

TINPOT DICTATOR

The Dalek is back – bigger and more brutal than ever. But will this new-look metal meanie have a whole new generation screaming “Ex-ter-mi-nate”?

What's it like being asked to write an episode of the new *Doctor Who*? “When the phone call came, I was on the ceiling with joy,” says Robert Shearman. And if that episode brings back the Daleks? “I wasn’t off the ceiling for weeks.”

Of course, after the euphoria must come the graft. Imagine the weight of expectation surrounding the Daleks. Everyone knows them, even those too young to remember them the first time round, because their image is seared into the mind, from memorabilia, repeats, promotional sweet wrappers. As is that voice.

“When I first wrote the *Dalek* episode, I wasn’t sure that ‘Exterminate!’ wasn’t a bit silly,” recalls Shearman. “So I put it in a couple of times, but I didn’t really want him ranting it. And Russell’s [executive producer Russell T Davies] notes came back saying, ‘Why not? I want to have kids in the playground saying *Exterminate!* all the time.’ Of course, he was quite right.”

Shearman is an award-winning playwright – successful since his student days – who has worked with Francis Ford Coppola and Alan Ayckbourn. Born in 1970, he’s also a *Doctor Who* fan and has written four audio plays, including *Jubilee*, featuring Colin Baker’s Doctor – and the Daleks. Natural progression took its course.

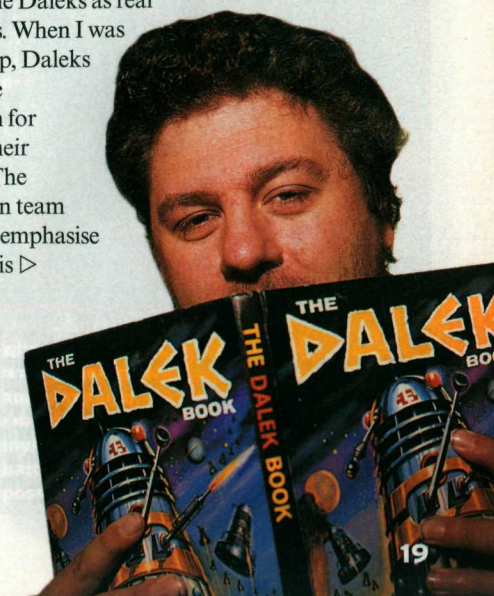
Don’t expect a radical reinvention of Terry Nation’s iconic creatures (besides their being able to fly, see overleaf). As Shearman puts it, “People want to see the Dalek again, in all its glory, being taken seriously and killing rather brutally. I don’t think it’s any great spoiler to say there’s an awful lot of death in my episode.”

His tale sees the Doctor confronted by a Dalek in chains, in a Utah museum run by a billionaire collector. For inspiration Shearman went back to the Patrick Troughton stories of the 1960s, “because then you saw the Daleks as real characters. When I was growing up, Daleks were more henchmen for Davros [their creator]. The production team wanted to emphasise that there is ▷

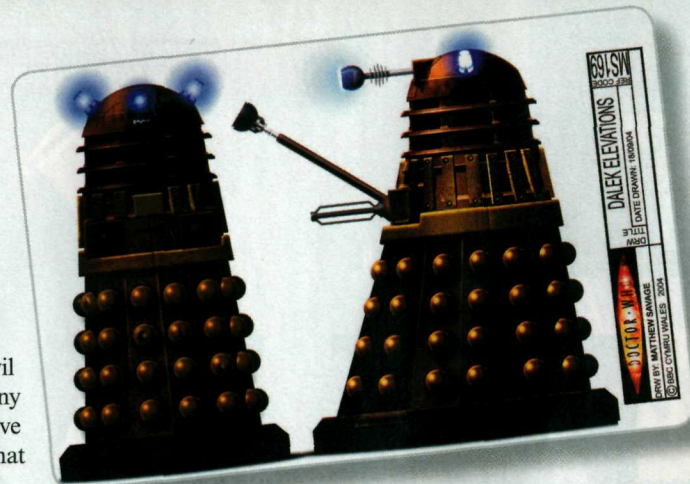
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WRITER ROBERT SHEARMAN

TAKING THE PLUNGER
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MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: IAN MCKINNELL
DAN GOLDSMITH



◁ something living inside the Dalek; they aren't just pepperpot robots.

