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WIZARD
INSIDER!

V

The venerable '80s sci-fi TV classic gets a facelift

In 1983, two nights of the mini-series "V" scored 40 million viewers for creator Kenneth Johnson's parable about social tolerance. The underwhelming "V: The Final Battle" and "V: The Series" followed, but surviving those ill-advised follow-ups is about to pay off. ABC is resurrecting the concept as a weekly TV series, set for a winter 2010 debut. Here's how:

CREATIVE CREATURES

Though Johnson ("The Incredible Hulk") wrote *V: The Second Generation*, a novel published in 2008 that acts as a linear sequel to the original, Warner Bros. opted to start the television remake without his participation. Johnson still holds motion picture rights to the franchise.

CASTING SCIENCE

"V" is chock-full of familiar faces from genre TV. Elizabeth Mitchell (the possibly-deceased Juliet on "Lost"), "4400" star Joel Gretsch, Laura Vandervoort (Supergirl/Kara on "Smallville") and "Firefly" veterans Alan Tudyk and Morena Baccarin all co-star, with Morris Chestnut and Scott Wolf ("Party of Five") rounding out the cast.

PANIC IN THE SKY

Like the original, "V" will revolve around



an invasion of Earth by aliens promising prosperity and global assistance while charming and engendering devotion in humanity as a curious few discover their true intention of harvesting mankind's resources. "When you look at our current times, with the economy, wars and social strife, it's a perfect time for a force like this to come along," Producer Jeffery Bell says of the seemingly benevolent aliens to *Variety*.

SERIAL KILLERS

Producers have been quoted as saying that there's a "beginning, middle and end" already mapped out to "V," with four seasons of 13-22 episodes each. If that sounds overly optimistic, consider that early pilot screenings have drawn raves: E! Online dubbed it "the best pilot we've seen in, well, forever."

SHOT FOR SHOT

"V" gleefully displayed some of the most eerily memorable imagery in sci-fi TV history. The lizard-aliens ate live mice, one human teenager's sexy alien evening resulted in a slimy lizard-baby and the reveal—ripping away faux-flesh showed the scaly invaders' hides—is all worthy of a revisit. Creature effects have come a long way since the '80s, so expect the lizards to look less clumsy and more National Geographic.

BAD AND BADLER

In the original and remake, the Visitors' bid for human trust is figure-headed by a really hot chick. Actress Jane Badler's Diana in the '83 original was the con-niving, conspiratorial template. In the 2010 version, it's Baccarin's Anna who seduces TV reporter Scott Wolf and convinces him to spin some propaganda in the aliens' favor. **JAKE ROSSEN**

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CHARACTER TO WATCH:

NOMAD



This September, high-tech science crosses with high school shenanigans to establish Rikki "formerly known as the girl Bucky" Barnes in the mainstream Marvel Universe.

In *Nomad*, a four-issue miniseries by writer Sean McKeever and artist David Baldeon, the heroine best known as part of Marvel's '90s "Heroes Reborn" sets out to find her family after being stranded in a world that's not her own. Searching for what McKeever jokingly called her brother's doppelganger on her new world, Nomad travels from her home of Philadelphia to NYC—establishing herself as a high school student and crashing into some marquee heroes along the way. Most importantly, *Nomad* ties into Cap history by featuring the villainous Secret Empire as the series' antagonists. In the 1970s, a Richard Nixon-esque politician was revealed as the Empire's head, which will find echo across McKeever's series. "That killed Captain America's faith in our government, and that's why he first became Nomad. You'll see a couple members of the classic Secret Empire, including Mad-Dog, who's a strange little character we're giving a bit of an upgrade. I do like the idea of the almost Machiavellian organization behind the scenes pulling the strings." **KIEL PHEGLEY**