Torchwood: Miracle Day

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Title card for the *Miracle Day* series	
Country of origin	United Kingdom United States
No. of episodes	10
Broadcast	
Original channel	BBC One (UK) Starz (U.S.)
Original run	8 July - 9 September 2011 (Starz)[1] 14 July - 15 September 2011 (BBC)[2] –

Torchwood: Miracle Day is the fourth series of the British science fiction television series *Torchwood*, a spin-off from the long-running show *Doctor Who*.[3] In contrast to the first three series, which were produced by the BBC, the fourth series is a British-American co-production involving the BBC's drama production house BBC Cymru Wales for BBC Worldwide and the U.S. premium network Starz. It was broadcast in ten episodes beginning 8 July 2011 (U.S.) and 14 July 2011 (UK).[4][5]

The central plot of *Miracle Day* is that suddenly no one on Earth can die, which incites increasingly troublesome legislative changes around the world as the global population soars.[3] In addition to a number of new American cast members and guest actors, showrunner Russell T Davies recruited several American television writers to write for *Miracle Day*, including Jane Espenson, John Shiban and Doris Egan. British writer John Fay also returned to write for the series, under Davies as head writer.[6] Production was partially divided along trans-Atlantic lines, with Kelly Manners producing in the US, and Brian Minchin in the UK.[7] The majority of the filming took place in Los Angeles, California, with two weeks' additional shooting in Wales.[8]

Although the series premiered to a high Audience Appreciation Index rating (85, considered 'excellent') and solid ratings in the UK, American critics were on the whole less favourable to the series opener. Reviews on both sides of the Atlantic became increasingly mixed as the series went on. Several commentators felt the series would have worked better as a five-episode series, highlighting concerns with inconsistent pacing, dangling plot threads, and a repetitive feel to mid-series episodes.

The series has a 10-episode companion web series entitled *Torchwood: Web of Lies*, referenced in the Starz website (but not in the BBC One website) related to the series,[9] which can be obtained as an app from iTunes Store,[10] and the first episode can be obtained for free, or also viewed in the Starz's YouTube channel.[11] It is available in its entirety (less interactive elements) in the series's DVD and Blu-ray release.

Production

Development

Early development rumours suggested that the fourth series would be a reboot of the show, and that it would air on Fox Network in the United States. However, the deal with Fox did not go through and a new co-production deal with Starz was officially announced. *Torchwood* creator and executive producer Russell T Davies clarified the focus of the series, stating "it's very much the next step. It's not a new version, it's not a reboot. We're simply moving countries."[12] The series was first announced with the title, *Torchwood: The New World*,[4][13][14] though this was revised to *Torchwood: Miracle Day* later in development. The second executive producer, Julie Gardner, described

the new series as being absolutely ready "to welcome in a new audience".[15] Series writer Jane Espenson clarified further, describing the series as strictly "a continuation of the UK show".[16]

Casting

The show's remaining three regulars return to the series: John Barrowman as Captain Jack Harkness, an immortal ex-con man from the 51st century who first appeared in the 2005 *Doctor Who* episode "The Empty Child". In the first three series of *Torchwood*, Jack ran the Cardiff remnant of the Torchwood Institute, and was "the happiest he'd ever been". After the destruction of Torchwood and the deaths of his grandson, friends, and his lover Ianto Jones in the third series, the only thing that could bring Jack back to Earth is "his unstated love for Gwen Cooper and Torchwood".[17] Gwen, portrayed by Eve Myles, became pregnant in the third series by her husband Rhys Williams (Kai Owen), the third returning main character. Since the fall of Torchwood, they have begun a quiet life living in seclusion with their baby, Anwen. Secretly, Gwen is bored since the fall of Torchwood and pines for her former, extraordinary life; although she loves her husband and child, she retains feelings for Jack.[17] Other returning characters include Gwen's former police partner PC Andy (Tom Price), now a sergeant,[18] and parents, Geraint (William Thomas) and Mary Cooper (Sharon Morgan),[19] who previously appeared in the 2008 *Torchwood* episode "Something Borrowed". Morgan appears in six of the ten episodes,[20] whilst Thomas' online CV intimated that he would be a 'regular' character.[21]

