

130

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TYPE: SCOUT SHIP

IN USE: 2370s

LENGTH: 180 METERS

PROPULSION: TRANSWARP

BORG PROBE

BORG PROBE

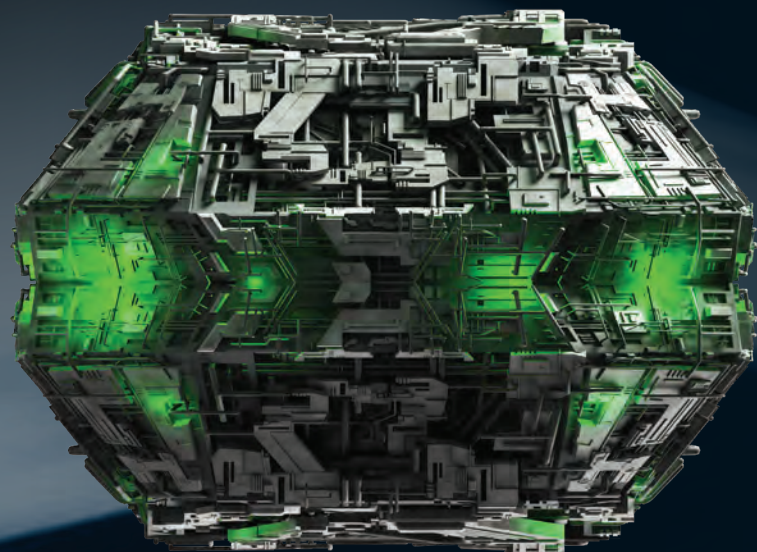
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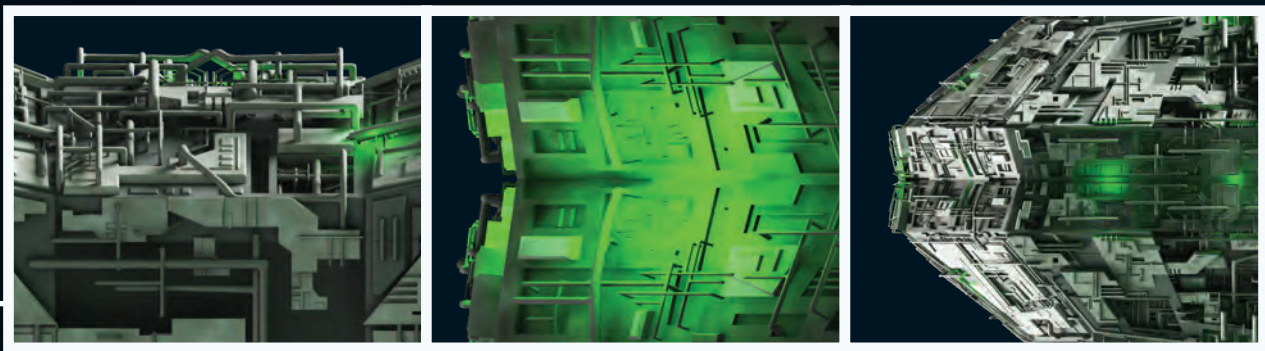
Stand assembly:



BORG PROBE SPECIFICATION



OPERATED BY:	THE BORG COLLECTIVE
TYPE:	SCOUT SHIP
IN OPERATION:	2370s
LOCATION:	DELTA QUADRANT
LENGTH:	180 METERS (APPROX.)
PROPULSION:	TRANSWARP
WEAPONRY:	ENERGY BEAM EMITTERS



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▼ Like all Borg vessels, the probe was a simple geometric shape that comprised of various plates and tube-like girders stuck on its exterior in a seemingly haphazard manner, with green energy signatures shining out from within. Its primary function appeared to be explore space in search of technology worthy of assimilation.



propulsion, energy beam weaponry and defenses in the shape of deflector shields and ablative hull armor. Its tactical abilities, however, were not as powerful as other larger Borg ships, and the probe's offensive and defensive capabilities were similar to that of the *U.S.S. Voyager* NCC-74656.

RESILIENT DESIGN

As with all Borg vessels, the probe had a highly decentralized design. This meant that there was no specific command center, and most of the vital systems were duplicated throughout the ship, so it was much less vulnerable to an attack on a specific area. It was therefore able to remain operative even after taking substantial damage.

There was also no need for living areas, such as a galley or personal quarters, as the drones had no need for these amenities. Instead, the interior was tightly-packed with Borg alcoves, where the drones regenerated, and various catwalks and conduits leading to vital systems and consoles.

In 2375, Captain Janeway decided to attack a Borg ship in the hope of disabling it and stealing some of its technology. The item she most wanted to get her hands on was a transwarp coil, the primary Borg propulsion device that allowed them to cross vast distances of space in minutes.

Of course, Captain Janeway was not stupid and realized that taking on a Borg ship was incredibly dangerous. She therefore resolved to attack their weakest ship – a Borg probe.

At around 180 meters in length, the Borg probe was the smallest ship the cybernetic race were known to use in the 24th century. It was oblong-shaped with rounded edges, and resembled a giant casket.

It appeared to function as a long-range scouting vessel and was operated by a crew of no more than 200 drones, much less than other Borg ships. It was equipped with all the standard Borg technology of the time, including transwarp

BORG PROBE

A Borg probe was not an unmanned craft, but the smallest ship in the Borg fleet in the 24th century.

