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How \$1.1 Million 'Star Trek' Fan Movie Has Escaped Studio Shutdown (So Far)

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A group of fans has crowdsourced the seven-figure "Star Trek: Axanar," and rights holders CBS and Paramount are doing nothing to stop it

Beatrice Verhoeven | Last Updated: December 30, 2015 @ 6:43 AM

The Wrap

CBS Warned Axanar About Possible Legal Action Four Months Before Lawsuit

The Wrap is an entertainment and media news website founded by Sharon Waxman in 2009. With an editorial staff of more than 19 regular contributors and with commentary from industry heavyweight guest "Hollybloggers," The Wrap covered the industry of entertainment and media from its headquarters in Santa Monica, Calif., with additional editorial staff in New York City, then moved to Los Angeles, CA.¹⁾

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Axanar Coverage

The Wrap covered the [Axanar](#) project in an August 25, 2015, article, "How \$1.1 Million 'Star Trek' Fan Movie Has Escaped Studio Shutdown (So Far)," which was subtitled, "A group of fans has crowdsourced the seven-figure "Star Trek: Axanar," and rights holders CBS and Paramount are doing nothing to stop it."

The article included comments from an interview with Axanar producer [Alec Peters](#).

'Professional Commercial Venture'

That article followed the August 2015 face-to-face meeting between Peters and two [CBS officials](#) during the Star Trek Las Vegas convention.

Axanar

Axanar producer Peters emerged from a [face-to-face meeting](#) with CBS licensing personnel in August 2015 saying:

“CBS has a long history of accepting fan films. I think ‘Axanar’ has become so popular that CBS realizes that we’re just making their brand that much better.”²⁾

CBS has never officially sanctioned fan films, understanding that doing so could compromise control over their own intellectual property. It characterized that August 2015 [meeting](#) with Peters differently, telling The Wrap:

“CBS has not authorized, sanctioned or licensed this project in any way, and this has been communicated to those involved. We continue to [object to professional commercial ventures trading off our property rights](#) and are considering further options to protect these rights.”³⁾
[emphasis added]

CBS and Paramount [filed suit](#) just four months later.

'Trading Off Our Property Rights'


The “professional commercial venture” Peters was engaged in was the [now-abandoned studio](#) he was building with fans’ money rather than producing *Axanar*, as well as an online [merchandise](#) operation. Just weeks after CBS’ warning, in an interview on the Chicks Who Script podcast, Peters scoffed at the idea CBS would sue him, and went on to describe his real goal:

The studio is the endgame. The idea is we create a studio that we can then [use to] produce our own original content, our own movies. ... The idea is to produce our own original content.⁴⁾

New Moves on Fan Films

On April 20, 2016, [CBS' Burke](#) reached out to *Star Trek-Horizon* creator Tommy Kraft, [strongly suggesting](#) Kraft cancel his sequel’s planned \$250,000 crowdfunding campaign, citing the legal fallout from Axanar’s activities. Burke indicated more fan productions were getting a similar call.

On March 31, 2018, according to British fan producer Samuel Cockings, CBS Legal emailed him suggesting he [delay releasing](#) his movie, *Star Trek: Temporal Anomaly*, because of issues that appeared to be related to Cockings not adhering to CBS’ [fan film guidelines](#) which may have included:

- His use of audio and video from official Star Trek productions (Guideline 2).
- Using “Star Trek” in the title of the film and failing to include the subtitle, “A Star Trek Fan Production” (Guideline 3).
- The film’s 50-minute runtime, 20 minutes longer than suggested by the guidelines (Guideline 1). 

Keywords

Lawsuit, Wrap, CBS, Wrap quote

1)

 Wikipedia article, "The Wrap," retrieved 4/1/18.

2)

The Wrap: Why ‘Star Trek’ Fan Film Producers Should Have Seen CBS/Paramount Lawsuit Coming, 1/8/16

3)

The Wrap: How \$1.1 Million ‘Star Trek’ Fan Movie Has Escaped Studio Shutdown (So Far), 8/25/15

4)

Chicks Who Script Podcast, 9/28/15.

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