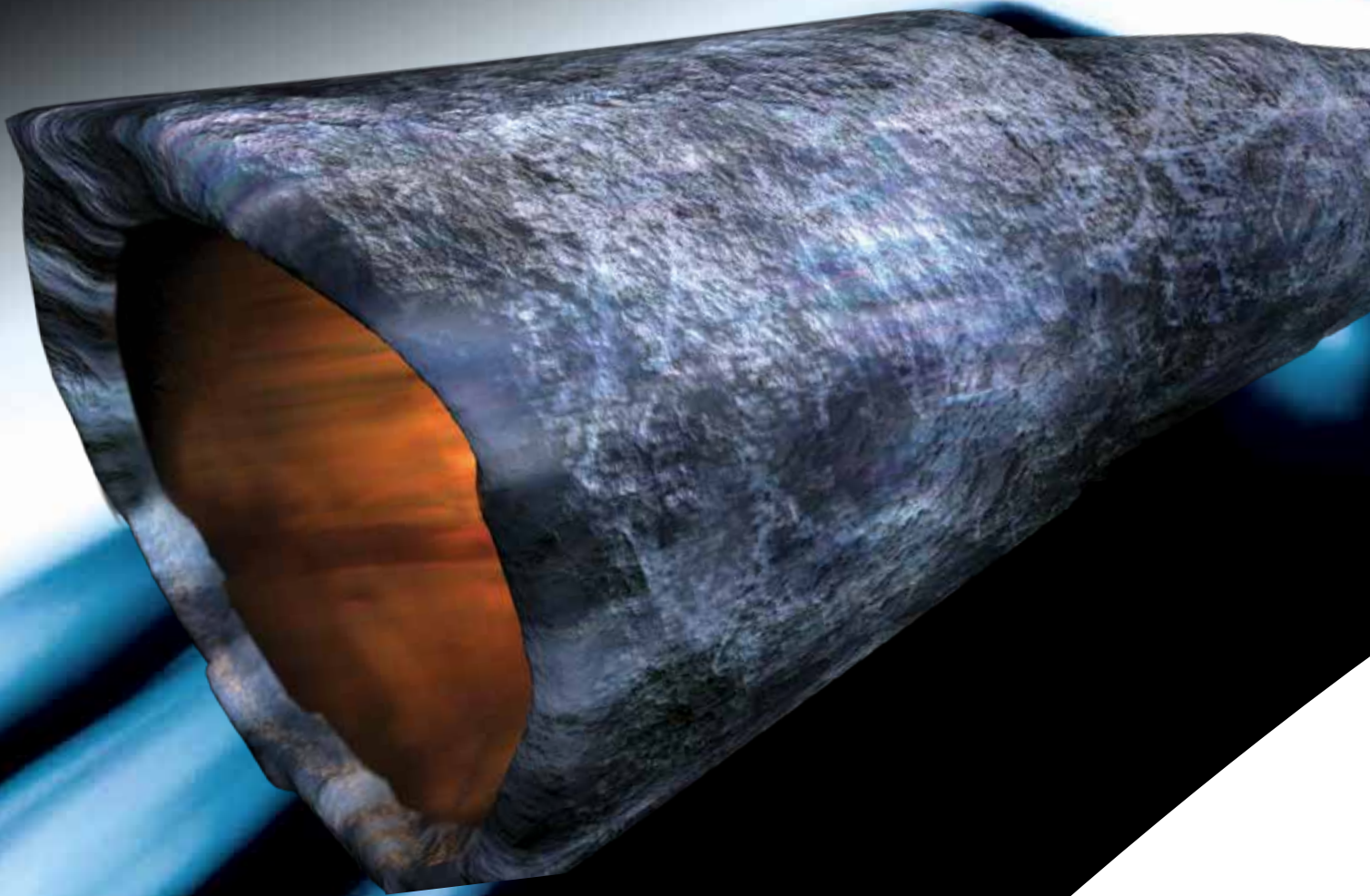


STAR TREK™

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**PLANET
KILLER**
SPECIAL ISSUE

ENCOUNTERED: 2267

HULL: NEUTRONIUM

WEAPONRY: ANTIPROTON

ORIGIN: EXTRA GALACTIC

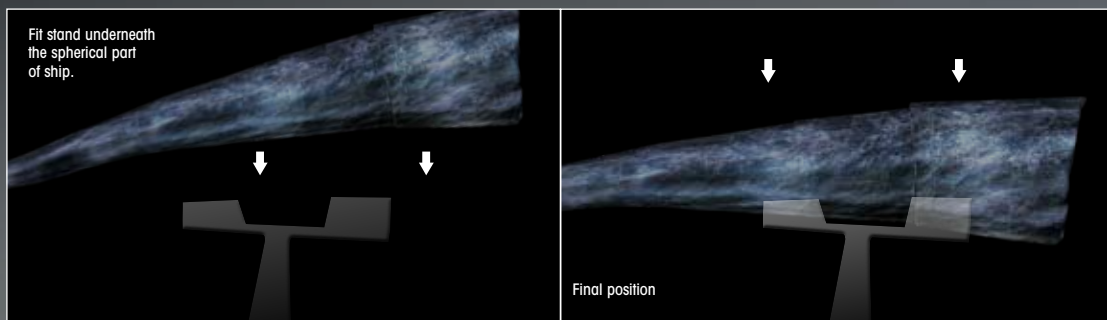
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14: DESIGNING THE TRIP INSIDE V'GER

18: STAR TREK AND ILM: BRINGING BACK THE MAGIC

Stand assembly:



The model of the Planet Killer includes an internal light, which when illuminated mimics the internal glow as seen on-screen in the episode. To enable the model's light, you will require two LR41 batteries (not included). Remove the small panel on the underside of the model, which is held in place magnetically. Using a small crosshead screwdriver, remove the two screws holding the bulb housing in place. Remove the bulb housing from the model and insert the batteries into the two slots. You can test that the light is working by depressing the button on the top of the bulb housing. Replace the bulb housing in the model and secure it with the two screws. Switch the light on and off, as desired, by depressing the button, and then replace the magnetised panel.



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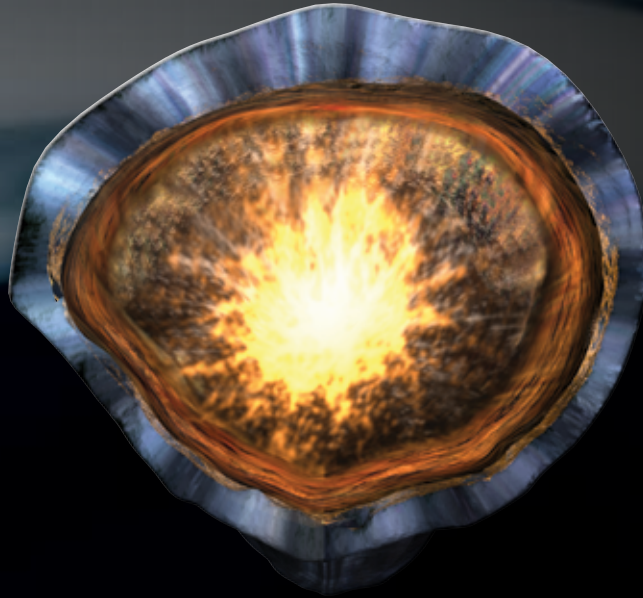
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PLANET KILLER

SPECIFICATION



TYPE:

ANCIENT WEAPON

ENCOUNTERED:

2267 (SYSTEM L-374)