DATA FEED

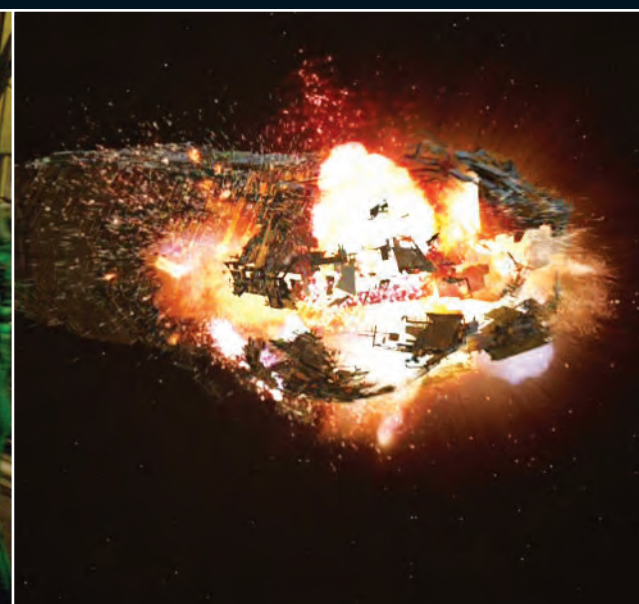
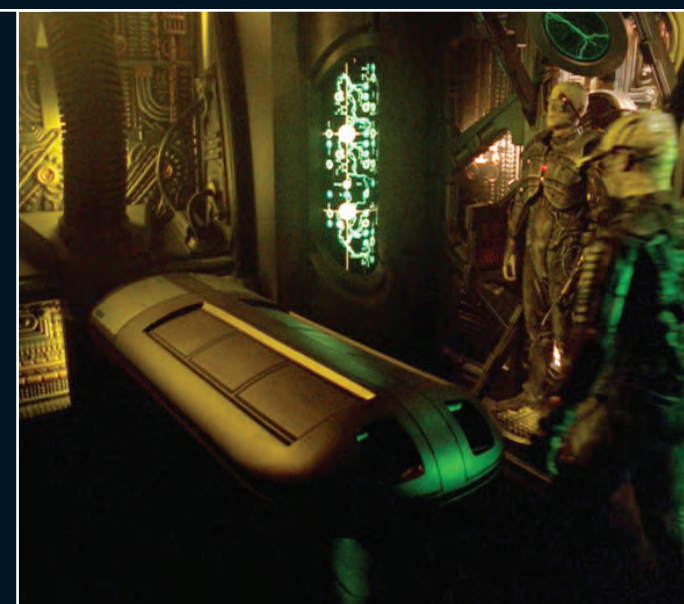
A transwarp coil was a Borg propulsion device that allowed their ships to travel much faster than Starfleet vessels. A coil needed at least 30 teradynes of force to create a transwarp conduit.



◀ In 2375, the crew of the *U.S.S. Voyager* allowed themselves to be found by the least powerful ship in the Borg fleet – the Borg probe. Although the two ships were equally matched in terms of combat capabilities, the *Voyager* crew hoped to disable the Borg probe and then steal some of its technology.



▶ After the Borg probe and *Voyager* had exchanged fire, the probe remodulated its shields to adapt to the frequency of *Voyager's* phasers. During this small window, *Voyager* seized the opportunity to beam a photon torpedo aboard the probe. Before the drones managed to disarm it, the torpedo detonated and an explosion ripped through the Borg probe.



▶ Debris from the Borg cube was brought aboard *Voyager* and gathered in cargo bay two. The Starfleet crew sifted through the wreckage to see if anything could be salvaged. One of the items that still worked was an arm from a medical repair drone, which the Doctor promptly claimed.



▲ The *Voyager* crew only wanted to disable the Borg probe, but because the photon torpedo ended up being beamed to an area aboard the probe near its main power matrix, it caused a catastrophic explosion. The Borg probe was torn apart from the inside, and only fragments of the ship were left floating in the surrounding space.

▲ A Borg probe was much smaller than other Borg vessels and not nearly as powerful. It was, nevertheless, equipped with similar technology and capable of transwarp speeds. It was also able to identify ships and technology worthy of assimilation, but its combat capabilities were much less than that of the larger Borg cube.

When *Voyager* allowed itself to be found by a Borg probe, Janeway warned them to break off their attack and stated that they were equally matched when it came to firepower, but the Borg, implacable as ever, continued with their assault. *Voyager* took several hits from the probe's energy weapons, but they had no effect, while *Voyager* returned fire, causing some damage.

The Borg probe started to regenerate its primary shield matrix and remodulated its weapons in preparation for another attack. However, in the fraction of a second that it took to change the frequency of the probe's shields, *Voyager* beamed a photon torpedo directly on to the Borg ship.

As a drone went to disarm the weapon, it exploded causing the entire probe ship to be blown to smithereens. Millions of fragments of

the probe littered the area, as the *Voyager* crew wondered how they had managed to destroy it rather than just disable it.

AMPLIFIED EXPLOSION

Seven of Nine had the answer to that question, as she determined that the torpedo had detonated right next to the probe's power matrix, which caused a catastrophic chain reaction. All that was left was just fragments of the probe, but Janeway ordered her crew to sift through them in case they managed to salvage something of worth.

The Starfleet crew recovered two power nodes and a dozen plasma conduits, plus some type of auto-regeneration unit that still scuttling around on the floor of cargo bay two. The Doctor also managed to salvage a servo-armature from

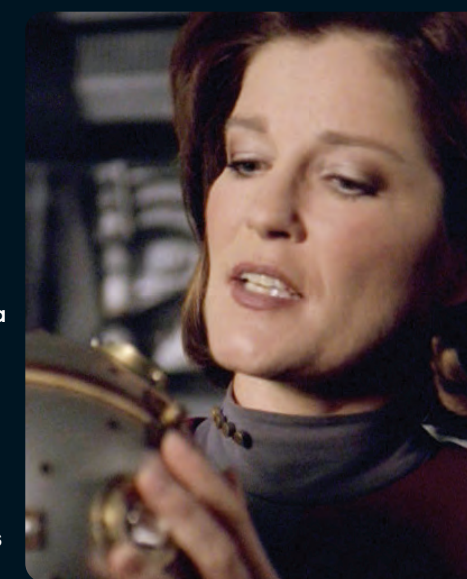
a medical repair drone, which featured a laser scalpel, biomolecular scanner and a micro-suture.

Voyager's encounter with the Borg probe was not a total waste. One of the datanodes they recovered contained tactical information showing the long range sensor telemetry, assimilation logistics and Borg vessel movements for a radius of 30 light years.

This data allowed *Voyager* to avoid any run-ins with Borg vessels, but when it also revealed a Borg sphere, which had been heavily damaged by an ion storm, just nine light years away from them it gave Janeway another idea. She made a plan to steal a transwarp coil from the sphere, which was ultimately successful. The coil provided 20,000 light years of travel before giving out, taking about 15 years off *Voyager's* journey home.

DATA FEED

The *Voyager* crew collected eight kilotons of debris from the wreckage of the Borg probe. Captain Janeway really hoped to find a transwarp coil, and although they found one, it was damaged beyond repair. Janeway also found a small sphere that was made from some kind of polytrinic alloy. When she began to inspect it, Harry Kim told her to put it down as it had been crawling around on the floor and he suspected that it was an auto-regeneration unit.



TRANSWARP CHAMBER

Borg vessels were highly decentralized and most of their vital technology was duplicated throughout their interiors, meaning they had multiple redundancies built-in. For example, if one system failed or was destroyed, a back-up system in another part of the ship could be brought online to replace it.

