



Prelude to Axanar

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By  [Carlos Pedraza](#)

Prelude to Axanar (full title: *The Four Years War Part III: Prelude to Axanar*) is a 2014 fan-made short film, 22 minutes long, directed by [Christian Gossett](#) and written by Christian Gossett and [Alec Peters](#). Funded through [Kickstarter](#), production sought \$10,000 in funding, but raised \$101,000. It had its public debut July 26, 2014 at San Diego Comic-Con.

Set in the Star Trek universe, the film stars Kate Vernon, Tony Todd, Richard Hatch, Gary Graham and J. G. Hertzler, in a documentary-style film recounting the events surrounding the Battle of Axanar, the climactic clash between the [United Federation of Planets](#) and the [Klingon Empire](#).

Peters was to portray the hero of the battle, the renowned [Starfleet](#) captain, [Kelvar Garth of Izar](#).



Alec Peters portrayed Garth of Izar in *Prelude to Axanar*

Production

Peters announced his intention to produce the feature-length *Axanar* in 2012. [CBS](#) and [Paramount Pictures](#), which own the rights to Star Trek had traditionally allowed fan-made projects to move forward just “as long as they agree not to sell anything—including tickets, [merchandise](#), or copies of the finished film or series.”¹⁾

These limitations made financing a fan film difficult, so Peters turned to [Kickstarter](#) and a fan-funding campaign which eventually exceeded his initial funding goal of \$10,000 by raising \$101,000. The campaign met its goal by March 31, 2014, and principal photography was in Los Angeles over the course of two days.



STELLAR CAST The cast of *Prelude to Axanar*, (from left) Kate Vernon, J.G. Hertzler, Gary Graham, with director Christian Gossett, producer Alec Peters and actor Richard Hatch.

Purpose

Prelude was conceived as a “proof of concept” for the *Axanar* feature. The short film’s [renown](#) helped Peters raise nearly \$1.2 million on [Kickstarter](#) and [Indiegogo](#) and an estimated \$500,000 in direct donations and [merchandise](#) sales.

Fate of the Feature

The feature project was derailed by a slowdown in crowdfunding donations and a [copyright infringement lawsuit](#) brought against Peters and [Axanar Productions](#) by Star Trek's owners, [CBS](#) and [Paramount Pictures](#), in 2015. The case was settled out of court in January 2017.

Axanar Lite

The [settlement](#) allowed Peters only to produce two 15-minute films, mostly beholden to the fan film [guidelines](#) CBS announced in June 2016. Those films, nicknamed Axanar Lite, were to be produced in the same faux documentary style as *Prelude*.

Cast

The [cast](#) included Hatch and Hertzler in principal roles, with Graham reprising his role as Vulcan ambassador [Soval](#). The film's purpose was to help raise the hundreds of thousands of dollars needed to produce the *Axanar* feature. The film's visual effects were done by Tobias Richter and [Tommy Kraft](#), makeup by Kevin Haney, and sound design by Frank Serafine.

Plot

Prelude is presented as an episode of a Federation documentary pertaining to a non-canon conflict, the Four Years War with the Klingon Empire, narrated by noted historian [John Gill](#) (who appeared in the Original Series episode, "[Patterns of Force](#)") and featuring interviews of participants on both sides of the battle. It is set two decades before the original series. The film focuses on the wartime exploits of Garth of Izar (who appeared in "[Whom Gods Destroy](#)"), captain of the prototype battlecruiser, the U.S.S. Ares, which turns the tide of the war. *Prelude* ends on Stardate 2245.1, just before the battle at Axanar, which was to be portrayed in the feature film.

Watch



Prelude to Axanar

Awards

Since its release, *Prelude* has screened at many film festivals around the world and, according to Axanar spokesman Mike Bawden, won 45 awards. Meanwhile, Peters for years had publicly and inaccurately cited the number of the short film's awards as 47.

