

Interview: Returning to ‘Battlestar Galactica’ With Producers Ron Moore, David Eick

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on January 12, 2009 - 8:53am

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CHICAGO – The highly acclaimed and beloved “Battlestar Galactica” returns to the air on Friday, January 16th and executive producers/creators Ron Moore and David Eick recently sat down for a press conference to discuss the fifth season premiere of the Sci-Fi Channel series.

The upcoming season of “Battlestar Galactica” will be the last for the popular series starring Edward James Olmos, Mary McDonnell, Katee Sackhoff, Grace Park, Jamie Bamber, James Callis, Tricia Helfer, Michael Hogan, Aaron Douglas, and Tahmoh Penikett. But Moore and Eick did drop some information about the upcoming spin-off/prequel “Caprica”.



Ronald D. Moore, Executive Producer/Writer
Photo credit: Evans Vestal Ward

David Eick is clearly proud of the way the series wraps up, saying, “I think we were able to answer most of the questions that we had raised over the years. And, sort of, resolved most of the mysteries and the grander questions of the show. And, also at the same time, give a resolution to all the character arcs. And, sort of, to wrap it all up by the end. I think you’ll find that we don’t save everything until the last episode. We sort of start answering questions along the way.”

It’s rare for a series to be able to go out on top like “Battlestar Galactica,” something Moore and Eick are keenly aware of but that they’ve been intending for a few years now. Moore revealed that they had talked about the ending two years ago and said, “I would add that it’s so rare that you get to end things in the way that you intended.”

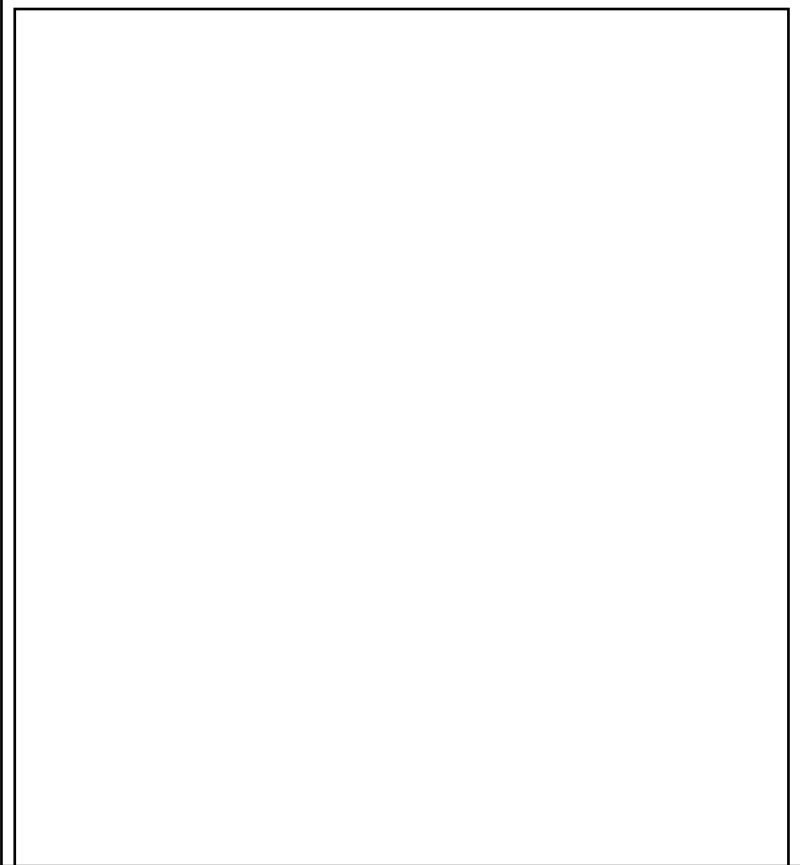
Of course, most of the conversation at the press conference with Ron Moore and David Eick revolved around the end of the show, something that neither man was willing to give up major spoilers about but that both are clearly happy with. Moore said, “I would say I found it very satisfying. I mean I was very pleased with the way that the show ended, creatively and personally. It just feels like we’ve completed the piece. And now to be able to step back a little bit and look at it from beginning to end I feel good about the complete story that is Battlestar Galactica.”



Tricia Helfer as Number Six in “Sometimes a Great Notion,”
Episode 413
Photo credit: Carole Segal

Why should people tune in for the final season of “Battlestar Galactica”? Moore summed it up succinctly, “Well I mean, you know, why finish the end of the book? You’ve come this far. Don’t you want to see how it all turns out? I mean that seems like the most fundamental reason to watch the end. And it really is the end. It’s the conclusion of their stories. It’s what happening - happened to them finally. You know, where did they end up and under what circumstance? And who made it and who died? And who’s the last Cylon and sort of what did it all mean? I mean if you’ve been a fan of the show, you know, at all up until now why wouldn’t you want to watch how it all concludes?”

