



TURNER ENTERTAINMENT

Moderator: Chrissie Eckhardt
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3:35 pm CT

Operator: Good day and welcome to the Turner Entertainment Hosted Noah Wyle conference call.

Today's conference is being recorded. At this time I would like to turn the conference over to Ms. Chrissie Eckhardt. Please go ahead.

Chrissie Eckhardt: Good afternoon everyone. Thank you for joining the Noah Wyle Falling Skies conference call.

Falling Skies premieres Sunday June 19 at 9:00 PM Eastern on TNT.

The conference call is now open to questions. Please press star 1 to ask a question. Thank you.

Operator: At this time, if you would like to ask a question please press star followed by the number 1 on your telephone keypad.

If you're calling from a Speakerphone, please make sure your mute function is off to ensure your signal can reach our equipment.

Once again, star 1 to ask a question.

Our first one comes from Patrick Douglas with Great Falls Tribune. Your line is open.

Patrick Douglas: How you doing Noah?

Noah Wyle: Very well, how are you?

Patrick Douglas: Excellent. Now, my wife and I we've been struggling with the series V for its current run because it's just - there's too much soap opera drama that continues to build. What we love most about Falling Skies is it picks up right in the thick of the madness.

Talk about that aspect of the show where we go, like I said, right to the meat of the story instead of having a season or two of build-up?

Noah Wyle: Yes, it's sort of a typical story telling in the sense that we don't start with everyday life going on business as usual and then suddenly everybody's eyes turn to the heavens and say, what's that coming in towards our planet.

We do, we pick up six months into what has been a devastating alien invasion and meet our characters already in a pretty high state of disarray which is kind of exciting storytelling because it allows you the opportunity to fill in the back story through episodic storytelling and also opens up the possibility of being able to track back in time down the road if it seems (dramatically) appropriate.

Patrick Douglas: Well, my other question is, how involved is Steven Spielberg in the production of this show?

Noah Wyle: He's pretty damn involved. His fingerprints are all over it. He was instrumental in helping craft the original pilot script and certainly in casting the pilot.

And he came out and was on set when we were shooting the pilot and he made lots of editorial decisions and even drew some storyboards for the reshoots on the pilot and then helped craft the overreaching story (arks) for the season, watched all the daily's and made lots of editorial suggestions all along the way in bringing those shows to their final cut.

So I would say he's instrumentally involved.

Operator: And our next question comes from Jay Jacobs with Popentertainment.com. Your line is open.

Jay Jacobs: Nice to talk to you Noah.

Noah Wyle: And you.

Jay Jacobs: You've been very active philanthropically about wildlife preservation so I thought it was kind of interesting that, in a way, you're doing a show about human's facing extinction.

Noah Wyle: Yes, we're the new polar bears, right?

Jay Jacobs: Yes, that's true. Now, if you were in the position of your character do you think - what do you think you'd miss the most in the new world and also what do you think would be the most exciting opportunity about a civilization to sort of start over?

Noah Wyle: I'm guessing a variety of diet would be the thing I'd miss the most. And hot food. But we sort of tried to (pepper) each episode with exactly that. What are the cons and disadvantages to the state we've been thrown into but what are the sort of more subtle pros whether it's seeing a group

of kids having to exercise their imaginations at play and actually relishing in the opportunity to do so or the quality of relationships between families being that much enriched without all the other distractions.

There's a sequence that comes midway through the season where a women who's among our ranks is pregnant and is throwing a baby shower. And having been to quite a few baby showers this was unlike any event I had experienced in the sense that it wasn't so much about the gifts and the swag and stuff for the impending birth it was really more about the spiritual aspects of brining a new life into the world and your responsibilities are as a parent and what we collectively - what are our collective responsibilities for this new life?

And those I find very rewarding aspects to the storytelling because it allows us an opportunity to kind of pick and choose between separate the weak and chafed from what's important and what's not.

Operator: And our next question comes from (Mike Gencorelli) from Moviemics.com. Your line is open.

(Mike Gencorelli): Hey Noah, how's it going?

Noah Wyle: Good, how are you today?

