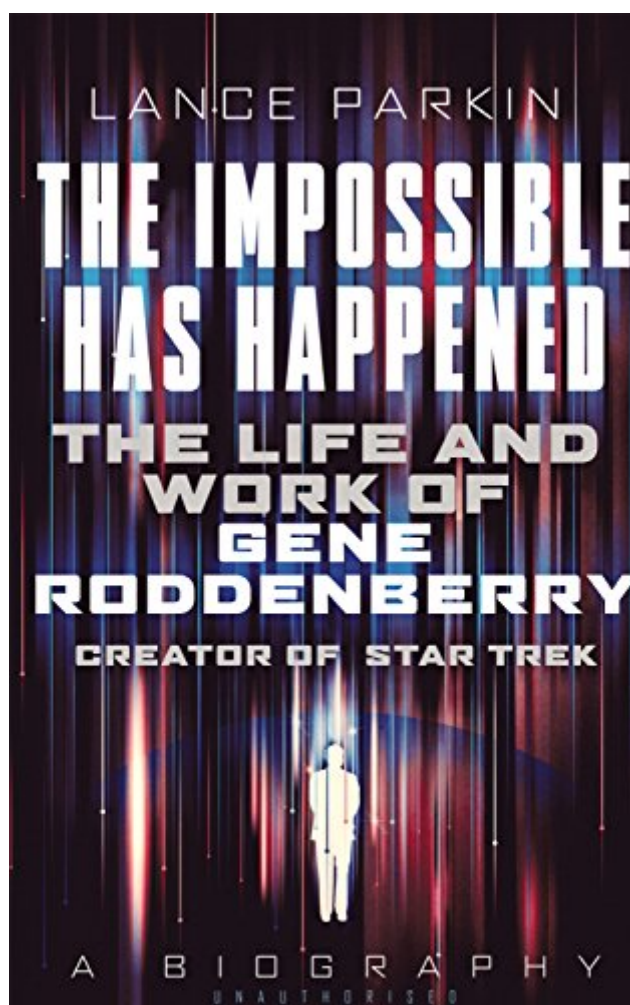


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The Impossible Has Happened: The Life And Work Of Gene Roddenberry, Creator Of Star Trek



Synopsis

8 September 2016 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the debut of the world's most successful science fiction television series: Star Trek. In this new biography Lance Parkin, author of Aurum's acclaimed Magic Words: The Extraordinary Life of Alan Moore, will go in search of the show's creator, Gene Roddenberry. This book will reveal how an undistinguished writer of cop shows set out to produce a "Hornblower in space" and ended up with an optimistic, almost utopian view of humanity's future that has been watched and loved by hundreds of millions of people around the world. Along the way Lance will examine some of the great myths and turning points in the franchise's history, and Roddenberry's particular contribution to them. He will look at the truth in the view that the early Star Trek advanced a liberal, egalitarian and multi-racial agenda, chart the various attempts to resuscitate the show during its wilderness years in the 1970s, explore Roddenberry's initial early involvement in the movies and spin-off Star Trek: The Next Generation (as well as his later estrangement from both), and shed light on the colourful personal life, self-mythologising and strange beliefs of a man who nonetheless gifted popular culture one of its most enduring narratives.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Lance Parkin's track record of heavily researched and often meticulous books on Doctor Who and Alan Moore implies that his perspective on Gene Roddenberry deserves attention. The new book does not really attempt to compete with previous Roddenberry biographies or books on Star Trek on the criteria of comprehensiveness or the use of documentary and interview material. And many of Parkin's points— notably those relating to the extent to which the original Star Trek was a product of many hands, how Roddenberry's characterizations after the 1960s of the original series' content clashed in important respects with the actual material broadcast, and how the Star Trek film and Next Generation franchises attained acclaim after Roddenberry moved away from them— will be familiar ones because of the previous retrospectives written by others. All that said, Parkin's biography of Roddenberry is a highly readable account that makes and documents many interesting observations. It is surprising, however, in view of Parkin's track record, to find a considerable number of factual misstatements and highly debatable assertions in the book. Some examples follow:

1. Parkin repeatedly implies or states that Roddenberry's role during his main years on the original Star Trek program was that of executive producer (see for example page 93 [twice], 223 and page 341). In fact, until he stepped down ahead of season 3, Roddenberry was the series' producer.
2. The author's suggestion that Roddenberry was barely aware of the stirrings of the Star Trek fandom movement in the early 1970s (see for example pp. 9, 124) is not convincing, especially in view of the fact that Roddenberry ran a Star Trek merchandising company.
3. Page 6 lists "tractor beam" among the terms due to Star Trek.

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