six colleagues who all agreed that it came from Shatner . This scene became a popular subject of flatulence humor among Star Trek fans and on morning zoo radio programs . Reviewers identified as many as six other similar noises in Mind Meld , between the 52 @-@ minute mark and the end .

Howard Stern played the sound on his radio show several times , including when Shatner appeared on the show to promote his upcoming television series Iron Chef USA on November 13 , 2001 . When Stern asked about the sound , Shatner said it had been produced by the boom operator . A similar claim was made on Shatner 's website , where the noise was attributed to a squeaky jib . On Conan O 'Brien 's Late Night program on November 14 , Shatner called it " outrageous " that Buckman should assume him to be the source of the sound rather than Nimoy . O 'Brien responded , " You 're the captain ! You outrank him ! It 's your responsibility ! " Pressed further by O 'Brien on the sound 's provenance , Shatner suggested that it may have been a dog bark or a bird call . According to Jaysen , the sound did not emanate from Shatner , and was most likely caused by cables rubbing against each other while a camera moved . " It was probably some machine that nobody heard " , Shatner said in a September 2002 interview . " The controversy is over . "

Jim Dawson devoted an entire chapter of his 2006 Modern History of the Fart to Shatner 's alleged flatulence in Mind Meld , which he compares to the sound of someone stepping on a tribble . G. Noel Gross of DVD Talk compared the excitement over this sound to that evinced by adolescent boys watching pornography , and compared the level of scrutiny devoted to the scene to that received by the Zapruder film of the Kennedy assassination .

= = Reception = =

Sarah Sloboda of The New York Times wrote that Mind Meld " provides a genuine glimpse of the lives of the stars shadowed by the roles that defined their public personas , and the mutual experience that binds them as friends " . Gross praised the video quality , but criticized the DVD functionality and features . He also wrote that " even in the heavier parts of this conversation , there 's a warmth and comradery there that 's rife with good humor " . Scott Brown of Entertainment Weekly gave the film an F , saying that the only people likely to watch the film other than extreme Star Trek fans are people interested in hearing the sound alleged to be Shatner 's flatulence , which Brown said can be clearly heard . He called the film " seemingly interminable " and said the discussion between Shatner and Nimoy shows that they " rival black holes in sheer self @-@ absorption " . According to John Henzell , writing for The Press of New Zealand , Mind Meld 's trailer took its subject matter so seriously that it became comical .

Vern Perry of the Orange County Register called the film fascinating , writing that it skilfully combined humor and earnestness . He wrote that it was moving to see the two actors talk about their personal lives with such vulnerability ? particularly when Nimoy discusses his experiences with alcoholism . Greg Stacy of OC Weekly reported being " thoroughly charmed " by the film , and called

" the affection between [Shatner and Nimoy] obvious and touching . "

Laurence Lerman of Video Business praised Mind Meld for not " rehash [ing] anecdotes that have long been staples of Star Trek conventions and behind @-@ the @-@ scenes memoirs " , but instead dealing with such topics as alcoholism , career difficulties , and conflicts on the set of Star Trek . Mike Clark of USA Today praised Shatner 's interviewing abilities and wrote that the film was engaging . Clark called Shatner 's and Nimoy 's conversation " surprisingly frank " , but added that Shatner was " full of himself " . A review in British newspaper The Guardian summarized Mind Meld as " a couple of gents sitting around talking " .