One area that did not have a back-up and was therefore one of the most important areas of a Borg ship was the transwarp chamber. This section housed the transwarp drive and the most vital component in making it work was a transwarp coil – it was the equivalent of a Starfleet ship's warp core.

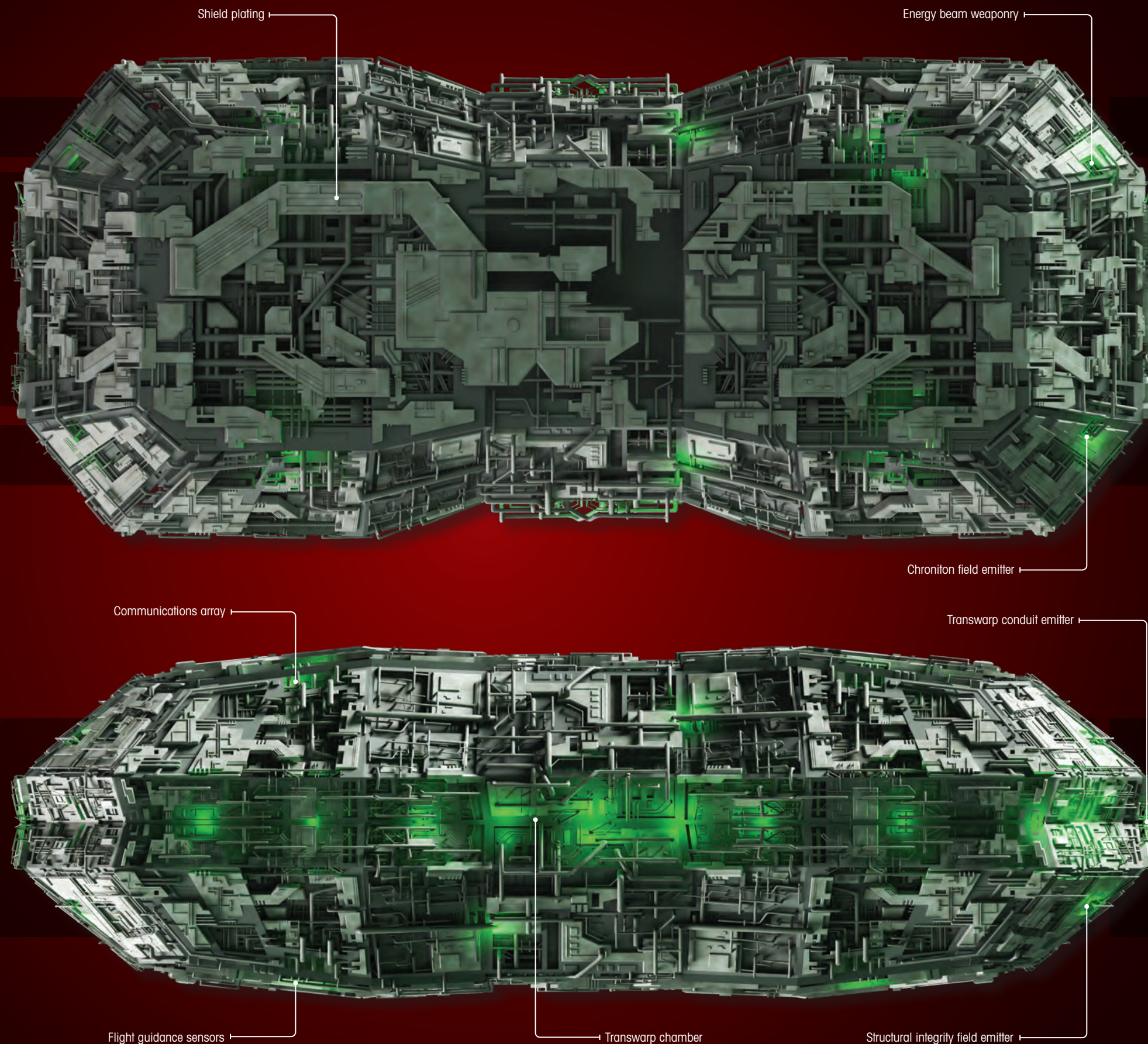
The transwarp chamber was located deep within a Borg ship, and it was heavily shielded to protect it from damage in an attack. The Borg placed such importance on the transwarp coil that it was designed to self-destruct if the ship became critically damaged, so no other species could use it or study the technology.



▲ One of the most important areas on all Borg vessels was the transwarp chamber. This section contained the transwarp coil, the component responsible for generating transwarp conduits.

DATA FEED

Borg probes were capable of traveling at both warp and transwarp speeds. After entering a transwarp conduit, a Borg ship would project a structural integrity field ahead of itself to prevent it from breaking up under the extreme gravimetric pressure that were exerted on the hull. They also emitted a chroniton field in front of the ship while in a transwarp conduit to compensate for the temporal stress they were under.

