

= Gridlock ( Doctor Who ) =

" Gridlock " is the third episode of the third series of the British science fiction television series Doctor Who , first broadcast on BBC One on 14 April 2007 . It was written by Russell T Davies and directed by Richard Clark .

In the episode , alien time traveller the Doctor ( David Tennant ) takes his new companion Martha Jones ( Freema Agyeman ) to New New York in the far future , where they discover the remainder of humanity on the planet live in perpetual gridlock within the Motorway , an underground highway system . When Martha is kidnapped , the Doctor races to find her before she enters the dangerous " fast lane " .

" Gridlock " completes a loose trilogy that began with " The End of the World " ( 2005 ) and " New Earth " ( 2006 ) , and contains hints at the series ' story arc . The story is designed to show how the Doctor can bring hope into a world . Production of " Gridlock " took place in September and October 2006 . Much of the episode was filmed in @-@ studio and used a large amount of computer @-@ generated imagery , so it appeared to be set in a " CGI world " . Some location filming was done in Cardiff , most notably at the Temple of Peace . " Gridlock " was viewed by 8 @.@ 41 million viewers in the UK and received generally positive reviews from critics .

= = Plot = =

The Doctor takes Martha in the TARDIS to the year five billion and fifty three and the city of New New York on the planet New Earth . They end up in an alleyway where street traders are selling mood patches to help people deal with their emotions . While the Doctor talks to a vendor , Martha is kidnapped at gun point by a young couple named Milo and Cheen . Once in their vehicle , they explain that Cheen is pregnant and that they needed three adult passengers with them to use the fast lane . They promise they will drop Martha off when they reach their destination ten miles away , estimated to take six years . Cheen also mentions rumours about something living down in the fast lane , saying that cars that go down there vanish and are never seen again .

The Doctor chases after Martha 's kidnappers and arrives at the Motorway , a completely enclosed highway filled with thousands of hover vans stuck in gridlock . The fumes in the air begin to affect the Doctor and he seeks refuge in the van of Thomas Kincade Brannigan and his wife Valerie . The Doctor learns that the couple , along with all the other traffic on the road , have only travelled a short distance in several years . Brannigan helps the Doctor to locate the vehicle containing Martha , which is heading towards the fast lane . The Doctor tries to call the police but gets put on hold , and Brannigan refuses to put his family in danger so the Doctor decides to try to reach Martha himself . He begins to jump down from lane to lane , breaking in and out of vans with his sonic screwdriver . Shortly after the Doctor leaves , Novice Hame enters Brannigan 's van , chasing after him .

Martha , Milo , and Cheen drive into the fast lane and begin to hear strange noises all around . A nearby driver warns them to escape into the slow lanes before being eaten by the creatures that live in the fast lane , but Milo refuses . The Doctor , finding himself in a van just above the fast lane , looks out the bottom and discovers that the floor of the Motorway is filled with Macra . The Macra are monstrous crab @-@ like alien beings that were once intelligent but now have devolved into feral beasts , who attempt to capture and eat those that fly in the fast lane . The Doctor watches as Milo 's van is nearly caught by a Macra claw , but Martha realises that the beings are attracted by the light and motion generated by the van and has Milo cut the power . This saves them from the beasts but leaves them with only a few minutes of breathable air in the van .

Novice Hame finally catches up with the Doctor and teleports him against his will to the senate building where the Face of Boe is waiting . Hame explains that a new mood drug called " Bliss " proved too addictive , and a virus mutated with the Bliss drug , became airborne and wiped out the entire surface population in a matter of minutes . Those in the Motorway were spared by being sealed in and keeping the travellers in constant traffic to avoid telling them the real problem . The Face of Boe wired himself to the system to keep the Motorway operational . The Doctor determines that whatever danger that Bliss may have caused before has long passed , and works with Hame to

try to power up the systems to unseal the Motorway . The Face of Boe sacrifices his life energy to the system , allowing the ceiling of the Motorway to open . The Doctor broadcasts a call for all drivers to escape through the ceiling and gives Martha directions to come find him .