The fans who have been with “Battlestar Galactica” since the beginning may have even had an impact on the development of the show. Moore revealed, “I have a habit of going and sort of monitoring Web sites on the night that a - that a new episode airs. I’ll kind of surf around a few Web sites just to kind of pick up, you know, fan reaction. I get a kick out of sort of seeing message boards entries as the show was on the air. I’ll try to go to like a, I’ll put a couple windows up on my computer and watch sort of, you know, live reactions to people as they get to act breaks. I think that’s kind of enjoyable. And sort of receive some reviews and kind of see what the general tenor of it is. But after that I kind of don’t, I don’t monitor it very closely beyond that.”





Katee Sackhoff as Kara "Starbuck" Thrace in "Sometimes a Great Notion," Episode 413
Photo credit: Carole Segal

As for message board postings or web sites with theories about what will happen in the final season of "Battlestar Galactica," it turns out that a few of you may have gotten it right. Moore said, "Yes there's, there's theories out there of things, of guesses about different parts of the mythology or different revelations that are spot on. Fortunately they're buried with so many other bad ideas that it's like, you know, you just leave them alone and, you know. But I don't know that I've seen anyone who's nailed the whole thing. Or anyone who's gotten exactly what the show is going to be at the end or anything."

So how do the writers themselves come up with the twists and turns of a show like "Battlestar Galactica"? Moore revealed a bit about their process, saying, "The final four came up literally in a moment in a writer's room where we were struggling with the end of season three and trying to figure out certain things. And I just said, you know, because it was all about the trial of Baltar. And we had always set that up to be the end of the season. And it was, the structure was working fine. But it just didn't seem to satisfy. And it didn't quite seem as big an idea to me. And I said, you know, I just wish that there was, we had some bigger revelation here. And I just said, you know, I just got this image of like four of our people walking from different areas of the ship and all ending up in one room together. And they all close the doors and they look at each other. And they say, okay we're Cylon. And then we just reveal like four of them, you know, in one fell swoop. And everyone was kind of taken a back in the moment."

"The more we talked about it, it just became, well, why not? Why don't we really do that? And then we just talked about who those final four would be with an idea of holding out the last one for the last season. And then settling on the last one. We kind of had a good idea going into the last season who the final Cylon was. And, but we were willing to sort of, you know, look at other candidates and see who it could be and which one makes the most sense in the mythology. And ultimately we stuck with the original choice because it just made the most sense in terms of the history of the show and what it means for the characters."



The cast of Battlestar Galactica.
Photo credit: Art Streiber

As for spoilers, Moore did drop a big one - the identity of the last Cylon won't be saved for the final episode. He revealed that it won't be a last frame or last shot reveal. And don't expect a "Sopranos"-esque open ending. Moore said, "This is it. You know, this is the end of the story. I think that there might be some things that are still somewhat ambiguous or you might want to think about more that are not spelled out in bold letters. But, you know, by and large I'd say the vast majority of the questions will have been answered. They may not be satisfying answers, but they will be answers."

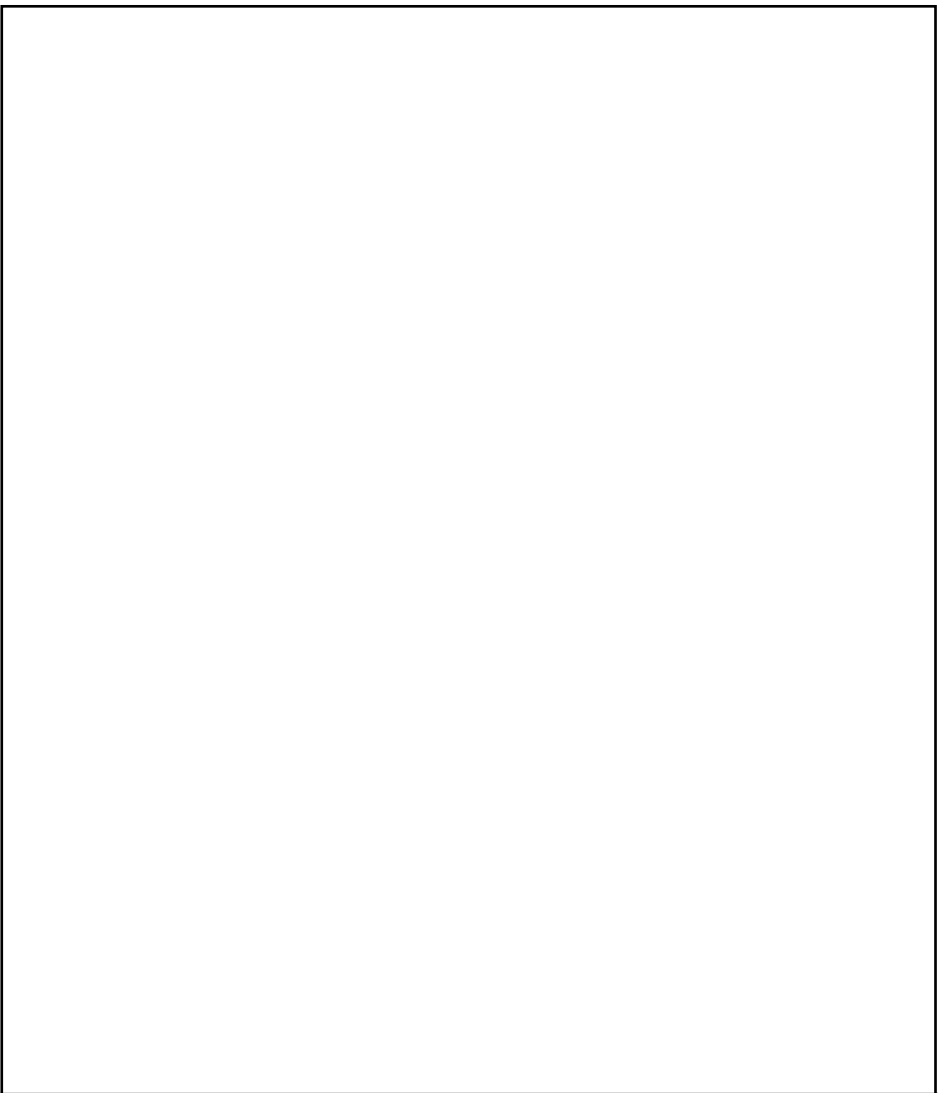
Of course, as all good "Battlestar Galactica" fans know, this final season doesn't mean the end for the universe that Ron Moore and David Eick have created. The spin-off show, "Caprica," starts shooting in July with a full-season order already in place. Moore revealed, "We're putting the writing staff together now and the crew. And, you know, just staffing up and getting ready to go. We'll start breaking stories probably in February or maybe even as soon as the end of this month, kind of depending when all the pieces go together. We have a game plan of sort of what the general story line is and sort of some direction. So we're not starting completely from scratch. So things are well in hand. In Caprica we feel really good about that."