**POWER NODES**

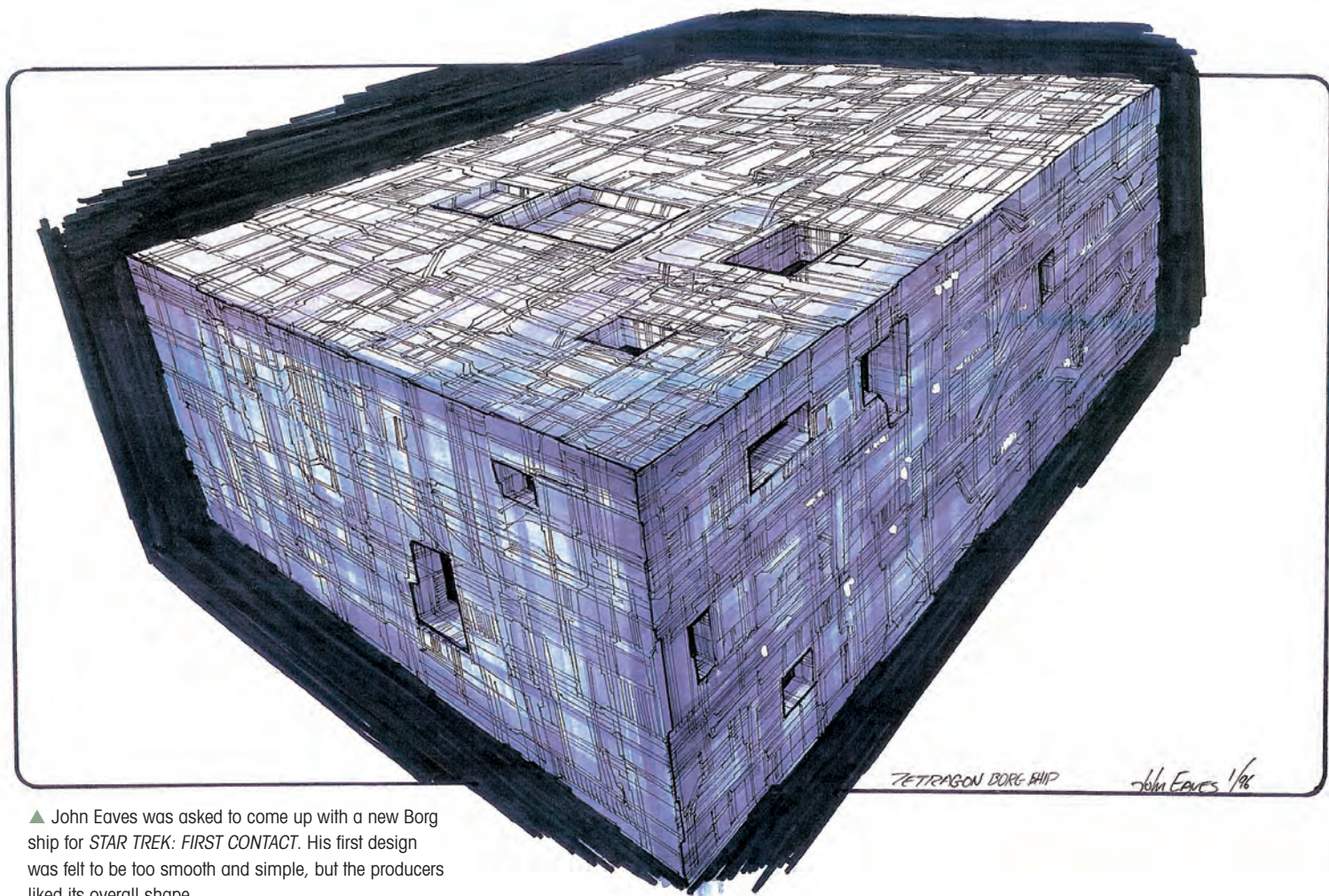
Energy for Borg ships was produced by numerous power nodes. Each one generated enormous amounts of power, which was distributed throughout the ship via the means of plasma conduits.

TOUGH TRITANIUM

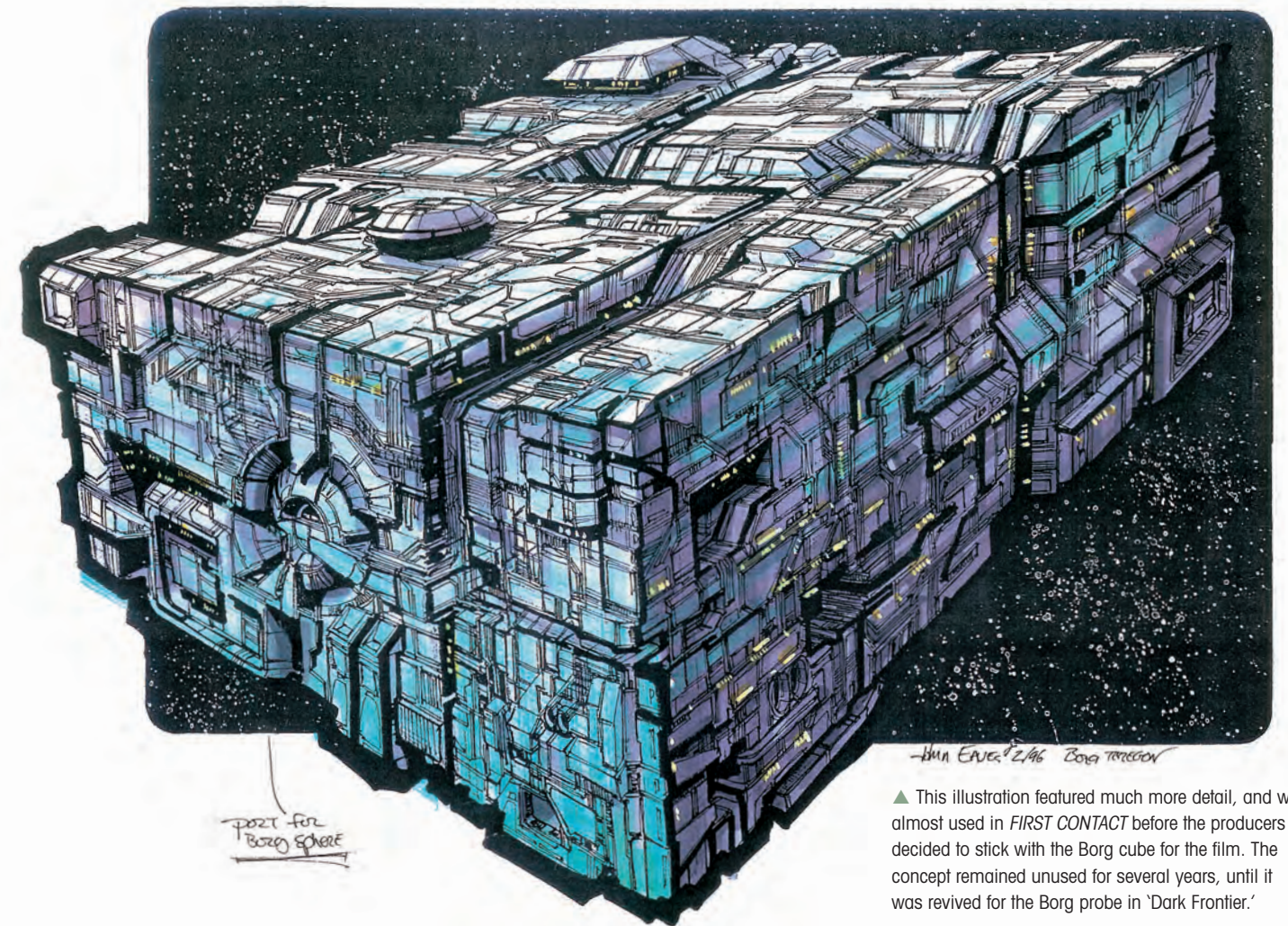
Borg vessels were mostly made from tritanium, an ore known for its extreme hardness. Tritanium was 21.4 times as hard as diamond, and Borg tactical drones were largely composed of it.