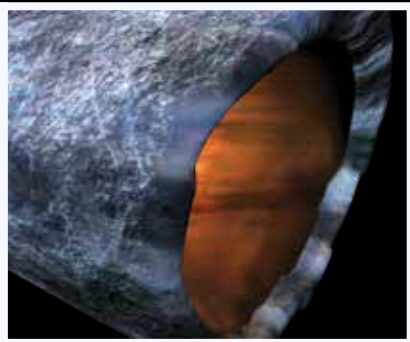
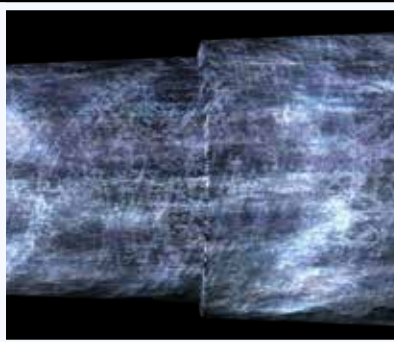
HULL:

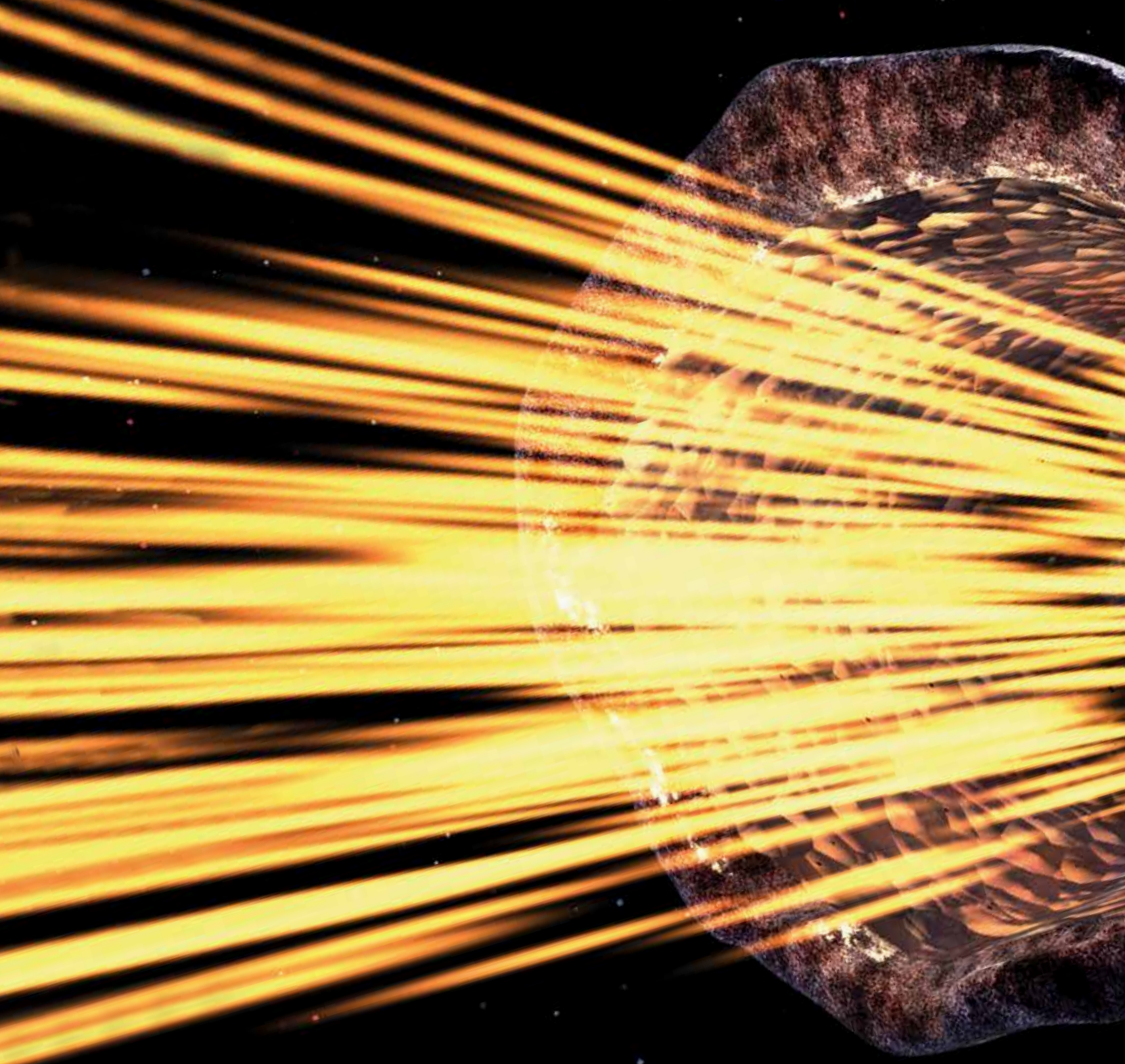
SOLID NEUTRONIUM

WEAPONRY:

ANTIPROTON BEAMS

SUBSPACE DISTORTION FIELD

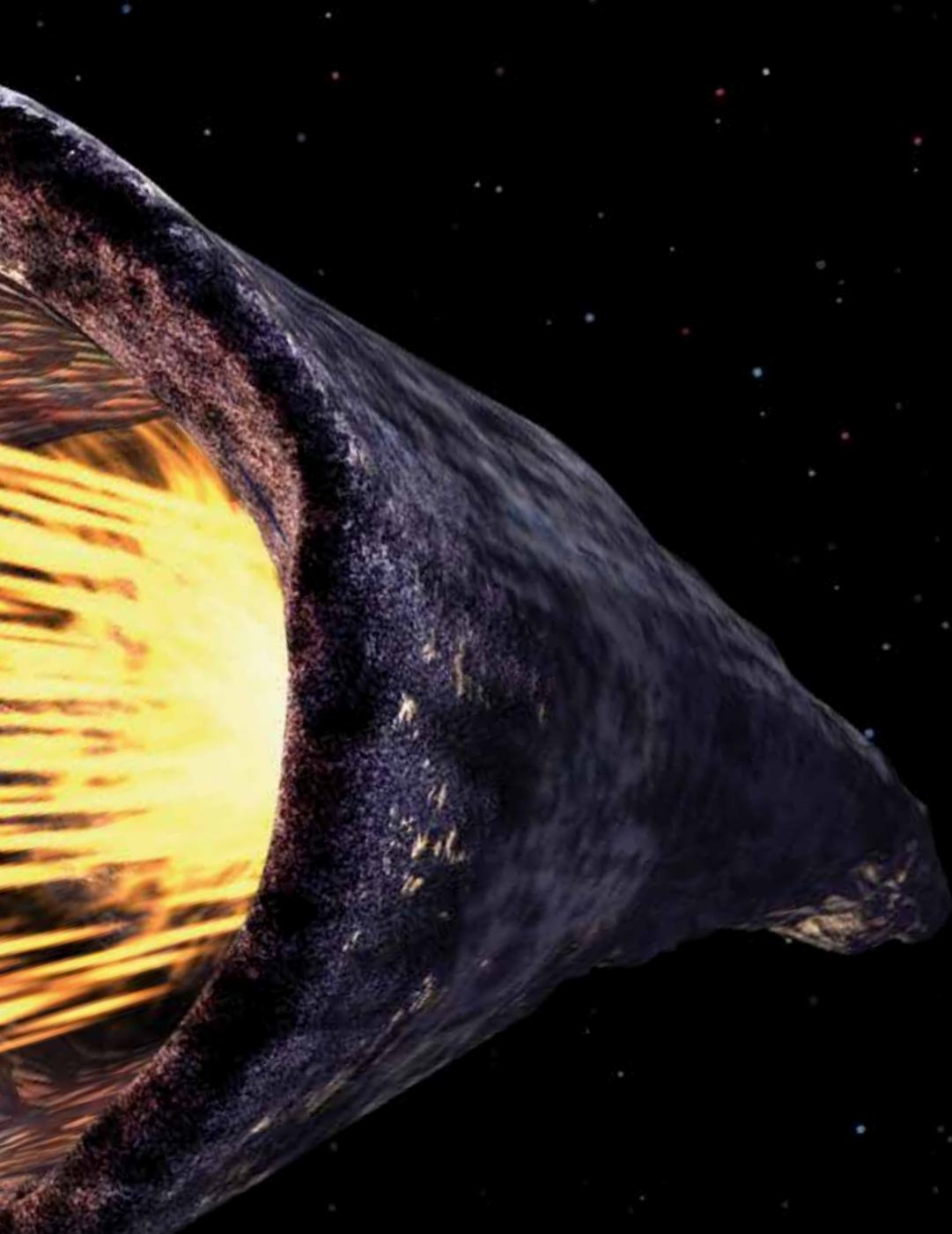




PLANET KILLER

Arriving from beyond the Galaxy, this ancient weapon destroyed everything in its path.





R In 2267, while on routine patrol, the *U.S.S. Constellation*, under the command of Commodore Matt Decker, detected a solar system in which the planets had been completely destroyed. Heavy subspace interference prevented them from reporting their findings to Starfleet, but they continued to investigate, discovering that several other systems had also been destroyed.

They discovered the cause when they entered system L-374. The science officer, Masada, reported that the fourth planet was breaking up. When the *Constellation* approached it, they discovered a vast machine that was slicing the planet apart with an antiproton beam. Their analysis showed that it was unmanned, and that its function appeared to be to reduce planets to rubble which it could then digest for fuel.

The *Constellation* engaged the planet killing machine but its weaponry was completely ineffective against the machine's neutronium hull. The machine responded by attacking the *Constellation*, knocking out its deflectors and disabling the warp drive, using some form of energy dampening field, which was also responsible for a massive subspace distortion field. As soon as the *Constellation* moved outside the machine's range the massive robot broke off its attack.

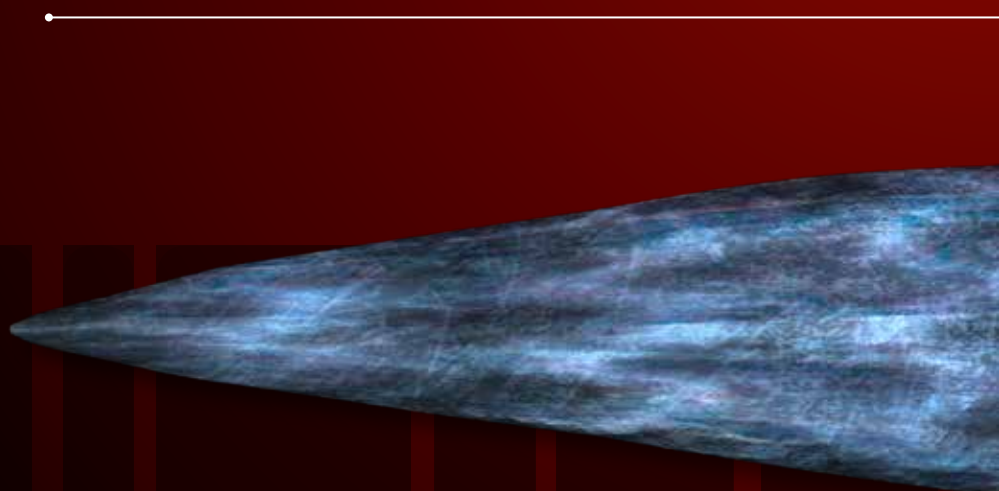
With the ship effectively disabled, Decker beamed his crew down to the third planet. He stayed on board but was horrified when the machine turned its attention to the planet and destroyed it. The *Constellation's* transporters had failed and he was unable to beam his crew back.

OUTSIDE THE GALAXY

The *Constellation* issued a distress call, which its sister ship, the *U.S.S. Enterprise* responded to. By the time it arrived in system L-374, there were only two planets left. The *Enterprise's* crew traced the machine's origins to a point outside the Galaxy. The *Enterprise's* captain, James Kirk, theorised that the machine was an ancient weapon that had been active for centuries, cutting its way through solar systems until it reached our Galaxy.

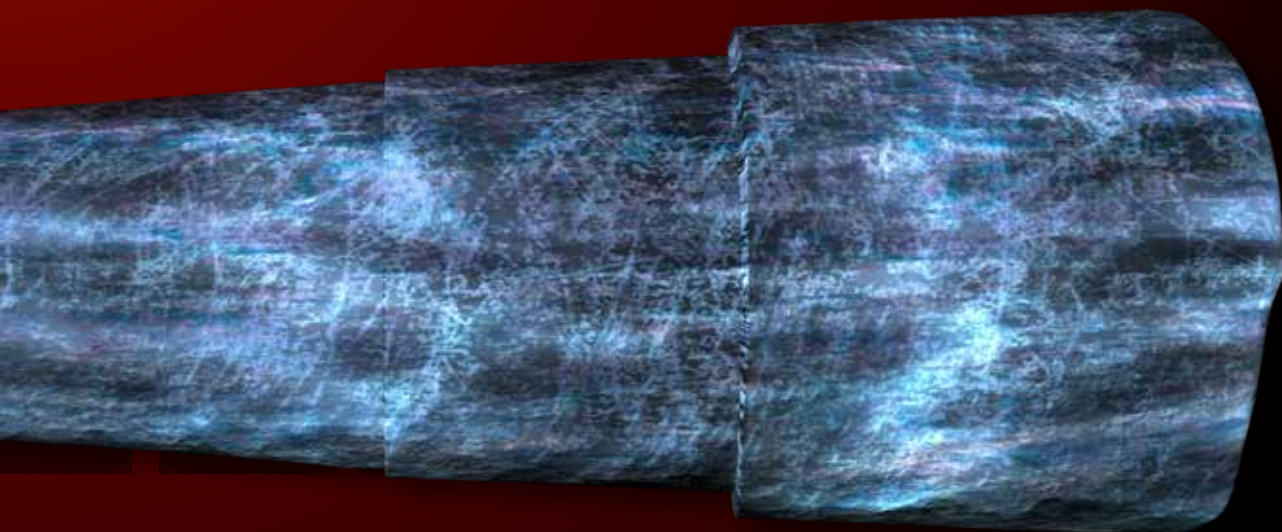
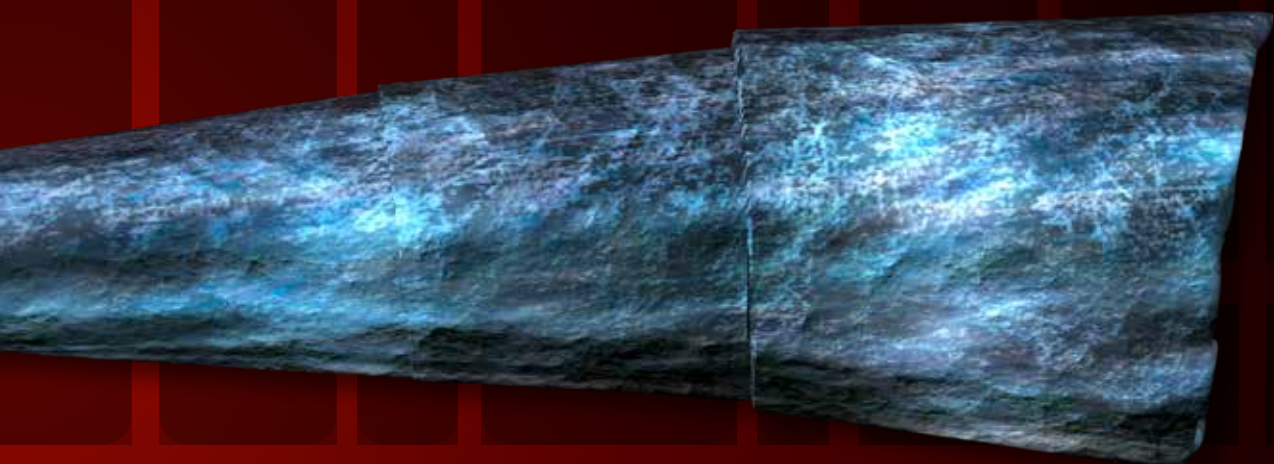
Kirk and a small party beamed on to the *Constellation* and sent Decker back to the *Enterprise*. Decker was obsessed with destroying the machine and assumed command of Kirk's ship but the *Enterprise's* attack was equally ineffective.