"I always see them as evil children who don't have any morals yet, and will connive any way they can to get what they want. In the past, as they went on, it was played up more that they were incompetent. I didn't want that. I based my episode upon *The Silence of the Lambs*."

Remember the scene in which Agent Starling first meets Hannibal Lecter, hands at sides, evil-eyed, waiting, in his glass cage? "You still don't want her anywhere near Lecter because he can get into her mind," says Shearman. "And it's that psychology of the Dalek I wanted to bring out."

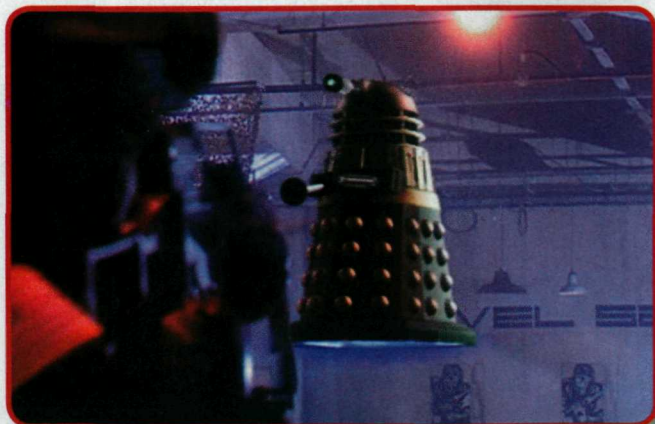
The script was more than a year in gestation, involving 14 or 15 drafts: setting the tone; realising the Dalek; ensuring it was suitable for families. At one stage, the Dalek went altogether (see the Inside Story on page 62)!

When Shearman saw his Dalek on set, "I almost cried. Your immediate impulse as someone who's been writing it for a year is to give it a hug because you feel close to it. But close up, it really does unnerve you." Even the silly bits? "All the things people laugh about on the Dalek, I wanted to address one by one in the script and show they're not silly."

The sink plunger? "Oh, the plunger kills in a rather dramatic way. It's quite unpleasant!" **Nick Griffiths**

LINKS

www.bbc.co.uk/doctorwho



JUST WHEN YOU THOUGHT IT WAS SAFE TO GO UPSTAIRS Daleks have already been seen to hover in the 1988 episode *Remembrance of the Daleks*, but with the Mill's CGI work they're really taking off. "The first time we started to animate the Dalek," says visual effects supervisor Will Cohen, "it was tempting for the animators to make it fly in a cool way, zooming round corners at 80mph. But you have to remember to keep it simple to match the live action."

OVERALL DESIGN

"Production designer Edward Thomas had taken some design cues from the film versions of *Doctor Who*," says BBC models expert Mike Tucker. "At the base he went for a brutal, chunky feel." "We made him look robust," adds producer Phil Collinson. "He's beautifully finished. He looks like he's fashioned out of steel with a 6in casing that you'd never be able to penetrate. The dome moves, the central section moves. He's a more fluid and therefore terrifying creature."



THE EYE

"There are so many close-up shots of the eye that director Joe Ahearne wanted the eyeball to be more visual," explains Mike Tucker. "So we added more surface detail and ridges, and gave it the ice-blue light."

IDENTITY TAG

The Dalek now carries an ident – a sort of bar code – unique to each Dalek to aid recognition.

THE LIGHT

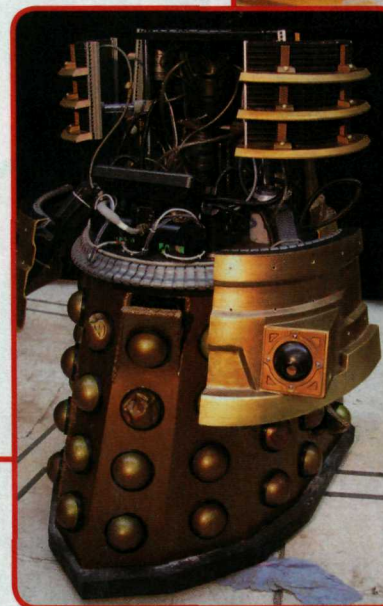
"Previous incarnations used car indicator lights, but these were specially designed," says Mike Tucker. "They're bigger and chunkier, in line with the look Russell T Davies wanted. The operator used to have to flash the lights in sync with the voice. Now that's all radio-controlled."