DATA NODES

Like all Borg ships, the Borg probe featured numerous data nodes. These portable storage and processing devices contained enormous amounts of information, such as how many drones were on the ship, long-range sensor telemetry, assimilation logistics and the location of other Borg vessels.



▲ John Eaves was asked to come up with a new Borg ship for *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*. His first design was felt to be too smooth and simple, but the producers liked its overall shape.



▲ This illustration featured much more detail, and was almost used in *FIRST CONTACT* before the producers decided to stick with the Borg cube for the film. The concept remained unused for several years, until it was revived for the Borg probe in 'Dark Frontier.'

DESIGNING THE

BORG PROBE

The Borg probe that featured in 'Dark Frontier, Part I' evolved out of concept John Eaves had illustrated for *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*.

The design of the Borg probe had its origins in the feature film *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*, which was released three years before 'Dark Frontier.' For the movie, illustrator John Eaves was asked to come up with some alternative designs for Borg ships. In early drafts of the script for

FIRST CONTACT, the assault on Earth was carried out by an enormous Borg tetragon. This posed Eaves with a slight problem – no one in the art department actually knew what a tetragon was!

Fortunately, as Eaves recalled, before he'd even had time to look for his

dictionary, the writers and producers provided a little clarification. "They wanted different shapes that were kind of along the lines of a cube, but not really the same as the old cube," said Eaves. "They thought we maybe needed a different look because we'd seen so much of that ship."

The first concept Eaves came up with was of a large, rectangular ship, rather like an enormous Borg brick. "The first one I did was very smooth and very large," said Eaves. "It was this reflective block and it had all these inset passageways you could fly through or things could fly out of. The producers said, 'OK, that's kind of cool. Let's carry that a little bit further, but not so smooth; we need that Borg detail.'"

ADDED DETAIL

Back then Borg detail wasn't very clearly defined. The original model of the cube had only been designed for television and would never have stood up to a cinematic presentation. It was essentially made up of model trees – the bits of plastic that are left behind

when you've assembled a model kit. So, Eaves had to design the detail himself. Thankfully, he said, this didn't mean he had to draw every individual hatch and panel. "I knew how John Goodson, the ILM modelmaker who would be building the ship, was going to work on the model. They were going to use brass etch, and there was really no way you could draw it – so what I did was just a guideline for the kind of shapes. I tried to do that with all the drawings I did; I left a lot of spaces open so the modeler could be part of the creative process."

Eaves refined his design a couple more times, adding more panelling before he hit on the final design. "That was also rectangular, but it had a lot of really deep valleys and it had a little

round escape sphere on the surface," said Eaves. "The producers liked that one; they said 'Let's go with that.' They sat with it for a week or so, then they came back and said, 'We're going to go back with the cube shape.'"

Eaves' work on the Borg tetragon was not in vain, however. The basic design was resurrected a few years later for the Borg probe in 'Dark Frontier,' although on a much smaller scale than was originally envisaged. Eaves said, "It's rare for that much work to be wasted, so it was great that it got used for the Borg probe. Of course, the scale of the ship was reduced, but I really enjoyed seeing how the CG artists interpreted it. As always, they did a fantastic job and it was cool seeing it being blown up."



STAR TREK DIRECTOR

CLIFF BOLE

Cliff Bole was one of *STAR TREK*'s most prolific directors, having worked on more than 40 episodes in total. Before he passed away in 2014, he looked back on his experiences of working for the franchise.

▲ 'Dark Frontier, Part I' ended up being the last episode of *STAR TREK* that Cliff Bole directed after working for the franchise for 12 years. The episode was a great success, and benefitted from Bole's visual flare and experience.

'Dark Frontier, Part I' was directed by Cliff Bole, who was one of the most commonly used directors of *STAR TREK* in the Rick Berman-era. In all, he directed 25 episodes of *THE NEXT GENERATION*, seven episodes of *DEEP SPACE NINE* and 10 episodes of *VOYAGER*. He made a huge contribution to the franchise, including helming both parts of the seminal

two-parter 'The Best of Both Worlds,' and he even had the Bolian race named after him.

Bole was often called in to direct some of the most spectacular *STAR TREK* episodes, and 'Dark Frontier' certainly qualified. It was a major undertaking that took us to the heart of Borg space, dealt with Seven's background, and introduced us to a new Borg Queen.



The show was actually shot as two separate one-hour episodes and the decision to show it as a two hour special was taken relatively late in the day. The first part was directed by Cliff Bole, and it turned out to be his swan song on the franchise.

UNDER THE GUN

Bole recalled that the production was under a lot of pressure from the get-go. To make matters worse the show was filming in November and December, a period that is notoriously busy. "Casting was a bit of a problem," said Bole. "The town was awful busy then. You know, winding down before Christmas with everybody trying to get shows done, and finding the right talent was very tough. I think the original actress who played Seven's mother was unavailable and working in New York, and we just had to go searching.

"A lot of times when they were looking, I was shooting, so that added to it. We were putting the show together pretty much at the fifth hour, and I had to depend on the boys upstairs to do some

casting without me, because my plate was full. So, Seven's parents were cast late, because we weren't sure how much we were going to do on it. The girl we picked for the young Seven was a real find. We lucked out but, by God, we looked; it got really tight."

And casting was not the only problem: the writers were working long hours to produce an exceptional script, and sometimes the directors could not wait for them to finish.

"We started shooting before we had actually had a completed script and the writers were really cranking hard," said Bole. "Our set designer, Richard James, had to pretty much put a set together without knowing the ending, and he had to build the Queen's set without knowing how the second part was going. The phone was ringing all the time; that's how Brannon (Braga) and I had to work, because he was working so hard on the second part and finishing the first one. I mean he answered the phone immediately and we hammered our way through it."

▲ Bole, seen here in the top left picture, came on board early in the first season of *THE NEXT GENERATION*. He had to use all his experience to complete 'Dark Frontier, Part I' on time, especially as they were still looking for actresses to play a young Seven of Nine and her mother at the last minute. Bole was also adamant that they had to show the Borg Queen at the end of 'Dark Frontier, Part I,' even though she was originally not scheduled to appear until the second part.



◀ As a sign of the impact Bole made on the franchise, he had a species – the Boliars – named for him. No other *STAR TREK* director has received this honor.

▶ Bole looked back on working on *TNG* with great fondness. He became good friends with many of the main cast, such as Michael Dorn, and said the acting ensemble was the best he ever directed.



Most of the changes to the script were very subtle but, as Bole explained, some important details still hadn't been clarified.