(Mike Gencorelli): Excellent, doing great. I've been hearing a lot of talk about them saying that Falling Skies it feels like so (ethnic) in the first pilot episode. They're saying that it almost feels like a feature film. Can you reflect on that?

Noah Wyle: I'm sorry (Mike) there's a little static on the line, I'm having trouble hearing you. Do you mind saying that again?

(Mike Gencorelli): I'm sorry. I said a lot of people have been talking about how the first few episodes of the pilot it seems like it's - it feels very much like a feature film. I wanted to know if you could kind of reflect on that for us?

Noah Wyle: Yes, sure. Well, it wasn't intended to be sandwiched together. The pilot was a standalone hour and it's being married to the first episode which we shot as a first episode for the season to build it into a two-hour block.

So it was never scripted to feel like a movie but I think anytime Mr. Spielberg's name is above the marquee you can't help but to make a cinema comparison. And it's got a lot of rich production value. The budget on the pilot was pretty extensive. So we had a lot of bang for our buck and that wasn't necessarily the case in every episode so I think getting a sense of what the series is going to be like comes probably more accurately from the second half, second hour, than the first.

But, yes, it's got a very cinematic feel to it.

(Mike Gencorelli): What the show it's clocking in at ten episodes for the first season. I mean, do you think that the show has like enough (talent) to spread its wings in season one?

Noah Wyle: I think - well, I had lunch with Michael Wright who's Head of TNT and we discussed if this came to a second season whether he would be interested in picking it up for more episodes. And his philosophy, which I tend to agree with is, that if you're writing for ten episodes you can really write to a focused point and make sure that all of your T's have been crossed and your eyes have been dotted.

And if you're trying to slug it out through 15, 17 or on a network 22 to 24 you run the risk of dissipating the potency of your story telling and falling back on sort of (heck nine) clichés. And he really didn't want to do that. He really is very proud and pleased with the show and wants - should

the second season come to pass it to have the same kind of punch that the first season did which I think you really only get from shooting a truncated season of 10, 12 maximum.

Operator: And our next question comes from Kate Blake from Mutlipleverses.com. Your line is open.

Kate Blake: Hi Noah.

Noah Wyle: Hello, how are you?

Kate Blake: Good. One of the things that I've really enjoyed from watching the first three episodes, is I really enjoy the family dynamic that's on it. I was wondering if you could talk to us a bit about how you approach trying, how you guys approached keeping your family together in this broken world?

Noah Wyle: Well, dramatically I think that was probably the theme that was most interesting to me. I haven't had a lot of experience working in the science fiction genre so that had a certain appeal.

But I went into this with the confidence of knowing that the spaceships and the aliens were going to be just fine with Mr. Spielberg designing them. And so my responsibilities really fell to making sure the human aspects of the show were as compelling as they could be.

And I found that dual conflict that we set up in the pilot to be really provocative of a guy just trying to keep his family intact and alive being given the larger responsibility of having to care for 300 (veritable) strangers and the conflict between the two; very interesting.

But that's really, I think, what's at the core of the show is once the reset button on humanities been pushed and these characters, should they survive, are going to become the next founding fathers for the next civilization. What are the best aspects of the previous civilization that you

would want to retain and what are the more superfluous or (ascerteric) ones that you wouldn't mind dropping?

And certainly the notion of family and the quality of human relationships comes to the floor and that's what I think we pretty successfully explored through the first half of the season.

Kate Blake: Okay and I've got one more thing to ask. After all of your years working on ER did you ever have to stop yourself from wanting to jump in and help in any triage type of situations?

Noah Wyle: Oh, I learned enough to know that I didn't really learn very much at all and that the best thing to do is be a cheerleader on the sidelines and say things like (please).

I've been - I had the misfortune of being first on scene at a couple of different accident sites and fortunately had to do nothing more than call 911 and a little hand-holding because I don't think I could really have rise too much more than that.

Kate Blake: Well, you never know.

Noah Wyle: You never know, you never know.

Operator: And our next question comes from (Piedro Phillip Philaphoni) from the Daily (Bland). Your line is open.

(Piedro Phillip Philaphoni): Hey Noah, how you doing buddy?

Noah Wyle: Good, how are you today?

(Piedro Phillip Philaphoni): Another great day, right?

Noah Wyle: It is a beautiful day out here in California. Where are you?