Decker was eventually removed from command. He escaped from confinement and attempted to destroy the machine by flying a shuttlecraft into it. The explosion from the shuttle only did minimal damage, but Kirk was inspired to fly the *Constellation* down the machine's vast maw, where it's engines overloaded. The resulting explosion disabled the machine, saving millions of lives.



DATA FEED

Neither the *Enterprise's* or the *Constellation's* scanners were able to penetrate the Planet Killer's neutronium hull so Starfleet was never able to determine any details about its internal workings. The machine's interior would have suffered considerable damage when the *Constellation* exploded inside it, even though the starship's antimatter pods had been rendered inert. The explosion caused by the overload of the *Constellation's* impulse engines would have been the equivalent to a high-yield nuclear bomb.



CONSTITUTION CLASS

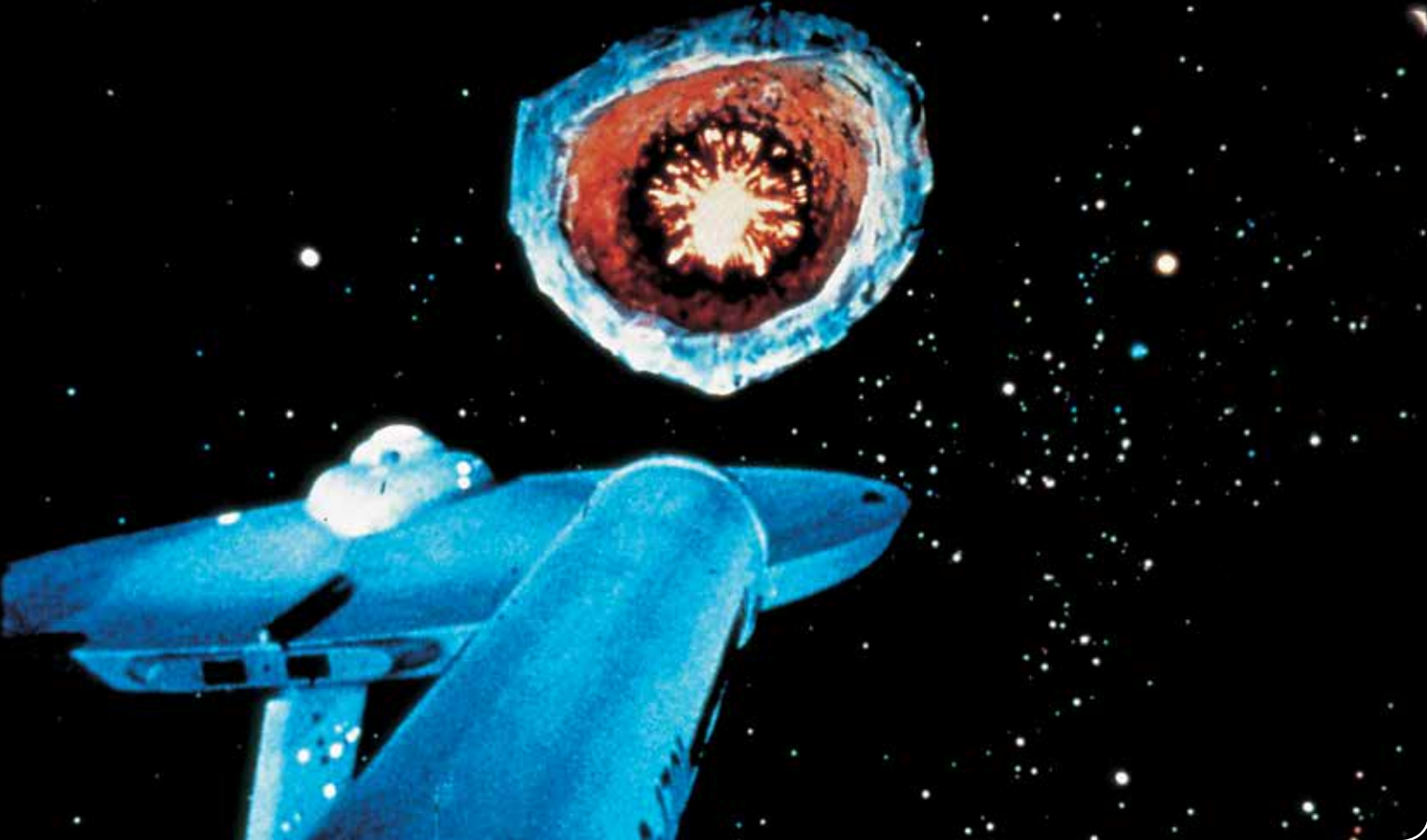
The *U.S.S. Constellation* was one of eight *Constitution*-class ships that we saw in the original series. It was one of two that was destroyed. Additional *Constitution*-class ships were added when the series was remastered.

COMMODORE

Matt Decker was one of several commodores to appear in the original series. Two of the others – Stone and Mendez – commanded starbases, while Bob Wesley took charge of the wargames that tested the M-5.

DESTROYED SYSTEMS

The planet killer destroyed all the solar systems in the sector containing systems L-370 and L-374. It's not clear how many other systems it had obliterated since it entered our Galaxy.



MAKING

THE DOOMSDAY MACHINE

The Planet Killer started life as a metallic creature, then evolved into a mining ship and eventually became a weapon of mass destruction.

▲ *The Doomsday Machine* was *STAR TREK*'s take on *Moby Dick*, as an obsessed captain pursued a giant, destructive 'beast.'

According to its author, Norman Spinrad, the second season episode 'The Doomsday Machine' owes its existence to Stanley Kubrick. Like Spinrad's good friend, Harlan Ellison who wrote 'The City On The Edge Of Forever', Spinrad was a science-fiction novelist. Described as a leading light of a sci-fi new wave movement that had emerged in the 1960s. Alongside his work as a novelist, Spinrad had been employed by the literary agency handling Stanley Kubrick's movie, '2001 A Space Odyssey.' This gave him a certain amount of insider knowledge, that enabled him to write a number of articles about the project prior to its release.

Spinrad had also attended science fiction conventions where Gene Roddenberry had

screened the first two pilots of his new TV series, *STAR TREK*. Spinrad was impressed, so much so that while writing a review of '2001' for 'Cinema Magazine' he took the opportunity to praise Roddenberry's vision, going as far as to claim that in his opinion both pilots were superior to Kubrick's movie.