Mekhi Phifer joined the show as Rex Matheson,[22] the CIA's "golden boy" operative, fast-tracked for career stardom. Highly intelligent and heroic, he teams up with Jack and Gwen to solve the mystery behind "Miracle Day".[23] He is joined by Esther Drummond (Alexa Havins),[23] a CIA watch analyst with an optimistic faith in humanity.[24] Arlene Tur has been cast as surgeon Vera Juarez,[25] whilst Bill Pullman plays Oswald Danes,[23] a dangerous convicted paedophile and murderer who turns a prison release into celebrity status.[26] Oswald faces lethal injection, but becomes swept up in the story's plot thread when he — like the rest of the world — simply does not die.[3] Lauren Ambrose was cast as Jilly Kitzinger in seven of the ten episodes. She plays "a sweet-talking PR genius with a heart of stone who's just cornered the most important client of her career ... and maybe of all time".[27] Lena Kaur joins the UK cast as Dr. Alicia Patel.[28] Dichen Lachman,[24] Wayne Knight, Ernie Hudson, C. Thomas Howell,[29] John de Lancie,[30] and Nana Visitor all have guest starring roles. Dillon Casey portrayed Brad, a one night stand of Captain Jack's.[31]

Casting calls differed from the final press release. Pullman and Havins' characters' names were originally Oswald Jones and Esther Katusi, respectively. Additionally, calls originally specified that Rex was to be played by a white actor and Esther by a non-white actress.[32] *One Tree Hill*'s Chad Michael Murray and *Dollhouse*'s Enver Gjokaj both auditioned for the part of Matheson.[33] *Greek* star Amber Stevens also auditioned for the part of Katusi/Drummond.[33] Actor James Marsters expressed strong interest in returning for the fourth series as his Series 2 character Captain John Hart.[34]

Main cast and guest stars

Actor	Character	Notes	Episodes
John Barrowman	Captain Jack Harkness	[35]	The New World - The Blood Line
Eve Myles	Gwen Cooper	[36]	The New World - The Blood Line
Mekhi Phifer	Rex Matheson	[37]	The New World - The Blood Line
Alexa Havins	Esther Drummond	[38]	The New World - The Blood Line
Kai Owen	Rhys Williams	[39]	The New World - The Blood Line
Bill Pullman	Oswald Danes	[40]	The New World - The Categories of Life, End of the Road - The Blood Line
Lauren Ambrose	Jilly Kitzinger	[41]	Rendition - The Categories of Life, End of the Road - The Blood Line
Arlene Tur	Dr. Vera Juarez	[42][43]	The New World - The Categories of Life
Tom Price	Sergeant Andy Davidson		The New World - Rendition, The Categories of Life, Immortal Sins, The Blood Line
William Thomas	Geraint Cooper		The New World, The Categories of Life - The Middle Men, The Gathering - The Blood Line
Sharon Morgan	Mary Cooper		The New World, The Categories of Life, Immortal Sins - The Blood Line
Candace Brown	Sarah Drummond		Escape to L.A., End of the Road, The Blood Line
Wayne Knight	Brian Friedkin	[44]	Rendition - Dead of Night, End of the Road
Nana Visitor	Olivia Colasanto	[45]	Immortal Sins-End of the Road
Paul James	Noah Vickers	[46]	The New World - Rendition, End of the Road-The Blood Line
Marina Benedict	Charlotte Wills		The New World - Rendition, End of the Road-The Blood Line
Dichen Lachman	Lyn Peterfield	[44]	Rendition
Mare Winningham	Ellis Hartley Monroe	[45]	Escape to L.A.
C. Thomas Howell	Torchwood Tracker		Escape to L.A.
John de Lancie	Allen Shapiro		End of the Road - The Blood Line
Frances Fisher	The Mother	[45]	The Gathering - The Blood Line

Locations

The majority of Torchwood was filmed in Denver, Colorado. There are many recognizable Denver landmarks in the exterior shots of the show. In one scene, Dr. Jaurez walks into a conference room where a medical panel is being held and a Colorado state flag can clearly be seen. Locations being used in Wales include Cardiff International Airport and the National Trust's Old Rectory cottage in Rhossili Bay[47][48] On 1 February 2011 filming returned to the Coal Exchange in Cardiff Bay.[48] The Coal Exchange was last used for John Frobisher's offices in *Children of Earth*. A pharmacy in Swansea has been used for a scene which sees Gwen Cooper crash a car into the front of the shop.[49][50]

The Old Rectory at Rhossili

Music

Torchwood and *Doctor Who* composer Murray Gold composed music for the fourth series with assistant composer Stu Kennedy.[51]