(Piedro Phillip Philaphoni): I'm down in Miami.

Noah Wyle: Oh, nice.

(Piedro Phillip Philaphoni): Let me ask, something that really - the dynamic that really touched me was the difference between Tom and Weaver played by Will Patton. You know, Weaver's a character who, especially in most of these post-apocalyptic movies you see the, I would say, something like Battle: Los Angeles, I mean, you see the military persona is the one who steps up to the plate and becomes the default leader.

But with Tom he really has no practical experience for military application. But his knowledge as a professor, you know, you see it coming out in all of these different situations.

I mean, what do you think distinguishes Tom as a leader as opposed to what all of these other projects have that they automatically show the militaristic personalities step to the foreground to take charge?

Noah Wyle: That's an interesting question. I would say that when you traditionally have a character whose career military like Captain Weaver is their strong suit is leading men who have been trained and focused for the battle and mission enhanced. Whereas in this particular scenario most of our military has been eradicated already and it's a civilian militia that is being trained.

It's exactly Tom Mason's back-story as having been a teacher that puts him in a little bit better (sted) to teach mostly kids how to arm themselves and defend themselves than it is for Weaver to fall back on the military paradigm.

And it's sort of - it's looking at the realm of academia and saying that's a little dry for what we need right now and looking at the role of military and saying that's a little dogmatic for what we need right now and trying to find a synthesis between the two that I think makes my character a leader of a different strength.

(Piedro Phillip Philaphoni): Beautiful. And the last question for you. Tom does seem like somebody who has his act together but, and I'm only three episodes in, I'm trying to figure out, are we going to see in the first season Tom's breaking point?

Noah Wyle: He comes damn close to it. He comes very, very close to it. Yes, I would say episode, yes, in the four or five range that's where he starts to wear a little thin.

Although, you know, there was an adage that we used to say a lot on my other show where you really didn't have time to feel sorry for yourself during the course of the day because you had another patient to treat or two or three.

So you really had to earn whatever private moments you allowed yourself to reveal, whatever inner life was going on.

And the same holds true for this show is that there's such a constant and eminent threat underneath each and every scene that these characters who probably if they had a week off would develop all sorts of the hallmarks of PTSD and go through all sorts of debilitating briefs don't have the luxury of doing so because there's just too many other things that need to be done.

So I would say that the big breakdown is still coming but we definitely show glimpses of it.

Operator: And our next question comes from Patrick Douglas from Great Falls Tribune. Your line is open.

Patrick Douglas: Well Noah, if I had to compare it to another show I'd actually put it up with another great series in Walking Dead only replacing zombies with aliens and obviously it's a little less violent because it's on TNT.

I mean, with this post-apocalyptic type of story with the isolation, how are you, as an actor, able to really get in the character where you believe and you translate that belief to the audience as far as just being isolated in just a sense of dire everyday?

Noah Wyle: I'm in a bit of a disadvantage. I haven't seen Walking Dead yet so the comparisons that I've heard I can't say whether they're well-founded or not. From my own preparation, nothing could be more isolating than pulling a guy away from his family and sequestering him and (throwing into Ontario) for five months.

That's the tongue-in-cheek answer. The straight answer is, you know, we watched a lot of movies, we read a lot of books, we passed stuff around from trailer to trailer trying to get everybody on the same page.

In terms of trying to find a level of continuity between everybody's performance so that we were all playing relatively the same stakes but individualizing them.

We talked a lot about encounters with the aliens serving as metaphors for encountering the worst aspects of our own personalities. So if you stop thinking of them as scary alien creatures which would force you into the limited choices of acting like Fay Wray in a King Kong movie and tried to personalize it a lot more and having them represent something that you really did not want to encounter at all costs.

Then the level of threats always existent but it's very specific to character. And I think we accomplished that pretty well.

Patrick Douglas: Thanks.

Operator: And our next question comes from (Eric Resnick) with Youbentmywookie.com.

(Eric Resnick): Hey Noah, thanks for taking the time to talk to us all today.

Female: ...I just forgot (I'll do it).

(Eric Resnick): I'm sorry?

Noah Wyle: Hello?

(Eric Resnick): Hello, still here, can you hear me?