When Martha arrives , the Doctor and Novice Hame are tending over the Face of Boe . The Face of Boe is close to death and the glass container that encased it is shattered . The Doctor tries to encourage the Face of Boe to live , as they are both the last of their kinds . Knowing that it is dying , the Face of Boe imparts its final message to the Doctor : " You are not alone " . The Doctor and Martha leave Hame to mourn and the Doctor tells Martha the message meant nothing . Martha knows the Doctor is lying and forces him to tell her the truth . As the undercity fills with the sound of the entire surviving population of New New York singing the hymn Abide With Me , he explains to Martha that he is indeed the last Time Lord and tells her all about Gallifrey and the Time War .

= = Production = =

= = = Writing = = =

" Gridlock " is the third in a trilogy which began with series one 's " The End of the World " and series two 's " New Earth " . Novice Hame and the green crescent seen on the mood patches previously appeared in " New Earth " . Head writer and executive producer Russell T Davies wanted to visit the same world each year to maintain a sense of continuity , something that could be hard to do with Doctor Who 's formula . Producer Phil Collinson remarked that " Gridlock " displayed Davies ' tendency to write about " topical " issues ; it is set in a dark dystopian future , but is also a satire on the common traffic jam . While the story is bleak , Davies showed how the Doctor transforms the place by literally opening up the sky and bringing in light . Davies also used hymns to signify hope and a togetherness of the members of the Motorway . Those on the Motorway sing " The Old Rugged Cross " , and the hymn heard at the end of the episode is " Abide with Me " . The episode also displays the Doctor 's growing attachment to Martha ; he feels guilty for lying to her and bringing her to New New York just to show off and realises that he misses her when she is taken .

Davies stated that he based many aspects of New New York on Megacity One from the anthology comic 2000 AD , including the businessman 's appearance on Max Normal from the Judge Dredd comic books . The numbered mood patches parallel the number coded mood controllers in the Ninth Doctor novel Only Human by Gareth Roberts ; Davies confirms that this was his inspiration . The character of Sally Calypso was an homage to Halo Jones , which featured a similar character named Swifty Frisko . Also in the online commentary , Davies noted that Brannigan 's appearance was based on " Ratz " , the CGI disembodied cat 's head that was a " virtual presenter " of CBBC 's Live & Kicking in the early 1990s . Ma and Pa at the start of the episode are based on the farming couple in the painting American Gothic , both having identical hairstyles , glasses and fashions . Alice and May Cassini are the first homosexual married couple featured in Doctor Who .

The episode marks the second appearance of the large crustacean Macra race , who previously appeared in the Second Doctor serial The Macra Terror ( 1967 ) . In " Gridlock " , they have " devolved " from their previous , more intelligent , state . Davies thought it was " cute " to bring back a forty @-@ year @-@ old monster whose story is now missing . " Gridlock " also contains important hints about the story arc of the series as it reveals the " great secret " promised to the Doctor by the Face of Boe in " New Earth " ? " You are not alone " . The Face of Boe was originally intended to die in " New Earth " , but as that episode featured another death , it was put off . The meaning of Boe 's final words are revealed in " Utopia " , while " Last of the Time Lords " suggest that the Face of Boe 's true identity is Captain Jack Harkness ( John Barrowman ) .

= = = Filming = = =

" Gridlock " was in the third filming block for the series , along with " The Lazarus Experiment " . Filming took place from mid @-@ September to early October 2006 . The episode uses " some of

the largest and most complex CGI effects of all the series so far " . The Motorway was entirely constructed out of CGI aside from a single car set ; it was the first time an episode was set inside a " CGI world " . Will Cohen , The Mill 's Visual FX Producer , revealed in Radio Times that the films Blade Runner , The Fifth Element and Star Wars , specifically the planet of Coruscant influenced the look of New New York .