Tahmoh Penikett as Karl "Helo" Agathon in "Sometimes a Great Notion,"
Episode 413
Photo credit: Carole Segal

"Caprica" is a prequel that takes place 50 years before the action of the entire series of "Battlestar Galactica," but you won't have to be a huge fan of "BSG" to enjoy the new show. Of course, it would probably help, but Moore said, "we sort of set out deliberately to set up Caprica in a way that you didn't have to see Battlestar. I mean I think you could literally watch the pilot to Caprica without seeing a frame of film on Galactica and you would get it. And you could invest in that story completely on its own and just go from there. Because we wanted it to stand as its own project and we didn't want you to have to study up on Battlestar in order to enjoy Caprica."

As George Lucas learned with the "Star Wars" prequels, it can sometimes be difficult to tell an entertaining story when the audience knows where it's all going to end up. So how can "Caprica" avoid the prequel curse? Moore said, "Well, hopefully, they view it as is intended, which is a period piece. You know, we're doing a period piece. And in any period piece you kind of know what lays in the future if you're doing madmen you know, you know, the '60s are a-coming. And you know that that whole world is going to collapse. If you're doing a World War II piece, you know the Nazis are going to lose. But, you know, you still are able to tell, you know, fascinating and compelling stories as periods. And I think that's what we're doing for this as well. I mean that's at least the intent."





Jamie Bamber as Lee "Apollo" Adama, Edward James Olmos as Admiral William Adama, Mary McDonnell as Laura Roslin
Photo credit: Justin Stephens

Interestingly, Moore's experience with the different incarnations of "Star Trek" (he worked on "The Next Generation," "Deep Space Nine," and "Voyager") may have some influence on how he approaches "Caprica". He said, "First and foremost, don't try to repeat the formula. I think that I questioned at the time when, after Deep Space Nine, they developed Voyager, and, then subsequently, Enterprise. Both those projects felt too similar to Next Generation and to the original series for me and by my lights. And I felt that Deep Space was the way to do a spin off series of an existing franchise where you really are doing a very different show. It's a different format. It's a different feeling. And the Deep Space Nine station lent itself to continuing stories. The Next Generation was episodic. I mean they were just very different animals. And I felt that it was more creatively satisfying to do that instead of doing a spin off that just felt like a different version of the mother ship. And so that definitely informed, you know, the process as we went into Caprica."

Finally, any fan who may have hopes that "Battlestar Galactica" could return after this season for a movie like the successful "Razor," Ronald Moore dashed those hopes, saying, "I don't know that there's really any opportunity to do more Battlestar pieces. We've struck the set. You know, I mean the sets are gone. So that alone, you know, raises a huge hurdle to try to do any more. Because, you know, I don't know what, how they would scrape together the money to reassemble that ship. But, you know, there's always virtual versions of the ship. And you never say never. But I would say it's very, very unlikely that there would be any more."

'Battlestar Galactica,' which airs on SCI-FI, stars Edward James Olmos, Mary McDonnell, Katee Sackhoff, Grace Park, Jamie Bamber, James Callis, Tricia Helfer, Michael Hogan, Aaron Douglas, and Tahmoh Penikett. The premiere of the last season airs on January 16th, 2009 at 8PM CST.



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