"Even before I had an ending, I begged to get the Queen in the end of my piece," explained Bole. "Originally, they hadn't planned on it, and I said 'Guys, you can't do this. You've got to get the Queen in this episode. You've just got to have what I call the end-teaser and introduce the Queen. I don't care if it's one page or two shots; just do it.'"

▼ The first *STAR TREK* show that Bole directed was 'Lonely Among Us.' In this episode, Captain Picard was possessed by a sentient cloud creature, who was trying to return to its own kind.



Bole did get his scene with the Borg Queen, but not straight away: "They hadn't quite got the Queen yet, the actress wasn't available; so I had to come back to shoot," said Bole. "I had to come back after I'd finished filming, about a week later, to shoot my part with the Queen, which was just the ending (of the first hour of the show)."

By the time Bole directed 'Dark Frontier, Part I,' he was a *STAR TREK* veteran, but he had had plenty of experience helming TV shows before he took on his first assignment on *THE NEXT GENERATION* in 1987. Pre-*TREK*, Bole had many successful programs to his credit such as *The Six Million Dollar Man*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Supertrain*, *V*, *Vega\$*, *Fantasy Island*, *T.J. Hooker*, *MacGyver* and more.

IN THE PICTURE

Bole was also already acquainted with *STAR TREK*'s creator Gene Roddenberry. "I hadn't worked with Gene, but I had met him many times," said Bole. "I had certainly seen *THE ORIGINAL SERIES*, and I had worked with Bill Shatner; I did the pilot for *T.J. Hooker* and did a lot of shows with him and with Leonard Nimoy. Also, I used George Takei on *The Six Million Dollar Man*, so I was very much aware of the show. And I had worked for Harve Bennett, who ended up doing the *STAR TREK*

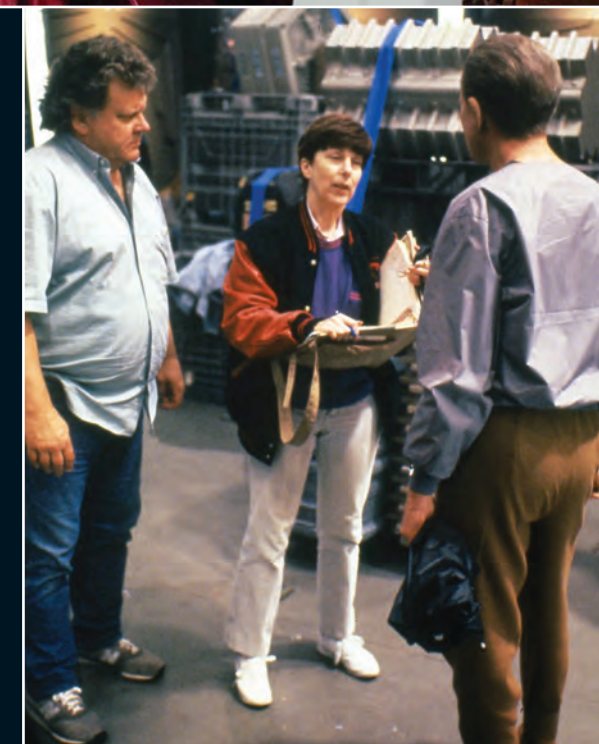
features; he also did *The Mod Squad*, which knocked *THE ORIGINAL SERIES* off the air. It was kind of a weird circle."

INSTANT CHEMISTRY

The revival of *STAR TREK* after more than 20 years was a surprise to many people. Bole said, "There were a lot of soothsayers when it first came out saying it was just going to last one year, but I felt a chemistry amongst the cast that I felt was going to work. I just felt it was going to be a success. Personally I felt that *THE NEXT GENERATION* out-weighed the original. Certainly the electronics, and everything that had improved over the years, were in our favor. But I just thought the stories and the cast made it a much better series."

The first show Bole directed, 'Lonely Among Us,' was the seventh in that first season. In the episode a cloud entity tried to communicate via Picard's body as the ship attempted to transport the warring Anticans and Selay to the planet Parliament for conciliatory talks.

Bole was acknowledged in several *STAR TREK* in-jokes. In the third first-season episode he directed, 'Conspiracy,' the writers bestowed the doubtful compliment of naming the bald, blue, Boliars after him. Bole was neither bald nor blue, and joked, "Oh, my goodness, I lost 40 pounds

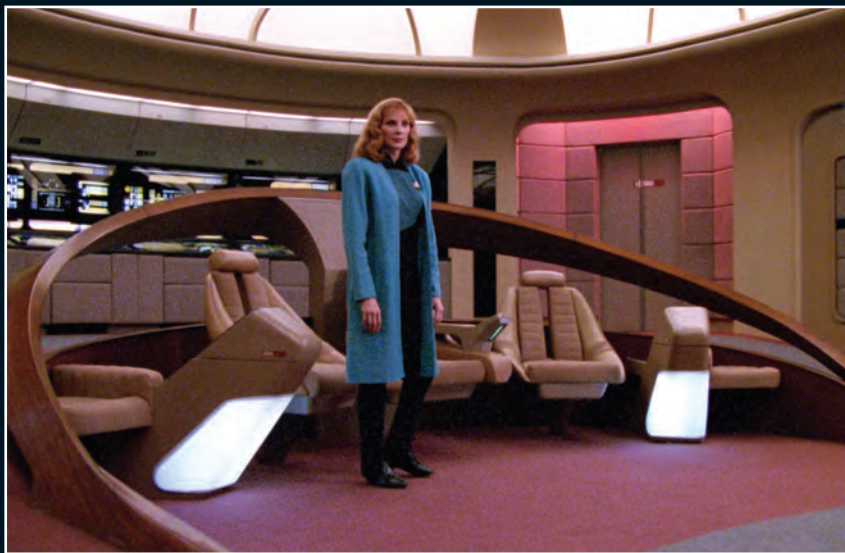


▲ Bole was called in to direct many pivotal episodes of *STAR TREK*. 'The Emissary' introduced Worf's lover K'Ehleyr and began a storyline that eventually culminated in the Klingon Civil War.

◀ Bole is seen here on the set of *DS9* with script supervisor Judi Brown and René Auberjonois, who played Odo. Bole directed seven episodes of *DEEP SPACE NINE*, and he recalled that the overall mood behind the camera was more serious than it had been on *TNG*.

since then!" And later, in *STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE*'s second season, the Cliffs of Bole were mentioned in 'Invasive Procedures,' a show helmed by another veteran *STAR TREK* director, Les Landau.