See also: [The Story Behind Prelude to Axanar's '47 Awards'](#)

AxaMonitor compiled this list because until January 3, 2018, Peters' [Axanar Productions](#) website did not name the awards about which he boasted.²⁾ Bawden added the list to Axanar's [press website](#) on January 3, only after **AxaMonitor's** inquiry.³⁾

No.	Award	Year
1.	Best of Show, The IndieFEST Film Awards	2015
2.	Best Narrative, California International Shorts Festival	2015
3.	Best Fan Film, Dragon*Con Independent Film Festival	2015
4.	Best Director, Christian Gossett, The ZONE sci-fi film festival	2015
5.	Best Ensemble Cast, The ZONE sci-fi film festival	2015
6.	Best Mini-Movie, The ZONE sci-fi film festival	2015
7.	Best Score, Alexander Bornstein, The ZONE sci-fi film festival	2015
8.	Best SFX Makeup, The ZONE sci-fi film festival	2015
9.	Best VFX, The ZONE sci-fi film festival	2015
10.	Award of Excellence, Special Mention, Accolade Global Film Competition	2015
11.	Award of Excellence, Special Mention, Best Shorts Competition	
12.	Best Music Score, 1st Annual Widescreen Film & Music Video Festival	2015
13.	Best Visual Effects, Salt Lake Comic-Con Film Festival	
14.	Best Special Effects and Makeup – Short Film Category, Maverick Movie Awards	
15.	Best Short Film, Perfect Spirit Film Award, Creative Arts Film Festival	2015
16.	Best Science Fiction Short Film, Perfect Spirit Film Award, Creative Arts Film Festival	2015
17.	Best Actor, Richard Hatch, Perfect Spirit Film Award, Creative Arts Film Festival	2015

No.	Award	Year
18.	Best Sound Design, Frank Serafine, Perfect Spirit Film Award, Creative Arts Film Festival	2015
19.	Best Special Effects, Tobias Richter, Perfect Spirit Film Award, Creative Arts Film Festival	2015
20.	Golden Reel Award, Nevada Film Festival	2015
21.	Best Fan Film, First Glance Film Festival, Philadelphia	2015
22.	Bronze Winner, 36th Annual Telly Awards	
23.	Silver Winner, 36th Annual Telly Awards	
24.	Best Short Film, The Geekie Awards	2015
25.	Best Visual Effects, The Independent Star Trek Fan Film Awards	2015
26.	Best Production Design, Scott Cobb, The Independent Star Trek Fan Film Awards	2015
27.	Best Soundtrack, Alexander Bornstein (Composer), Frank Serafine (Supervising Sound Designer/Editor), Jesse Akins (Sound Designer), Ramsey Mellette (Sound Mixer), The Independent Star Trek Fan Film Awards	2015
28.	Best Original Story or Screenplay, Christian Gossett, Alec Peters, The Independent Star Trek Fan Film Awards	2015
29.	Best Director, Christian Gossett, The Independent Star Trek Fan Film Awards	2015
30.	Best Dramatic Presentation (Short Form), The Independent Star Trek Fan Film Awards	2015
31.	Best Composer, Scruffy City Film and Music Festival	
32.	Best Score, Scruffy City Film and Music Festival	
33.	Best Sound Design, Scruffy City Film and Music Festival	
34.	Best in Show, Action on Film International Film Festival USA	2015
35.	Geekiest Film, Boston Science Fiction Festival	2015
36.	Best Short Film, Gwinnett Center International Film Festival	2015
37.	LAIFF February Award, Christian Gossett, Los Angeles Independent Film Festival Awards	
38.	Best Editing - Robert Meyer Burnett, Big As Texas Short Film Festival	
39.	Best Sci-Fi/Fantasy, Big As Texas Short Film Festival	
40.	Best Special Effects, Big As Texas Short Film Festival	
41.	Outstanding Excellence for Sci-Fi Short Film, Depth of Field International Film Festival	
42.	Outstanding Excellence in Makeup, Depth of Field International Film Festival	
43.	Outstanding Excellence in Editing, Depth of Field International Film Festival	
44.	Best Narrative Short, Los Angeles Film and Script Festival	
45.	Special Jury Remi Award, WorldFest-Houston International Film Festival	

Not Counted

The following may have been counted by Alec Peters as awards when claiming *Prelude* had won 47. However, neither was an actual award.