Noah Wyle: Yes.

(Eric Resnick): I was wondering because you haven't done too many big action roles other than really the Librarian series which was great, what did you have to do to prepare for the action involved in the show compared to the previous work that you've done?

Noah Wyle: Oh, I probably should have done a lot more. I showed up and we all had a couple of days of running around the sound stage and learning gun safety. But in terms of physical preparation I found myself at a disadvantage trying to keep up with Drew Roy whose part (springbok). He plays my oldest son who very early on in the pilot we had to sort of run and jump and dive and whirl and roll and do all these crazy things. All of which, eventually, I got more comfortable at. But it's certainly not wearing the white coat everyday.

(Eric Resnick): Did you find that you were able to do a lot of your own stunts or was a lot of it done by a stunt team?

Noah Wyle: Kind of both. I mean, there's stunts but they're not real stunts. I mean, running and jumping and sliding and diving all that stuff looks so much better when the actors doing it. And so I did a lot of that kind of thing.

And then whenever - there was one sequence where I'm fighting one of the aliens in a steam tunnel and I did all of that fight with the exception of one throw where the alien sort of chucks me. And that required some wirework to get thrown high up against a wall.

So...

(Eric Resnick): Is that the first time you've done wire work?

Noah Wyle: I didn't do that one. That's the one I (farmed) out to the double. And I had to learn how to ride a motorcycle for this show which I'm still kind of terrified by. So I can start one and I can stop one and I can kind of coast through a scene on one but anything requiring any more acrobatics than that I give to the double as well.

Things like that.

Operator: And once again, if you have a question, please press star followed by the number 1 on your telephone keypad.

We go next to Jason Hunt with Scifi4me.com.

Jason Hunt: Hi Noah. Going back to the question of family for a moment, it seems like there's a good setup for some brother related themes that are going throughout various different stories with Captain Weaver and the Band of Brothers mentality that he has with the soldiers versus the civilians.

You've got the Mason brothers and the question of what they'll do for each other in this situation. And it almost seems like Mason and Pope might have the beginnings of something setup for that discussion there in the theater.

Is this something that's been discussed and planned that - or is it just coming out in the performances as just a natural outgrowth of the story?

Noah Wyle: I think kind of both and not to give to non-specific an answer, you know, relationships especially when you're starting up a new show, it's a lot like testing spaghetti. You kind of throw a bunch of stuff on the wall and see what sticks.

And certain relationships have greater resonance than others and certain themes become more pronounced than others and oftentimes they're not the ones that you expect to pop.

Certainly when we started I - it was pretty black and white that I was coming from the humanist angle and Will Patton was coming from the militarist angle and that we were going to butt heads continually.

And then as we got into the playing of it, Will brings such an interesting complexity to his character and a lot of humanity to what could easily be perceived as a two-dimensional character that it became a lot more interesting to kind of explore the areas of commonality between these two characters as opposed to the areas of conflict and to see how under different circumstances

these men actually might like each other but are forced into opposite camps because of their dueling ideologies.

And the same holds true with characters like Pope where you know it's this notion of who your allegiance is to. Obviously when you have an external threat from another planet suddenly the divisions between black, white, rich, poor, old and young get erased immediately against common enemy. But if you take that enemy off the table for a moment and are allowed to take a little bit of breathing room, what are the lessons we've learned? Or do we revert back to our own kind of pettiness and clannishness?

And so these are all themes that are worthy of exploring as we go on.

Jason Hunt: It seems like your characters - you talk about breathing room. It seems like your characters are actually getting some of that where a comparison was made to (V) earlier. It seemed like in that series it was really a lot of slam, bang and no character development.

Are you guys consciously aware of being able to spend time with these characters before you go in to just doing action sequences? Is that something that you're being careful about wanting to...

Noah Wyle: Well, you have to be careful about it even just from a production standpoint because obviously action sequences require the most money of an episode budget. And if you're going to give a little action sequence in every show you'll get a little action sequence in every show.

But if you can buy yourself a couple of episodes by saving on your post-production budget and focusing the drama on interpersonal and character conflict then suddenly on the fourth episode you've got quite a large (work chest) to work with and you can stage something pretty epic.