STAR TREK's close-knit production teams were always admired by those who worked alongside them, and Bole was no exception. "We were all



▲ Episodes that largely focused on just one crew member, such as 'Remember Me,' posed Bole with more challenges than perhaps installments with many people and plenty of action.

working together for so long it seemed to be not necessarily a mutual admiration society, but we all knew how everyone worked, and it came together. It was a great setup. It was probably the best overall production situation that I was aware of since I'd been directing. Rick (Berman) mounted a great unit. He was a very dedicated, hands-on producer."

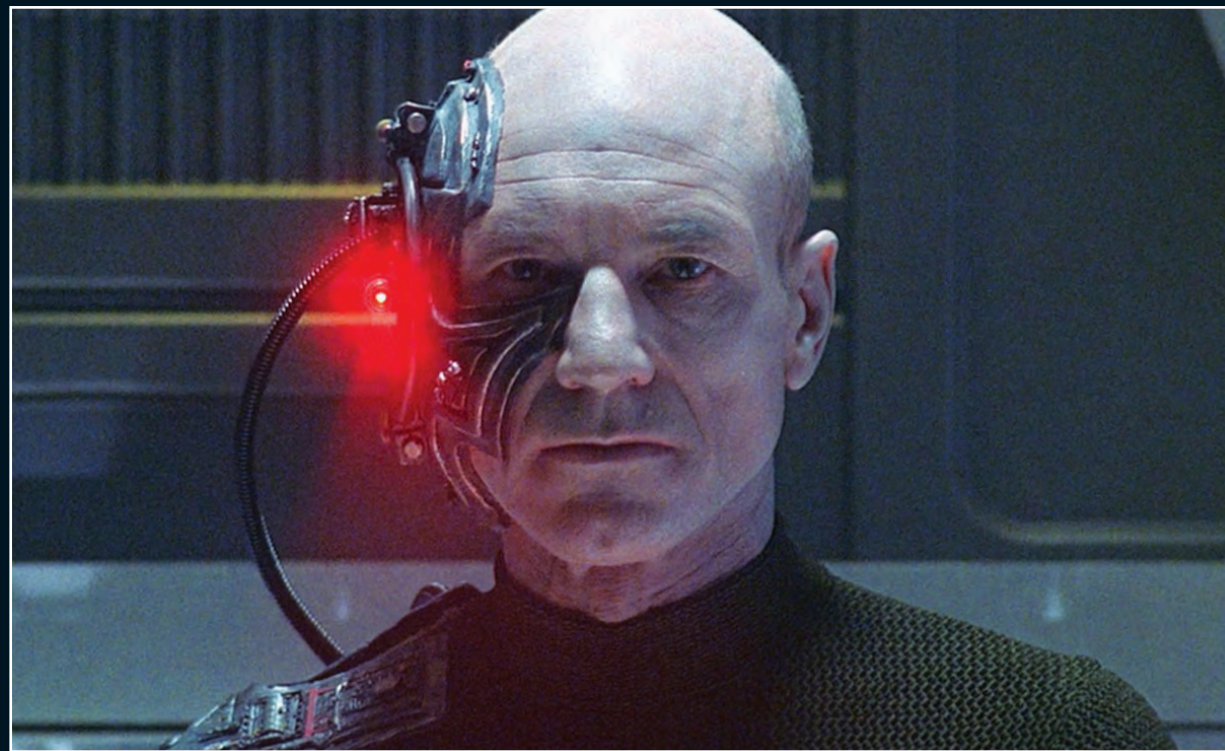
There was plenty of variety to keep Bole creatively satisfied. "I did one show where Gates (McFadden) was the only person in the show ('Remember Me'). One person acting alone was a real challenge; it was easy to take 30 people

and do something, but with one person you all become very vulnerable. And I did one with Patrick pretty close to the same concept."

WORKING WITH THE BORG

At the other end of the scale, Bole was involved with several of *STAR TREK*'s biggest shows. As has been said, he directed the first half of 'Dark Frontier,' which certainly turned out to be a triumph, but Bole's all-time favorite of the shows he directed was *TNG*'s 'The Best of Both Worlds,' where he helmed both parts. "That was done just before the real break in optical effects when things really started going crazy, and we were still doing them in a format that was a little more difficult. Then it became a lot easier. But I'm very proud of that show."

On *DS9*, Bole's favorite was a virtual two-hander with Ben and Jake Sisko. "I think the one I really enjoyed was a story with Avery (Brooks) and his son, and they were on a special little ship that they built and they went out in space ('Explorers'). We built a marvelous set, very small, and it was just the two of them. It was a great relationship show with some great optical effects, and I was able to come up with some camera movement inside of the set with cranes and stuff. I just enjoyed the whole thing."



► Bole felt his finest *STAR TREK* moment was directing 'The Best of Both Worlds,' which is still regularly voted the best ever episode. Bole said that after he first read the script, he knew it was going to be a great episode, and he put everything he had into it.

As for *VOYAGER*, Bole liked 'The Q and the Grey.' "Q was trying to have a romance with Janeway. That was my favorite."

Bole gave much of the credit to the actors themselves. "The ensemble of *TNG* was a highlight; it was just grand. It was like a family. And then there were the guest stars, of course. Q, John de Lancie, brought a lot to it. He studied what he was doing, and he brought stuff that sometimes just went over your head. I think if any director didn't admit to that he was a pompous ass; there were plenty of actors that came in and they didn't have a clue and you got on with it, but others had done their homework and brought something to the table that you didn't even think about. That was what de Lancie did."

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS

Working with *STAR TREK*'s aliens was always enjoyable. "The Borg were the fun ones," said Bole. "You couldn't beat the animation and the design of the Borg. And of course the Klingons were great; they were pictorially interesting, and you could just have so much fun with them with the camera. Because they were broader and bigger, you could stretch their performance a little bit more. And I loved the Ferengi; they were the Peter Lorre of space."

Bole preferred character-driven shows, but was always content to work with whatever material the writers came up with, in *STAR TREK* and elsewhere. "We were all subject to what was hot at the particular time," he said. "There was the Aaron Spelling era where the character base was not there; it was all fluff and mind candy. After that of course a lot of it was character-driven, with 'The Practice' and shows like that, and action was kind of taking a back seat."

