How ‘Doctor Who’ landed in America

New book chronicles rise of cult British TV show to pop-culture phenomenon

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After 54 years on television—not to mention hundreds of books, audio stories and comics—it’s undeniable that “Doctor Who” is British to its core. But a substantial number of fans live on this side of the Atlantic, too, helping the show to flourish for decades as a cult hit and more recently to grow into a pop-culture phenomenon rivalling “Star Trek” and “Star Wars” for galactic supremacy.

A new book called “Red White and Who: The Story of ‘Doctor Who’ in America”—released this month by ATB Publishing—pulls together independent research, media clippings and hundreds of interviews for the first substantive look at the American perspective on the world’s longest-running science fiction show.

For those unfamiliar with the Doctor and his adventures through the cosmos, here’s a brief primer: He’s an alien Time Lord with two hearts and a

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In ‘Good Time,’ Pattinson has the role of his life

JAKE COYLE
ATLANTIC WHITBY

The external directing duo of Josh and Benny Safdie make urban odysseys that flow with the quicksilver currents of New York City. You can feel the gym-stained pavement under your feet. You can smell the Q train. The Safdies are already an electric new energy in cinema—streetwise and seedy—but in the ironically titled opus “Good Time,” they have quickened their already kinetic pace. This movie, wild and erratic, is downright blistering. The opening credits, as if rushing to catch a train, don’t appear until well into the film, after all hell has already broken loose.

Many of their gritty, abrasive tales emanate directly from the street; that’s where they found the homeless, heroin-addicted protagonist (Arielle Holmes) of their last film, the verite “Heaven Knows What.” The same could not be said for the star of “Good Time”: Robert Pattinson, The “Twilight” actor, captivated by a still from “Heaven Knows What,” contacted the Safdies and out came “Good Time.”

It goes without saying that this is a long way off from “Fighting”—a Frankenstein that, whatever its other attributes, has at least given voice to two of the most interesting actors of a generation. While Kravitz Stewart has already won a claim for herself in Olivier Assayas films and others, Pattinson has more quietly assembled an equally impressive filmography with the likes of David Cronenberg and James Gray, in whose “The Last City ofz” Pattinson made such a

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Doctor

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higher-on-the-ledge TARDIS (resem-
bling an old-school British police call box) that he doesn’t travel anywhere and anytime. He generally travels with a hu-
man assistant (or “companion”) who is our window into the action, able to ask the questions that viewers want an
answer to.

What’s now called the “classic series” premiered in the U.K. on Nov. 23, 1963 (the day after President John F. Kennedy’s assassination) and ran through 1989. A joint BBC-ITV production in 1966 (starring Paul McGann as the Doctor) was not picked up as a series, but it returned properly in 2005 with a modern sensibility and a
researched worldwide that’s bigger than
our planet.

One secret to the longevity of “Doctor Who” is the Doctor himself. He can
recess as needed through a neat trick called “regeneration,” where he for-
ters the mythos of the show when the series came to an end. Capaldi’s
turn came to an end in 2016.

The Doctor has seen the history of the
Doctor over 50 seasons (plus an extra in-
carnation in the “classic series”). He is,
grown in the current, one skilfully embodied by both David Tennant and Peter Capaldi, who will form into the 13th Doctor at Christmas in the form of actress Jodie Whittaker and is the first woman to take on the role.

In the classic series, Jodie Whittaker takes over from Peter Capaldi as the Doctor on New Year’s Eve in the text in the TARDIS.

Dr. America

Dr. America: A joint U.S. A. production of “Doctor Who” starring Paul McGann aired as a movie on the Fox on the Fox for

A series concluding with no clear ques-
tions, but in the end, we all had fingers in these pies, but we did also solicit contributions. We
were also busy with promoting the series and posting messages in various places.

We opened up a post-office box in case
anyone wanted to send us videotapes or anything like that. We told people that (they had VHS tapes) of public television) pledge drives to send us to —
we could use it for the book, and then we would convert them to DVD and send them back.

Strength enough, we got a lot of peo-
ple who said, “Yeah, I’ve got a lot of stuff that I want to do something with.” But quite a number of them, we had to serve some of the illustrative material ourselves. It’s a little bit da-
bling at pointing, but we also recognize that once people have the book in their hands, then, they’ll say, “Yeah, I have something that could really go into this book.” Maybe in a future edition, if there is one, we could have a much better idea of exactly how it would go.

How did you find your first encounter with “Doctor Who?”

ILL: I was 9 years old, living in the Chicago suburbs. It was 1975, and I think I was just sitting in front of the TV when it wasn’t on. I don’t want to see it stop. I don’t want something like that — you want to keep things going and keep going. So we really need to embrace new fans con-
nected to the show. We really need to

Don’t go looking for the good old days.

In the U.K., they’d always be seeing things made to be funny. What did it end up in the culture that everyone knew what it was? We know it as “Doctor Who.” When we know what “Doctor Who” was, whether the characters were colorful or, whether they cared for it or not.

Over the years, I’ve discovered the or-
igin of “Redhead and White,” how the book came about, and how it’s im-
portant for “Doctor Who” fans to em-
brace these things, and how it’s changed.

GQ: How did the idea for “Redhead and
White” originate?

ILL: It came about in a similar fashion in

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White” originate?

ILL: It came about in a similar fashion in

Day Afternoon” has an unprepared pair trad their hand at an ill-conceived plan. They emerge with 40,000 in cash but soon after their livery car driver picks them up, a dozen corpses and the bodies spread out of the car in a cloud of red smoke.

From here, it’s a nonstop freefall. Caged by the police, Nick cracks through a glass door and is arrested. Connie, desperate to put both men to-gether, first tries to take advantage of his boyhood girlfriend (Jennifer Jason Leigh) and, when that fails, improves his way through increasingly absurd schemes in a surreptitious adventure that somehow includes trips to an amusement park. White Castle and a random household in which Connie takes the time to dye his hair blond. Along the way, Lishah Weiner, as a black teen exploited by Connie, and the “Heaven Knows What” actor Buddy Duress, give terrific performances. (Darren’s entrance is alone worth the price of admission.)

In the annals of the crime film, the paltry “Good Tree” is roughly the oppo-
site of something like the über-profes-
sional chills of “Heat.” At one point, “Cope” is seen on a television, and these are the kind of detours that would fit right in there. But aside from being a devoted brother, this particular Connie also a clever, loquacious user of sexual abuse.

Love was a drug for the smitten young

woman’s of “Heaven Knows What.” For the brothers of “Good Tree,” it’s an ex-
ploration of the从事物和“Good Tree”在其中的非典型性。这部影片可以被看作是其中一种形式的，一个关于黑色的、疯狂的、混乱的、混乱的电影。在这部影片中，小侦探在对黑手党的追杀中，经历了各种危险和挑战，最终在一位老侦探的帮助下，成功地完成了任务，并在过程中展现出勇气和智慧。

We also don’t try to plot it all, because we
just did it to see if, somehow, we could get away with it. We’re not looking for a
plot.

Dr. America

on Twitter: @DrKocher

Peter Capaldi playing the 12th Doctor.

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