Much of the episode was completed in the Upper Boat Studios , particularly the interior car scenes . For this , only one car set was used , with it being redecorated for each different car . The cars were decorated to look like they had been lived in , and incorporated futuristic and well @-@ known home objects . Brannigan and Valerie 's children were played by real kittens , which proved difficult to direct . The production team shot for four days in the " 6 @-@ foot by 6 @-@ foot " car , which Davies called a " nightmare " because not many camera angles were available and only one crew member could adjust the props and lighting at a time . In addition , smoke was generated around the car so it would blend in with the CGI smoke from the CGI cars . The small set was intended to benefit the actors , as they would feel claustrophobic . For the scene in which the Doctor jumps from car to car , the underside of a car was built and suspended ten to fifteen feet above the top of the car set with a green screen all around to get as many angles as possible . Davies preferred action sequences that moved up and down , a scale that is not seen much on television . The Temple of Peace in Cardiff was the location for the Darkened Temple , as well as the TV Studio with news reporter Sally Calypso . The production team spent two days filming there , on 18 and 19 September 2006 . The undercity where the Doctor and Martha arrive was filmed at the Cardiff Bay maltings and the Ely Papermill , which were designed to look in disrepair . The artificial rain proved difficult in some shots , as the production team had trouble getting one of the side walls wet .

= = Broadcast and reception = =

" Gridlock " was broadcast directly after the FA Cup semi @-@ final between Manchester United and Watford on BBC One . Had the match gone into extra time , the episode would have been postponed until the following week . Overnight ratings showed that the episode was watched by 8 million viewers , which increased to 8 @.@ 41 once time @-@ shifted viewers had been taken into account . This placed it as the second most @-@ watched programme of the week on BBC One , and the seventh overall . " Gridlock " received an Appreciation Index of 85 .

IGN 's Travis Fickett rated " Gridlock " an 8 @.@ 4 out of 10 , calling it " the first great episode " of the third series . He particularly praised the satire of a traffic jam , Tennant 's acting , and the use of Martha as a companion to aid the Doctor 's loss . Ian Berriman of SFX gave " Gridlock " four out of five stars . He praised the attention to detail of the props department , the appearance of the Macra , and the concept of the traffic jam , but felt there were many plot holes . He also called Travis Oliver , the actor who played Milo , " wooden " . Slant Magazine reviewer Ross Ruediger wrote that he did not like the episode much on first viewing because it was " too busy and too chaotic to get a proper grip on " but " subsequent viewings proved those very qualities are the backbone of the story . " He initially wished to see more of the Macra . Mark Wright of The Stage was positive towards calling back to " The End of the World " and " New Earth " , and praised Agyeman and the visual look of the episode . Despite finding the ending " life @-@ affirming " , he found a possible plot hole : " one wonders why the Face of Boe didn 't just open the roof in the first place " .

DVD Talk 's Nick Lyons compared the episode to " fine wine ... [ it ] gets better with age " . Lyons wrote , " Not only does the episode contain stunning imagery ( the Macra , the motorway ) , but ' Gridlock ' also has some of the most touching scenes in " Doctor Who " history " . In Who Is the Doctor , an unauthorised guide to the revival of Doctor Who , Graeme Burk interpreted " Gridlock " as an allegory that was not meant to be realistic , and commented that its strength was the " powerful " theme of the motorists being blind to the truth . He stated that the " fun , fast @-@ paced story with lots of comedic set pieces " worked to its advantage , and the appearance of the Macra was a " treat " for long @-@ time fans . Despite the popularity of the later series episodes " Human Nature " / " The Family of Blood " and " Blink " , Burk felt that " Gridlock " was the " worthiest candidate for this season 's best story " . Burk 's co @-@ author Robert Smith ? also called it " one

of the best episodes " of the revived series , particularly praising the acting of Tennant and Agyeman . Topless Robot named it the fifth best Tenth Doctor episode .