

EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE DECEMBER 2009

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Sent: 04 December 2009 22:48
To: fanderson@yahogroups.com
Subject: [Fanderson] Bob Bell

My query:

This is a long shot but I'm hoping to pick people's brains.

When asked in the 'Ask Anderson' section of #58 FAB News about the date Thunderbirds was set, Gerry replied that 'Bob Bell had gone on record to say that this was a mistake by someone in the art department'.

Does anyone know if FAB ever featured an interview with Bob Bell, or if there is any other published source that quotes Bell directly on this? I'd like to try and track it back to an original quote if at all possible for an article I am writing.

Any help appreciated.

Pen

Response (1)

Posted by: "Katie Bleathman"
Sat Dec 5, 2009 11:00 am (PST)

At the FAB1 convention in Wolverhampton in 1992, Alan Fennell confirmed this when I interviewed him on stage. He said that it was always meant to be 2065 but someone in the art department made a mistake.

Katie Bleathman

Response (2)

Posted by: "Chris Bentley"
Mon Dec 7, 2009 1:02 pm (PST)

It's interesting to hear that Alan Fennell told Katie that the 2026-dated calendar in 'Give or Take a Million' was an art department mistake during his interview at the FAB 1 convention. Bob Bell told me the exact same thing when I interviewed him on stage at the SPACE CITY convention in Watford in 1993.

Chris

Response (3)

Posted by: "Chris Bentley"
Wed Dec 9, 2009 8:38 am (PST)

Hi Pen,

If there's anything in it that's useful, sure. It's so long since I wrote that article I don't remember what I was thinking back then. Perhaps I'd better take another look at it and get back to you.

I maybe should also have mentioned before that the context of what Bob Bell was talking about at SPACE CITY, which led to his statement about the calendar in 'Give or Take a Million', is quite important too, I think. I have an idea that at that time I was firmly entrenched in the 2026 camp, in the belief that the appearance of the 2026 calendar in that episode was absolute inarguable proof of the chronological setting of the series. Talking to Bob opened my eyes.

What he was saying was that everything that you see and hear in 'Thunderbirds' (as well as 'Fireball', 'Stingray' and 'Captain Scarlet') was the result of a concerted co-ordinated effort by the producers, writers and designers to present a vision of the world 100 years in the future. That came directly from Gerry as part and parcel of the format of the show. So everyone involved was very clear from the outset that in the case of 'Thunderbirds' the year was 2065, advancing to 2066 for 'Thunderbirds Are Go' and the last six episodes, and then 2068 for 'Thunderbird 6'. And that thinking extended into all the merchandise - the books, comics, records and so on - associated with the show at the time.

So then I asked about the 'Give or Take a Million' calendar and Bob straightaway dismissed it as a mistake by the art department junior assistant who had been tasked with making it.

In that instant, all my earlier arguments for the 2026 dating became irrelevant to me. If everyone involved in making the show (except for that unfortunate art department junior) was aiming for a consistent presentation of a future world of 2065, then that vision should be accepted and respected for what it was. It should also be celebrated as an insight into what people imagined the world might be like a full century in the future, just as we accept the visions of the science-fiction filmmakers of the twenties, thirties and fifties, however quaint they might appear to us now we're actually living in a 21st century they couldn't possibly have imagined. The makers of 'Thunderbirds' imagined a world of 2065 and, whether we like it or not, we just have to accept that anything in the series which might appear to contradict that vision (the 'Give or Take a Million' calendar, the 1964-dated newspapers in 'The Mighty Atom', 'Edge of Impact', 'The Imposters' and 'Cry Wolf', and so on) were just careless mistakes or things that were never expected to be visible on the television screen.

Chris