Not long after the article appeared, Spinrad received a letter from Roddenberry thanking him for his positive comments. By now *STAR TREK* was in its first season. Despite the fact that Spinrad had no television writing credits, Roddenberry invited him to drop in for a cup of coffee so he could visit the sets and discuss the possibility of writing an episode. However, Spinrad was finishing up work on his novel 'Bug Jack Barron' and suggested



Roddenberry give him a call in six weeks. Roddenberry did just that and three days later Spinrad wrote back suggesting a story idea where the *Enterprise* encounters an alien race who are in possession of a device capable of tapping into the subconscious minds of Kirk, Spock and the governor of the planet. The machine creates what they each believe to be the perfect woman. However one of these women is revealed to be evil, thus forcing Kirk to make the decision to shut the computer down – a move which will effectively kill all three.

Roddenberry passed Spinrad's idea to DC

Fontana for her opinion. She was not impressed, feeling that elements of Spinrad's idea had already been covered in previous episodes. If Roddenberry was serious about Spinrad writing for the series, Fontana suggested that Spinrad should come up with a better premise.

Acting on Fontana's advice, Roddenberry called Spinrad in for another meeting. Roddenberry explained that along with the issues raised by Fontana, budgetary constraints meant that whatever story Spinrad came up with should lend itself to being shot on the existing sets. He also told him that there was a possibility that movie star

▲ Roddenberry told Spinrad that the budgets were tight so he needed shows that reused the *Enterprise* sets. In this case, the corridors and engineering pulled double duty as locations on the *Constellation*.



◀ In order to avoid confusion, most of the action on the *Constellation* took place in auxiliary control, so when we cut back to the *Enterprise* bridge there was no doubt about where we were.



▲ The role of Decker was originally written with Robert Ryan in mind but he was unavailable and the part was played by William Windom.

Robert Ryan would be willing to do an episode of *STAR TREK* and suggested that he write a character for him.

With this in mind, Spinrad dug out an unpublished novelette of his called 'The Planet Eater.' It featured a sinister planet eating entity, which cripples one starship before attempting to destroy another. Spinrad submitted an outline of a *STAR TREK* story that reworked the essential elements of this to Roddenberry on February 5, 1967. Like Ahab in 'Moby Dick,' the captain of the ship becomes obsessed with the creature and pursues it against all reason, a role that Spinrad felt would suit Ryan well.

A NEW IDEA

Roddenberry and *STAR TREK*'s story editor Gene Coon were intrigued by Spinrad's pitch, as was Fontana who conceded that the story was not one they had thought about doing before and that it was an interesting concept. Spinrad was contracted to work it up into a script and the story was earmarked for inclusion in the second season.

While Spinrad got down to work on a second draft of the outline, Coon discussed the story with NBC executive Stan Robertson. Robertson was not impressed by the story but changed his mind when

Coon revealed that Ryan was interested in playing the role of Commodore Decker.

Meanwhile Spinrad delivered a second draft of the outline. In it the *Enterprise* and her crew search for a missing starship, the *U.S.S. Constellation*. They find themselves in a partially destroyed solar system before encountering the ship.

METALLIC CREATURE

Upon boarding, Kirk, Scott and McCoy find the *Constellation* in a shambles and deserted, apart from its commander, Commodore Curt Decker, who is dishevelled and traumatized. Decker explains that his ship was investigating the destroyed solar system and was attacked by a huge metallic creature, which he calls 'the Eater.' Spinrad's outline describes it as "a kind of cylindrical "living atomic rocket" at least ten times the size of the *Constellation*, apparently from beyond the Galaxy, with a posterior rocket and a great anterior funnel-mouth big enough to swallow a ship with a cluster of atomic blaster beams and tractor beams around the funnel, not a machine, but a living organism with a nuclear metabolism."

When the *Constellation* suffered damage, Decker had made the decision to abandon ship and beam his crew down to a nearby planet.

Decker had been prevented from joining them when the transporter was damaged. He was then forced to watch as both the planet and his crew was devoured by the organism. Unsurprisingly, Decker is now consumed by guilt and bitterness. When he and McCoy beam over to the *Enterprise* leaving Kirk and Scott on the *Constellation*, he takes command of the *Enterprise*, hell bent on using it to destroy the Planet Eater.

After reading the new draft, Robertson once again voiced concerns. In a memo to Roddenberry, he questioned the likelihood of a creature from another galaxy possessing the ability to eat entire planets. He worried that including what he described as a gimmick would undermine their attempts to ensure that *STAR TREK* remained a superior product with a loyal and sophisticated audience.

Roddenberry called a meeting with Spinrad and Coon to discuss Robertson's concerns and to find a way to add "the clean line scientific extrapolation and believability" the story lacked.

On April 5, Spinrad submitted a first draft script. Line producer, Robert Justman had previously written a memo warning Roddenberry that a story involving a planet eating monster would be too expensive for them to produce. Justman repeated those concerns, questioning why Spinrad had been allowed to work up the story

into a script and suggesting he be paid off and the script junked. That view was echoed by Fontana. She commented that the script was very wordy and that the planet eater lacked the intelligence necessary to be a worthy adversary for Kirk and Spock.

MAKING CHANGES

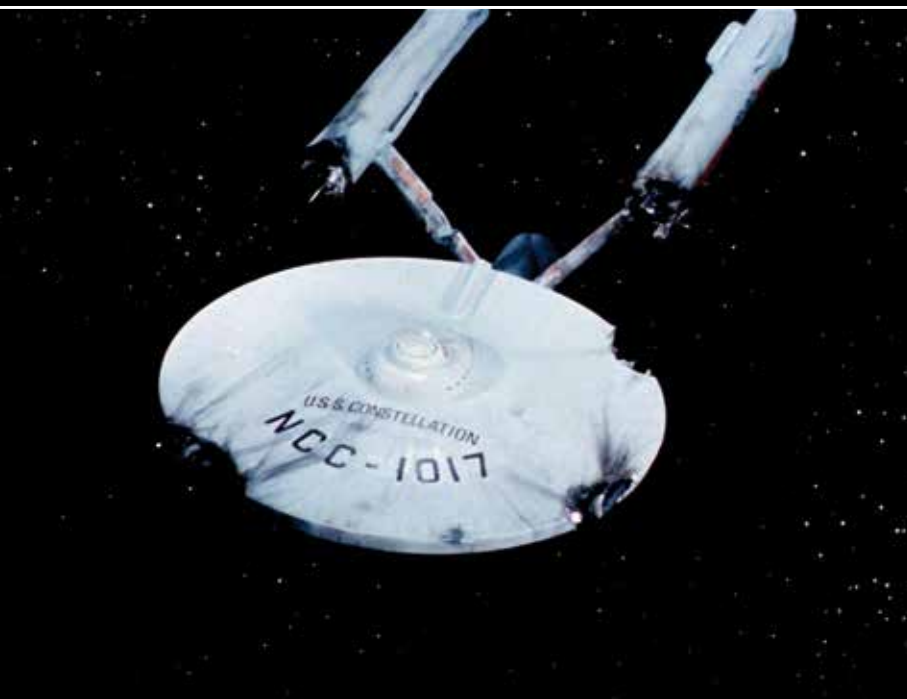
Spinrad received a 19-page analysis of the script from Coon with suggestions as to how the script and story could be improved. As well as pointing out that the dialogue was overwritten, Coon advised Spinrad that the Eater would work better as a mechanical device that had originally been designed for mining rather than a living creature. Since the *Enterprise* sets were being reused, Coon wanted to avoid confusion about where the action was taking place and told Spinrad that they should never show the same location on both ships. As a result, Spinrad introduced the *Constellation*'s auxiliary control room, where Kirk would be based.