Bole saw himself as primarily a TV director. "I did 300 hours of television," he said. "I had many chances at features - I got two or three submissions a year and the material was just dreadful. So I made a decision that if the material wasn't any better than what I was doing, I was not going to touch it. It was a major move. There were two reasons why you were in the business; one was that you loved it, you liked the creativity, and the other was that financially it was rewarding. I did as well or better than most of the feature



◀ 'Explorers,' which combined some stunning effects and great sets with strong relationship moments between Sisko and his son, Jake, was Bole's favorite directing job on *DS9*.

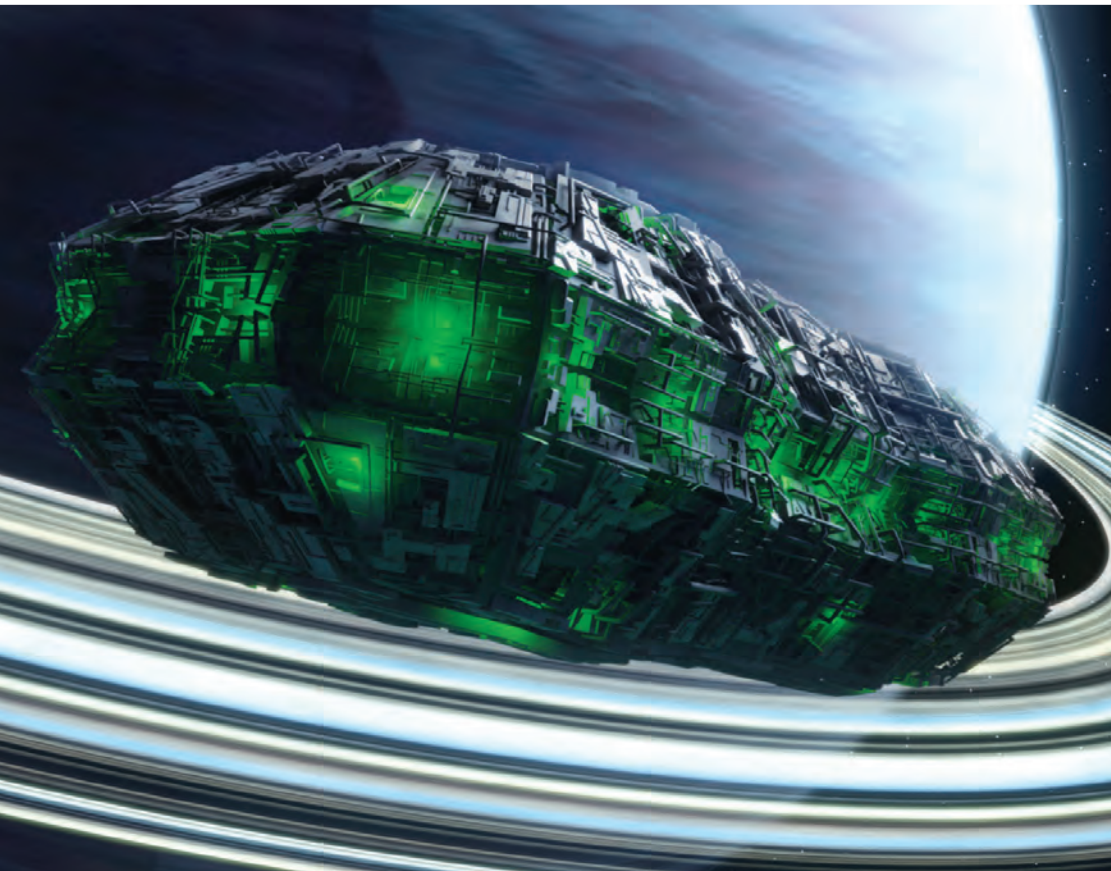


◀ Bole picked out 'The Q and the Grey' as the best episode he directed on *VOYAGER*. He was full of praise for both Kate Mulgrew [Captain Janeway] and John de Lancie [Q], who he said always brought something extra to the character apart from what was explicitly written in the script.

directors, except of course the top five or six. So if you made the decision that you were going to do a feature, there had better be something there, or you were wasting a lot of time."

Bole was known as a no-nonsense, plain-speaking director, who got the job done on time, even if he had to ruffle a few feathers on the way. That's not to say he wasn't an accomplished director with a creative eye, but he knew how important it was to be organized, finish on schedule and keep a close eye on the budget. Those who knew him were aware that he would tell it like it was, but he was also honest and upfront. Bole remembered working on *STAR TREK*, particularly on *THE NEXT GENERATION*, with great affection and said working with that cast was great fun and his biggest joy. Sadly, Bole died at his home in Palm Desert, California in 2014 after a long battle with cancer.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

Whereas the Borg Queen used sex to try and seduce Data in *STAR TREK: FIRST CONTACT*, the Queen was more of an evil mother figure as she tried to seduce Seven of Nine into rejoining the Collective in 'Dark Frontier.' Borg Queen actress Susanna Thompson saw this maternal relationship as the key to Seven's dilemma. "There really were two maternal figures," said Thompson. "Janeway and the Borg Queen were these two sides that were pulling at Seven."



The photon torpedo that destroyed the Borg probe in the teaser of 'Dark Frontier' was initially deleted from the script for budgetary reasons. It was reinserted at the last moment when additional funds were found to help give the episode a spectacular start.



Seven of Nine was seen in a purple jumpsuit for the first time in 'Dark Frontier.' This outfit was introduced because the previous blue costume had caused problems for the special effects department when filming her against Bluescreen backdrops.

- FIRST APPEARANCE: 'DARK FRONTIER' (VOY)
- TV APPEARANCE: STAR TREK: VOYAGER
- DESIGNED BY: John Eaves

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: VOYAGER 'Dark Frontier'

After the success of airing 'The Killing Game, Parts I & II' in a single night the previous season, the studio was particularly keen to do something similar in Season Five. Executive producer Brannon Braga wanted to create a big blockbuster TV event for the February rating sweeps period, and he and his writing staff came up with the idea of airing a feature-length episode, which was only later broken up into two parts for reruns in syndication.

Braga said, "To do a Borg movie, telefilm or whatever you want to call it, we had to outdo *FIRST CONTACT*. The

space battles and the Queen had to be more elaborate."

It certainly was a spectacular TV event. From the moment a Borg probe exploded in the teaser, the episode took the viewer on a rip-roaring adventure to the heart of Borg space with the Unicomplex, as the Borg Queen and Captain Janeway fought for the soul of Seven of Nine. It also took in the backstory of Seven, as more was learned about her parents - Magnus and Erin Hansen - who were based on the gorilla specialist Dian Fossey.

This feature-length episode was a triumph, and it won an Emmy Award for Outstanding Visual Effects for a TV series.

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