Promotion

A teaser trailer was released on 1 April 2011, featuring the earth stylized as a giant bomb after a news reporter announces that "At 10:36pm, the last death on the planet Earth was recorded." The song *Perfect Day* by Lou Reed was used as a backing soundtrack to the trailer.[52] A promotional poster had earlier been released, featuring the same bomb motif.[53] Actors John Barrowman and Bill Pullman, alongside executive producer Julie Gardner, attended the 2011 MIPTV event in Cannes to promote the series.[54] Speaking of the new series, Gardner commented that "[Torchwood is] taking the Welsh global — retaining the best of British drama while learning all about US production values". John Barrowman spoke of how the new series will be "bigger and better" because of the increased opportunities of the American co-production.[55] Promotional pictures of the Torchwood: Miracle Day Cast, along with character biographies, were released in May 2011.[56] Jack Harkness and Gwen Cooper feature on the front cover of *Radio Times* magazine for 9–15 July 2011.[57] The pair were also on the front cover of *TV & Satellite Week* for the same week.[58] Starz organised a 'March of The Soulless' on Thursday, 7 July 2011 to promote the new series.[59]

Broadcast

Miracle Day was first shown on Starz on 8 July 2011 in the US. On 9 July 2011 it was shown on Space in Canada,[60] and on UKTV Australia in Australia.[61] It was first broadcast in the UK on 14 July 2011 on BBC One. On 19 July 2011 it was announced it had been bought by Eleven, a Network Ten Australia free to air digital only channel.[62] Different edits were produced for the US and UK broadcasts. According to writer Jane Espenson, the only differences are "a 10 second trim in the UK version of ep.3 and a three-second cut in the UK ep.6."[63] The actual cut for episode 3 for UK airing was 30 seconds.[64]

Episodes

Miracle Day was developed through a collaborative plotting, with individual episodes subsequently assigned to individual writers. Gardner and Davies spent four weeks alongside their writing staff working through the complete story. Writers subsequently elected to write those episodes which reflected their particular interests in certain themes or characters.[65] The writing team chose to revise each episode before the first scene was shot; writer Jane Espenson felt this would give the series a much tighter feel and greater overall continuity.[66] In writing *Children of Earth* and *Miracle Day*, Davies found his preference for the mini-series format and has stated *Torchwood* will not return to the "monster-of-the-week" stories typical of the show's first two series, finding the new format "more ambitious and intelligent".[65]