Spinrad approached his friend Harlan Ellison for help with editing down the dialogue and in what proved to be a canny move, called on Justman for advice and guidance in writing scripts for a sci-fi series.

When Spinrad submitted a second draft, now entitled 'The Doomsday Machine' as per a



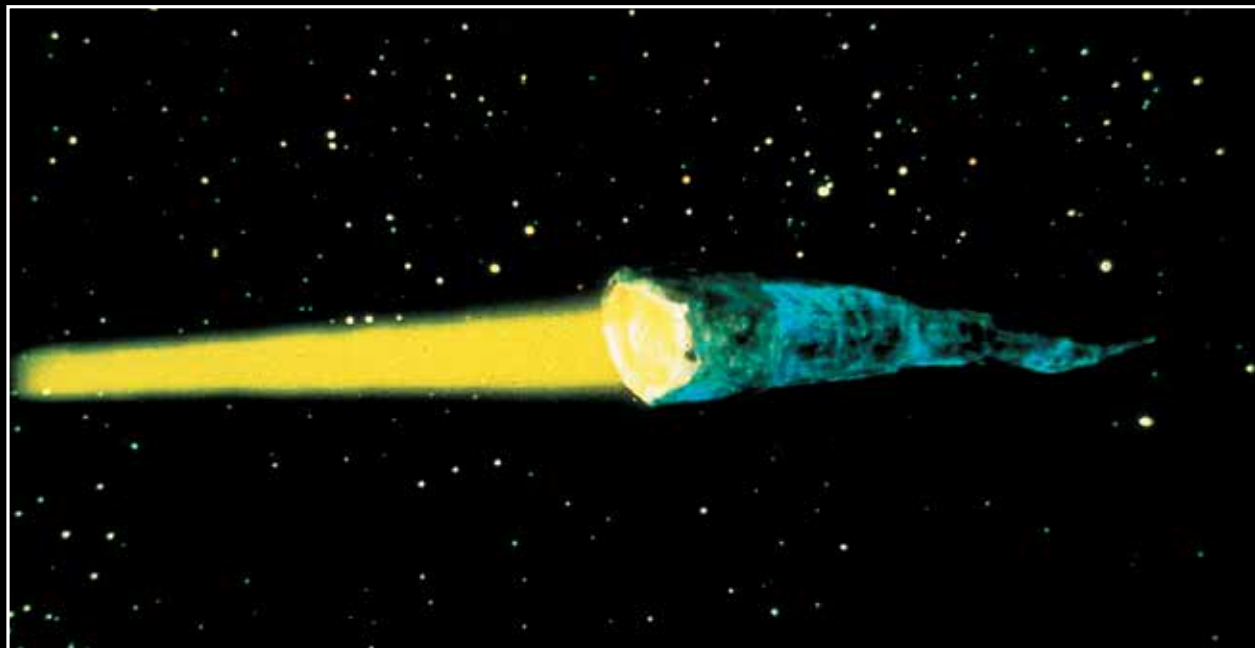
◀ Nichelle Nichols had taken a singing job, so wasn't available for this episode. As a result the story has a different communications officer - Lt. Palmer, played by Elizabeth Rogers. She made one other appearance in the third season episode, 'The Way to Eden.'



▲ It wasn't practical to damage the filming model of the *Enterprise* but the visual effects team were able to use a commercially available AMT model of the ship, which had recently been released.

suggestion by Coon, Justman praised the improvements to the dialogue and described Spinrad as a "talented writer who was going to come on in the business." However, Justman still complained that even with Spinrad indicating instances where shots could be re-used, the cost of shooting the special footage for the episode would make 'The Planet Eater' more expensive than other bottle shows, such as 'Balance of Terror.' Justman also complained about the name change, feeling it wasn't as zappy as 'The Planet Eater,' and suggested that they save the title for a

► Spinrad was not impressed by the final design of the Planet Killer, which he felt was far too basic. At Roddenberry's request he'd even produced his own drawing of the ship which had cutting and tractor beams and tentacles.



script that was actually about a doomsday machine. This last idea inspired Coon, who told Spinrad to change the nature of the planet killer yet again, making it into an ancient weapon that had destroyed its creators. Spinrad readily embraced the new concept feeling it fed into one conceived by political military expert, Herman Kahn, who had suggested that a doomsday machine would deter attacks, as the aggressor would be destroyed along with their target.

SENSE OF DANGER

This third draft was sent to Roddenberry, the various studio heads at NBC and Desilu and the cast. Roddenberry, along with others, voiced suggestions and complaints. Taking these into consideration, especially Roddenberry's desire for more jeopardy, Coon himself incorporated various changes. Kirk now battled against the clock to ram the *Constellation* down the throat of the machine, while Scotty fought to fix the transporter in time to beam Kirk off the doomed ship before its destruction. At the same time, the renamed Matt Decker piloted a shuttlecraft directly into the machine's 'mouth' giving him a much more dramatic death than in previous drafts, where he had only crashed into the side of it. Coon also tightened up the pacing of the story, giving it more of a frantic feel. Coon's draft was followed by two more revisions. The last dated June 19, 1967.

By now pre-production was well underway having begun on June 9. Justman still had



◀ Story editor Gene Coon added some jeopardy by having the transporter malfunction when Kirk is trying to beam away before the *Constellation* is destroyed.

budgetary concerns about physically creating the doomsday machine, a burned out *Constellation* and a skirmish involving the *Enterprise*, the *Constellation* and the doomsday machine itself. This was solved with the use of two \$3 dollar models of the *Enterprise* provided by AMT, which were damaged and used for the shots of the *Constellation*.

As Justman had predicted the cost of the photographic effects needed to stage the skirmish in space exceeded the usual amount. To accomplish the task, the shooting period was shortened and the job of directing placed in the hands of Marc Daniels who had previously proved himself capable of staying on a tight schedule.

A NEW COMMANDER

Casting was also underway. Having expressed an interest, Robert Ryan was unavailable for the scheduled filming days due to prior commitments. Joe D'Agosta suggested William Windom who was best known to television audiences as one of the stars of 'The Farmer's Daughter.' Spinrad was disappointed as the casting of Windom led to certain modifications to the script. Another change was the casting of actress Elizabeth Rogers as replacement communications officer Lt. Palmer because Nichelle Nichols was unavailable.

Filming began on June 20, 1967 on stage 9. The

tight schedule, which called for 50 minutes of television to be completed in just 5 days created tensions. Footage from the episode 'Tomorrow Is Yesterday' was added to make up a scene showing Scotty buffeted around in engineering while the *Constellation* is under attack. Daniels wrapped the shoot bang on time. Editing commenced on a similarly tight schedule. Cinema Research Corporation took on the task of providing optical effects. Spinrad expressed a lack of enthusiasm for the model of the Planet Eater which looked nothing like his depiction, feeling that it resembled a "windsock dipped in cement." Music for the episode was provided by composer Sol Kaplan who had previously scored the music for 'The Enemy Within.'

Despite Justman's concerns 'The Doomsday Machine' came in under budget. It aired on October 20, 1967 and would later be nominated for a Hugo Award and scores consistently highly in polls of the series greatest episodes.

Roddenberry was impressed enough with Spinrad to ask him back to pitch again, and he started work on another script 'He Walked Among Us,' which was eventually abandoned due to creative differences. Nevertheless, Spinrad returned to submit a script to the abandoned *STAR TREK* series that Roddenberry was planning in the 1970s, even returning to pitch to *TNG*.



STAR TREK'S

SECOND GENERATION

'The Doomsday Machine' played a role in creating some of STAR TREK's most memorable characters.