BARNABY EDWARDS, DALEK OPERATOR

When the Dalek moves, it's operator Barnaby Edwards's calf muscles doing all the work. "I had one scene where I had to stop going uphill," he says, "and that's tricky, because you've got 20 stone that wants to roll back downhill. So you have to put your foot behind the wheel and let the Dalek roll on to your foot. There are no brakes. And doors are hard. There's a door where this week's episode was filmed under the Millennium Stadium that was just half a centimetre wider than the Dalek. You can't see down in the Dalek, you can only see ahead, so going through that door was horrific. It took 15 takes to get it right."

THE SUCKER ARM

Well, you wouldn't want us to give everything away, but you can believe Russell T Davies when he echoes Robert Shearman in saying: "You won't like what they do with their sink plungers now, promise you."



INNARDS AND PAINT JOB

Above is an unpainted prototype for the inside of the Dalek with a glass bowl, which was later abandoned (you'll have to wait till Saturday to see what's inside now). The wiring is the Dalek creature's controls and the bent panel is all part of this week's episode. "Russell T Davies wanted them to look as if they were made of metal," says Mike Tucker. "Edward Thomas designed a version in steel and gun-metal colours, but Russell wanted copper and bronze, which was dirtied down with a little verdigris."

GLOBES

Rumour has it that the original globes were made of ballcocks cut in two – true or false? Probably false, says Mike Tucker. "The early Daleks were made out of wood, but later in the 1960s they were made from fibreglass – as were the globes – and they still are today."



DALEK GUN – THEN AND NOW

"Previously the Daleks used to zap people with a negative x-ray effect. Now you see all the victims' bones as well," says Davies. "People think that the old gun [the lower one] was always compressed in the middle," adds Mike Tucker, "but actually it was just because the crew used to haul the Dalek around by the gun to shift it out of the way!"

RT DIRECT HOME SHOPPING SERVICE

The paperback book *Monsters and Villains*, the definitive illustrated guide to the Doctor's adversaries in time – past, present and future – is available to pre-order (released 19 May 2005) from RT Direct for £7.99, including p&p. To order, send a cheque payable to Radio Times to: RT Direct, PO Box 326, Sittingbourne ME9 8FA, or call 0870 770 7979.



ACTING WITH DALEKS



BRUNO LANGLEY

Former *Coronation Street* star Langley plays Adam Mitchell, a scientist who helps identify items hoarded by his billionaire boss, the Collector: "The Collector catches the Doctor and Rose in his base and finds out the Doctor is an alien," says Langley. "He's interested in him, because he collects things, so the Doctor becomes part of his collection. Then the Dalek starts to wake up... Daleks are so iconic. It's an image that's in your face from posters, books, videos. They're more than just monsters – they represent something. Danger."

CHRISTOPHER ECCLESTON

"The Daleks are burned into our consciousness, like the Tardis. The first time I saw one on set, it really made me catch my breath. Personally, I'll be very interested to see what people think about the Daleks when their tops come off."

BILLIE PIPER

"What's bizarre is that when you're acting opposite a Dalek, it's easy to feel emotions towards it – you do get scared and threatened by these things. For Rose, they're scary because the Doctor has had so many run-ins with them, they've screwed with his head. It's the only time you see fear in his face when he talks about them."

VOICE OF THE DALEK

"You have to believe you are that Dalek character – without driving yourself nuts – and get into that frame of mind," says Nicholas Briggs, who provides the voice of the Dalek. "I'm round the corner on the set, with my lip mic and headphones, staring at a monitor. I can hear and see Chris or Billie, and it's easy to descend into your own little world of Dalek madness. Saying 'Exterminate!' is huge fun. But I also loved finding ways of saying things that aren't typical of a Dalek. Such as when he says, 'I am frightened,' and 'I'm dying. I had to make myself as pathetic as possible.'"



NEXT WEEK: THE DALEK CREATURE