Episode list

#	Title	Directed by	Written by	Original air date	Production code
1	"The New World"[67]	Bharat Nalluri[68]	Russell T Davies[68]	8 July 2011 (US)[69] 14 July 2011 (UK)	101
Earth is facing a phenomenon known as "Miracle Day", where for over 24 hours nobody dies, and the world will become unsustainable to the soaring population within four months. Every United States Government agency receives a tip on Torchwood, only to later find every trace of the word deleted by the newly returned Jack Harkness, who discovers that he is now mortal. Separately, he and CIA agent Rex Matheson — who has suffered a 'fatal' accident but cannot die — travel to South Wales to find Gwen Cooper, who is living in exile with husband Rhys and infant daughter Anwen. Jack, Rhys and Gwen find themselves under attack by unknown mercenaries in a helicopter. After Rex arrives, Jack saves them. Then Rex has Jack and Gwen extradited back to the United States.					
2	"Rendition"[67]	Billy Gierhart[68]	Doris Egan[68]	15 July 2011 (US)[70] 21 July 2011 (UK)	102
As Rex brings the Torchwood team to America, problems arise on the plane: CIA operatives are plotting to remove them, and poison Jack, who is now the only mortal man on the planet. Gwen and Rex, with the help of Doctor Juarez, create an antidote. Meanwhile, Oswald Danes begins appearing on talk shows, generating buzz in the press and online after seemingly apologizing on national television. Upon landing, Rex and his colleague Esther find that they have been framed as traitors by an unknown party. Realising that they are being hunted, Rex and Esther join Jack and Gwen and go on the run.					
3	"Dead of Night"[67]	Billy Gierhart[68]	Jane Espenson[68]	22 July 2011 (US)[71] 28 July 2011 (UK)	103
Still on the run, Torchwood infiltrate PhiCorp's DC headquarters and discover an incriminatingly-large stockpile of pain medication suggesting foreknowledge of the Miracle. Later, Rex persuades Doctor Juarez to go undercover for Torchwood at a PhiCorp event. Torchwood's location is compromised, however, when the Miracle's conspirators contact the cell phone Torchwood stole from the CIA's director Fredkin (Wayne Knight).					
4	"Escape to L.A."[67]	Billy Gierhart[68]	Jim Gray & John Shiban[68]	29 July 2011 (US)[72] 4 August 2011 (UK)	104
The Torchwood team relocates to California in order to better investigate PhiCorp. However, after Esther makes the mistake of trying to help her sister (Candace Brown), an assassin (C. Thomas Howell) is able to track Torchwood there. Torchwood manages to recover important servers out of PhiCorp's HQ, and discovers plans for concentration camp facilities all over the world. Before his throat is shot, the assassin reveals that 'the Families' are behind the Miracle. Subsequently, Rhys calls and informs Gwen that her father has been put in one. Meanwhile, Oswald and Jilly find themselves with a politician (Mare Winningham) leading an anti-undying segregation campaign called "Dead is Dead" that threatens PhiCorp's plans.					
5	"The Categories of Life"[67]	Guy Ferland[68]	Jane Espenson[68]	5 August 2011 (US)[73] 11 August 2011 (UK)	105
Vera, Rex and Esther go undercover into the overflow camps where they find a shocking revelation to those marked Categories 1 or 2. Meanwhile, Captain Jack attempts to convince Oswald Danes to expose PhiCorp's advanced knowledge of the Miracle in front of a televised audience. Gwen returns to Wales to set her dad free, but so far only manages to make his condition worse. When Vera challenges the camp's unethical practices, director Colin Maloney (Marc Vann) shoots her and has her incinerated. Rex finds Vera, but unable to free her, is forced to video the incident for posterity.					
6	"The Middle Men"[67]	Guy Ferland[68]	John Shiban[68]	12 August 2011 (US)[74] 18 August 2011 (UK)	106