▲ It's never stated explicitly on screen but Matt Decker was Will Decker's father, and the character of Will Decker played a role in defining Will Riker.

The 'Doomsday Machine' is one of a handful of original series episodes that had a direct influence on the future of *STAR TREK*. It's never officially stated on screen, but in *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE* the Enterprise's new captain, Will Decker, was consciously conceived of as Matt Decker's son.

Will Decker was originally developed for *STAR TREK*'s abandoned return to TV in the 1970s. Roddenberry and his team wanted to give Kirk a dynamic, second-in-command, who would lead the away missions. The writing staff, which consisted of Roddenberry, script producer Harold Livingston, and story editor Jon Povill, spent most of 1977 working on the series, developing the characters and commissioning stories and even

scripts. As Povill remembers, the writers wanted to give the two men a close relationship. "Phase II was looking at something akin to a father-son relationship between Kirk and his first officer. We were all big fans of 'The Doomsday Machine' and it seemed like there was more to mine from that particular father-son history."

The writers felt they could make the dynamic between Kirk and his first officer more complicated, and therefore interesting, if Kirk had known Will's father and in some ways felt responsible for his death. As Povill points out, Kirk could have made more of an effort to restrain Matt Decker and flying a shuttle into the interior of the planet killer didn't actually require Decker to have been onboard.

The series bible didn't explicitly state that Will was



Matt's son. It simply refers to him as coming from at least two generations of "academy graduates, Starfleet officers of flag rank."

INTRODUCING CONFLICT

Povill, however, is very clear that this was the writers' original intention. "I very distinctly remember discussing and considering the Matt Decker elements with Gene and Harold." He goes on to say that although Will could have held Kirk responsible for his father's death this wasn't their intention. In fact, they wanted the reverse, with Decker idolising Kirk. The element of conflict between the two men was only introduced when the series was reworked to become a movie.

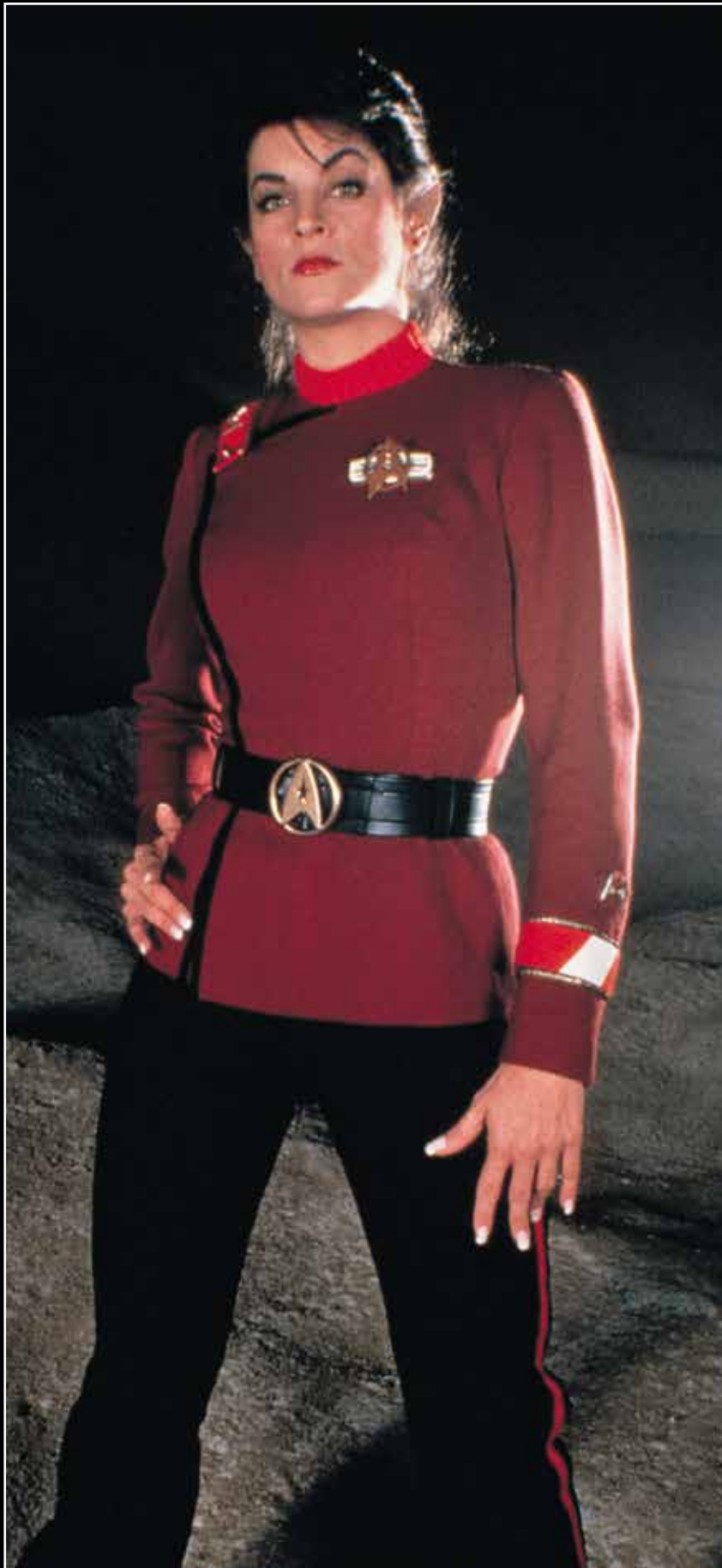
"We needed some conflict in the early stages of the film," Povill explains. "Harold, who was reworking the script, jumped on the Kirk and Decker rivalry. In retrospect, if I'd thought about it more, I probably would have lobbied for finding something else or handling it a bit differently. It's not like that particular conflict played out very well for either of the characters. But then, it's really easy to find fault with so much of the movie. We were under extreme time pressure and rarely had the luxury of thinking things through."

Of course, the reworked story ended with Decker evolving into a new life form and any opportunities to explore his relationship with Kirk were lost. Large elements of Will Decker's character survived in the

▲ Will Decker (left) was originally going to be Kirk's second-in-command on a new TV series. The writers wanted him to have a father-son relationship with Kirk, which was complicated by his own father's death.



◀ An early script for the movie *STAR TREK II* revealed that the Romulan Commander had been so intrigued by Spock that she had impregnated herself using his DNA.



form of Will Riker, a character who was built on the work that was done in the 1970s. More recently, there was a passing reference to a “cadet Decker” in the *STAR TREK: DISCOVERY* episode ‘Into the Forest I Go.’ The timeline makes it entirely possible that this character is actually Will Decker.

ROMULAN HERITAGE

The Doomsday Machine wasn’t the only episode of the original series, that – almost – provided a familiar *STAR TREK* character with a parent. When *STAR TREK II* was first in development, Samuel A. Peeples took a pass at the script. He deliberately set out to introduce the children of the original series characters, and his story involved Kirk’s son and Spock’s daughter, both characters would survive into the final version of the script but in radically altered form. In Peeples’ script notes, Saavik is explicitly identified as the child of the Romulan Commander from ‘The Enterprise Incident’ and he heavily hints that she is Spock’s child. He says that the Romulan Commander “loved but once – and that a forbidden love, for she met a Vulcan of Federation Starfleet, who aroused within her breast a lasting devotion.” In fact, her devotion was so lasting that, when she was granted the honor of motherhood (which the notes say was “a prized accolade on Romulus”), she decided to artificially inseminate herself with Spock’s genetic material.