Honor	Year	Comment
(Nominated) Golden Blaster, Best Picture, National Irish Science Fiction Film Awards	2015	Found by AxaMonitor, not on list provided by Axanar spokesman
(Official Selection) Sasquan International Film Festival, World Science Fiction Convention		Not an award, but on Bawden's list

Reception

Jana Monji of RogerEbert.com spoke during the film's private red carpet screening at the Horton Plaza

UA Cinema prior to its debut at San Diego's Comic-Con, and offered that involvement of known acting talent dedicated to the genre and to *Prelude to Axanar* might increase Star Trek fan influence at such events.⁴⁾

The Houston Press called it a functional example of "demonstration of concept," and urged Star Trek fans to see the film. It praised the cast, writing, "actors (Richard Hatch, Tony Todd, etc.) have some serious chops," and noted that the film's visual effects "are stunning."⁵⁾

Home Media Magazine highlighted "the film's high production values, cinema-quality special effects and the involvement of actors from the canonical Star Trek series, [elevating] *Prelude to Axanar* beyond the status of a mere fan film."⁶⁾



Scifi writer **David Gerrold** (Photo/David Gerrold Facebook profile)

Author [David Gerrold](#), writer of "[The Trouble With Tribbles](#)," and contributor to both the original Star Trek series and Star Trek: The Next Generation, after reading *Axanar* for the first time, stated "This is Star Trek." Liking the concept so much, and being so personally familiar with the Star Trek universe, he signed on as creative consultant.⁷⁾


Guardian Liberty Voice wrote, "The acting is superb, including appealing performances from Gary Graham as a Vulcan ambassador, Richard Hatch as the sweet-eyed Klingon General Kharn and the magnetic Kate Vernon as Starfleet Captain Sonya Alexander," and praised the film, writing "*Prelude to Axanar* is of the highest Hollywood-style production quality and a must-see for any devotee of the franchise."⁸⁾


Entertainment News International concluded, "[*Prelude to*] *Axanar* is a ground breaking independent film that proves the idea that a studio doesn't need to spend millions of dollars to produce a feature-quality production. *Axanar* will be the first non-CBS/Paramount-produced Star Trek to look and feel like a true Star Trek movie."⁹⁾



Portions of this article were adapted from the article, [W Prelude to Axanar](#), and used under a Creative Commons [W license](#).

Release

Prelude to Axanar itself had a three-minute teaser-trailer, released June 11, 2014. The completed 22-minute short had a private red carpet premiere July 26, 2014. at San Diego's Horton Plaza UA Cinema and its public debut at the 2014 San Diego Comic-Con. Available through the Axanar Productions 

[YouTube page](#), *Prelude to Axanar* includes subtitles in eight languages: French, Spanish, German, Dutch, Czech and Portuguese, as well as both American and British English. 

Keywords

[production](#), [prelude](#), [crowdfunding](#), [fan films](#)

1) 8)

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"[Star Trek Axanar Just Released \(Video\)](#)", Liberty Voice, 8/21/14.

2)

Email inquiry from AxaMonitor editor Carlos Pedraza to Axanar spokesman Mike Bawden, 1/3/18.

3)

Bawden's list inaccurately puts the number at 46, counting a nomination as an award.

4)

"[Comic-Con 2014: Star Trek Kickstarter Film 'Prelude to Axanar'](#)", RogerEbert.com, 7/29/14.

5)

"[First Look at The Houston Con](#)," Houston Press, 8/8/14.

6)

"[Filmmakers Increasingly Turning to Kickstarter](#)," Home Media Magazine, 7/28/14.

7)

"[Tony Todd is Admiral Ramirez in Indie-Financed 'Star Trek' Extension Feature 'Axanar' \(Watch 21-Minute Prelude\)](#)," IndieWire, 8/24/14.

9)

"[Star Trek: Prelude to Axanar world premiere and Q&A at SDCC](#)," Entertainment News International. 7/15/14.

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