So there's a financial necessity that goes into it. But also it's much more compelling to have the threat come, not as a constant, but in waves. And to have it start off as a huge wave and then be able to get a (low) and reflect a little bit and synthesize some information and then to have another wave come and also the anticipation of that wave coming is great dramatic tension.

What are the lessons learned after an encounter before the next wave comes? I think that for this particular show it works much better than having it be a constant threat.

Operator: And our next question comes from Jeanne Jackle from San Antonio Express News. Your line is open.

Jeanne Jackle: Hi Noah, how are ya?

Noah Wyle: Good, how are you today?

Jeanne Jackle: Good. I don't know if you're a big fan of Jason and The Argonauts like I am but I noticed that it had kind of a feel of very Harryhausen feel to the aliens here with very sort of mechanical (stop) motion a little bit.

I wonder what - did you know anything about that if that was intended to make it look a little different from what we see today or do you have any thoughts on that?

Noah Wyle: I don't. I hope you're not suggesting that ours looks like that kind of claymation.

Jeanne Jackle: No, no, no, no. No. I don't know if you saw Jason and The Argonauts, the old one but...

Noah Wyle: Yes, no. I saw it, yes.

Jeanne Jackle: I was thinking, is this a very - to me it's kind of scarier.

Noah Wyle: I don't know if that was predetermined or not. You know, it's - I don't say it flippantly when I say I left the post-production to the post-production people. And you know, my level of involvement really extended up and through the writing of the scripts and the shooting of the episodes and then we turned it over to the real technicians to flush out this world.

So I had nothing to do with it really.

Jeanne Jackle: Well, can I ask you about the target audience for this is it going to be more for families you think or how edgy is it going to get? How violent do you think it's going to get? Will it be more like Battlestar Galactica or more like...

Noah Wyle: It's a really fine line to walk because you don't - you know, I'll use as an example the sort of budding love story between my character and Moon Bloodgood's character. You know, we tee it up that there's an initial interest between these two and it starts the clock ticking in the audiences mind about when this is going to get consummated.

And as we were shooting the episodes we were always conscious of the fact that we hadn't really advanced this relationship at all. So we'd write scene's where I would be on guard duty and she'd bring me a sandwich and we'd start talking about whatever and suddenly it would get a little romantic.

And as we rehearsed them or talked them through it seems like it immediately dissipated the tension and level of credibility for the world that we were trying to establish and that we hadn't earned that moment yet.

And then it kind of stuck out like a sore thumb as an obvious (beat) in the television show so we cut it. And instead we would play it out probably more closer to the way it would realistically play out which is, yes, there's an interest from opposite sides of the room but these are two very busy people who have to get back to work.

And, as the season progressed and we finally got into the final episode there was a moment that seemed truly earned, very kind of romantic and I think it became incredibly satisfying to have it (pace) out that way.

Does that answer your question at all?

Jeanne Jackle: Yes. But I was just wondering about like how edgy it was going to be, how kind of...

Noah Wyle: Oh yes, that was the parallel I was trying to draw which is...It's a fine line to walk because you want to create a world where threat is very present but you don't want it to be so bleak that it turns off viewers who are tuning in to watch more of a drama than a genre show.

But by the same token there's a science fiction audience out there that I think the network would very much like to attract that is coming with the expectation that this is going to have a lot of epic battle sequences and be a fairly dark and violent show.

So it's going back and forth between the two. It's having moments of humanity and hope and humor punctuated by moments of terror and action and then how we move on from there and get back to the moments of humanity, hope and humor before the next attack comes.

I don't think it's going to get much more gratuitously violent than episodes we've already shot. I don't think that that's in the words but I don't think we really want to paint the rosier picture of the world prematurely either.

Operator: And at this time I'll turn the call back over to Chrissie Eckhardt.

Chrissie Eckhardt: Thank you so much everyone for joining today's call. As a reminder, Falling Skies premieres Sunday June 19 at 9:00 PM Eastern on TNT.

A transcript of this call will be available within 24 hours.

Thank you Noah...

Noah Wyle: My pleasure.

Chrissie Eckhardt: And thank you everyone for participating.

Noah Wyle: Thanks everybody. Take care. Bye.

END