This version of Saavik was intended to be a sophisticated blend of Vulcan and Romulan. Peeples wrote “With her there is a constant torment, an eternal struggle for dominance between the two sides of her nature. As a Romulan female, she is rated with an IQ of approximately 172 – and a fiery temperament that urges her to react passionately; as a Vulcan, that passion is held under rigid control. She uses logic, but unlike most Vulcans is not ruled by it. She has her tender side, and can respond to friendship, even love, with a depth as great as any Romulan woman.”

There are a handful of references in the scripts for *STAR TREK II* and *STAR TREK III* to Saavik being half-Romulan but the idea that she was Spock’s

◀ As the character of Saavik was originally conceived, she was a half Romulan who had been sent to live with her ‘father’ for undisclosed reasons.



◀ Like Saavik, Kirk's son featured in early versions of *STAR TREK II*. Producer Harve Bennett also wanted the film to be about the next generation of *STAR TREK* characters.

daughter (at least genetically) was completely abandoned. In fact, in *STAR TREK III*, on the Genesis planet, she helps the regenerated Spock deal with his Pon farr and scenes cut from *STAR TREK IV* would have made it clear that as a result she was pregnant with his child.

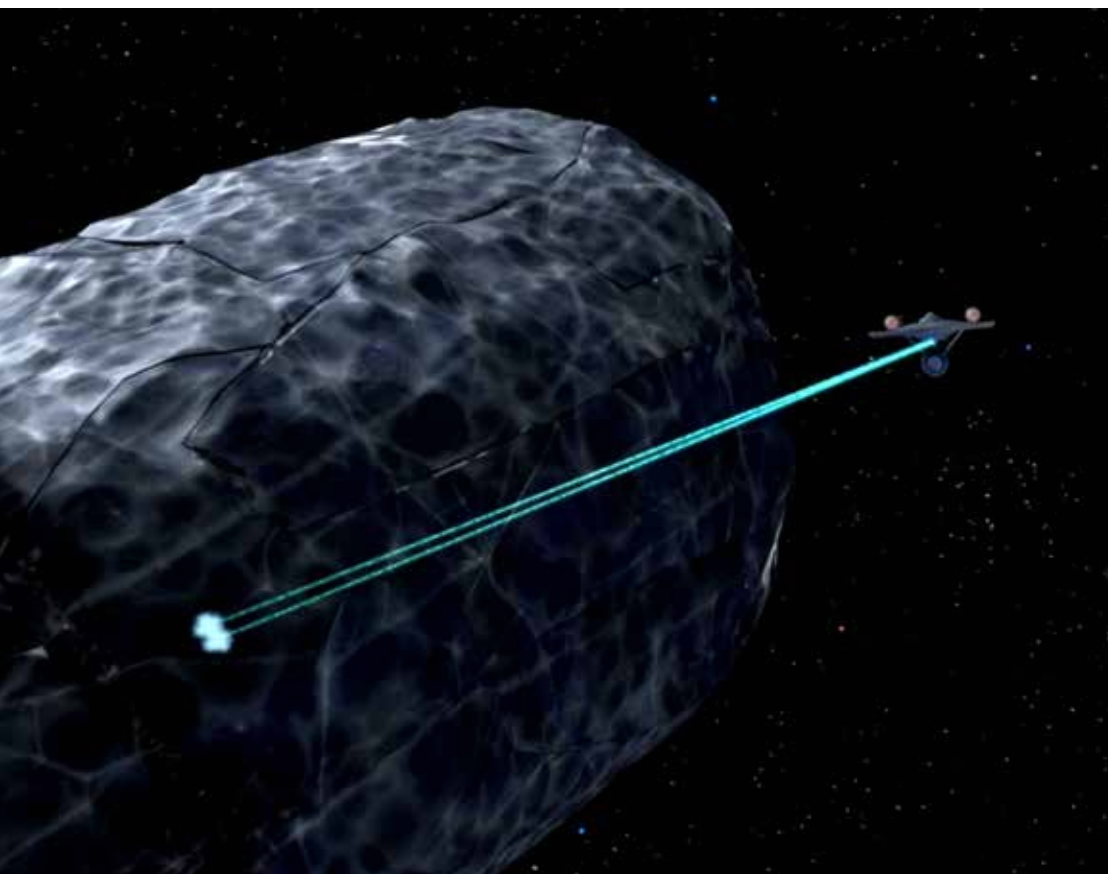
Other legacy characters might have seemed like an easy way to make a connection between the original series and the *NEXT GENERATION* era, but Roddenberry explicitly banned them, saying that *TNG* would not feature the children of Kirk and his crew. Instead, he argued, the series had to stand

on its own and develop new characters rather than harking back to the past. At one point this ban even extended to the Klingons and Romulans who Roddenberry felt should be left in the past. Eventually, however, he softened his objections and Spock's father Sarek from 'Journey to Babel' appeared in a *TNG* episode bearing his own name, and before long he was followed by Spock himself. Matt and Will Decker were the first characters to bridge different eras of the show, linking them together without the need for a direct sequel.



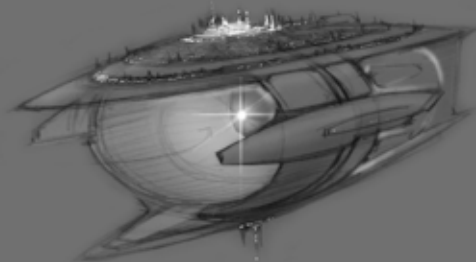
◀ Saavik's background changed significantly. Scenes filmed for *STAR TREK IV* would have revealed that she was pregnant with Spock's child. In the end they were dropped and she simply decides to remain on Vulcan.

ON SCREEN



TRIVIA

The visual effects team who worked on the remastered version of *STAR TREK* gave the design of the Planet Killer an upgrade, but stopped short of making radical changes. Norman Spinrad says that he asked them to consider redesigning it to look the way he had always intended, but ultimately they decided against this, preferring to stay close to the original look.



When John Eaves designed the Mirror Universe's Imperial Palace Ship for *STAR TREK: DISCOVERY*'s first season, he based the design on what he imagined the skeleton of the planet killer would look like. The idea was that the *Empress* had re-purposed the technology.

The *U.S.S. Constellation*'s registry NCC-1017 was used because it could be made by



rearranging the numbers in the *Enterprise*'s registry, meaning that the VFX team could use the decals in the AMT model kit.

FIRST APPEARANCE:	'THE DOOMSDAY MACHINE' (TOS)
TV APPEARANCE:	STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES
DESIGNED BY:	Unknown

KEY APPEARANCES

STAR TREK: THE ORIGINAL SERIES **'The Doomsday Machine'**

The *U.S.S. Enterprise* investigates the destruction of several planets and discovers its sister ship, the *U.S.S. Constellation*, which has been heavily damaged.

Kirk leads a landing party aboard the crippled *Constellation*. There they discover that aside from its captain, Commodore Matt Decker, the ship is deserted. The half-crazed Decker reveals that the *Constellation* was attacked by a giant, automated weapon that destroys planets for fuel. Decker had beamed his crew down to one of the planets to save them, but

instead they had all been killed when the weapon fired on the planet.

After transporting back to the *Enterprise*, Decker assumes command of the ship and orders an attack on the planet killer. With the *Enterprise* badly damaged and facing destruction, Spock relieves Decker of command. However, Decker steels a shuttlecraft and pilots it directly into the maw of the weapon and is killed.

Inspired by Decker's self-sacrifice, Kirk orders Scotty to set the *Constellation*'s impulse engines to overload, and then pilots the ship into the mouth of the planet killer, beaming out with only seconds to spare before the ship explodes, fatally crippling the weapon.

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