At San Pedro, Esther and Rex stumble into — and eventually, free from, a confrontation with Vera's murderer. Jack is able to reach PhiCorp COO Stuart Owens (Ernie Hudson), only to learn that PhiCorp are pawns of the Miracle's real conspirators too; Owens does reveal, however, that something called "the Blessing" is connected to the Miracle. Owens' agent in Shanghai (Eric Steinberg) made himself a category 1 after witnessing something awful there. In Wales, Gwen manages to smuggle her father out in Rhys's van, and destroys the Module where people are burnt. This is broadcast along with Rex's video of Vera's incineration online, but to little effect. Returning to LAX, Gwen receives a message from the conspirators through her Torchwood contact lenses: if she ever wants to see her husband, daughter, or mother again, she must deliver Jack to them.					
7	"Immortal Sins"[67]	Gwyneth Horder-Payton[68]	Jane Espenson[68]	19 August 2011 (US)[75] 25 August 2011 (UK)	107
In the present day, Gwen takes Jack hostage to free her kidnapped family; the two have an intense, and brutally honest conversation. Flashbacks show Jack on-mission in 1927 New York and falling in love with an Italian immigrant named Angelo (Daniele Favilli), but Jack's immortality soon causes him to be viewed with fear and suspicion by the religious community of Little Italy; his torture and bloodletting provide "the blessing" at the heart of the Miracle today. With some intervention from Esther and Rex, Gwen's family are saved by PC Andy and Jack and Gwen are saved from the Miracle Day conspirator (Nana Visitor), who then persuades Jack to come along with her by telling him one man is still waiting for him: Angelo.					
8	"End of the Road"[67]	Gwyneth Horder-Payton[68]	Jane Espenson & Ryan Scott[68]	26 August 2011 (US)[76] 1 September 2011 (UK)	108
Taken to confront Angelo as the stock market begins to collapse following the failure of the pension scheme, Jack is shaken to learn that his former lover has actually lived his way to the present through relatively natural means, having aged normally all this time. His granddaughter reveals that the Miracle was caused by the three families of the men who 'bought' Jack in 1927 using samples of Jack's blood and 'the Blessing' that they discovered in 1998. Although the CIA attempt to take control, matters become complicated when Angelo dies—the first true death since the Miracle began—revealing that his bed is over a device generating a null field. With Gwen having been deported, Jack and Esther are forced to flee with a vital component of the field after Jack is shot. Rex and Esther's colleague Charlotte (Marina Benedict) is also revealed to be a mole for the Families.					
9	"The Gathering"[67]	Guy Ferland[68]	John Fay	2 September 2011 (US)[77] 8 September 2011 (UK)	109
Two months later, and global recession has become global Depression. Esther nursed Jack to health and has been collecting blood samples from him in Scotland; Gwen continues to hide her father from police raids, while also selling stolen painkillers; and Rex is back working at the CIA; Jilly Kitzinger moves to Shanghai to work for the Families. Oswald Danes finds Gwen through the men who smuggled Jack into Scotland, forcing Esther and Jack to come to Swansea, where what Danes knows of Kitzinger's activities leads them to conclude the Blessing is located in both Buenos Aires and Shanghai. Rex's attempts to locate a descendant of a witness to Jack's repeated murders in Little Italy are foiled by Charlotte at the CIA. Gwen is forced to take Oswald with them as she and Jack smuggle their way into Shanghai, where Jack's blood is being physically pulled to the location of the Blessing. Esther meets up with Rex in Buenos Aires for their half of the mission, but they are being tracked by Charlotte.					
10	"The Blood Line"[67]	Billy Gierhart[68]	Russell T Davies & Jane Espenson[78]	9 September 2011 (US)[79] 15 September 2011 (UK)	110
At CIA HQ, Charlotte is able to protect her secret by blowing up Shapiro (John de Lancie) and Noah (Paul James). Rex and Esther face a setback when the suitcase containing Jack's blood is blown up by a Family agent in the Buenos Aires military. Jack and Gwen strap Oswald to explosives to gain leverage over the Families, and learn that the miracle was caused when the Blessing — an unexplained rock formation controlling the morphic field — reacted defensively when introduced to Jack's immortal blood. Rex reveals that he secretly transfused himself with Jack's blood to keep it safe, meaning both agents are able to bloodlet into the Blessing at either end at the cost of their lives, thus ending the miracle. Esther is shot, but the group proceed. Gwen shoots Jack, knowing that she is effectively killing her father, him, Rex and Esther. With death restored, Oswald blows himself up along with a senior Family member (Frances Fisher); Gwen's father dies. Jack's immortality is restored; he resurrects and escapes the facility with Gwen and Jilly. Some time later, Jilly is approached again by a Family agent (Teddy Sears) about assisting with their Plan B. Paramedics manage to revive Rex, but not Esther. At Esther's funeral, Charlotte's duplicity is revealed; she shoots Rex and is shot. To everyone's shock, however, Rex displays Jack's special ability, and instantly heals from his mortal wound.					

Critical reception

American reviews were mixed, as they had been previous to series *Torchwood: Children of Earth*. *The New York Times* described the show as 'a letdown' and the *Los Angeles Times* describing it as 'repetitive'.[80]

Though *Guardian* reviewer Dan Martin had initially responded warmly to the series, his later overview of the series was more critical. Despite showing promise with its opener, Martin states that it is an "understatement" to say that *Miracle Day* has proved divisive with audiences. He recommends that the story would have worked better as a five-parter in the style of *Children of Earth*, as it seemed that the plot was stretched thin. Other criticisms focused on Jack's relatively minimal role, the unclear direction of the Oswald Danes storyline, the lack of an alien presence in the series, and the show's expectation that the audience care for Rex and Esther, whom they have not had a chance to get to know. Commenting, "the series seemed to spend weeks looking at the consequences of the Miracle, running away from unnamed baddies, extraditions, deportations, and dangling character arcs", he does however commend Davies for the innovative trans-Atlantic production behind the series: "Perhaps the best way of looking at *Miracle Day* is as a first attempt. Taking a cultish British programme and giving it a cash injection and a platform for a global audience is a brave move."[81]

After the series finale Martin further notes that "*Children of Earth* ended with a resolution that could have very easily wrapped the series up." *Miracle Day*, however, ended with all kinds of cliffhangers, which Martin found strange in view of its unfavourable reviews and the fact that Davies was not sure he would do any more Torchwood.[82]

Charlie Jane Anders for io9 expressed some continuity concerns raised by *Miracle Day* in relation to its parent show, *Doctor Who*. Because *Miracle Day* seemingly supposes a catastrophic worldwide phenomenon spanning at least between March and May 2011, it seems quite incompatible with the world of *Doctor Who*, where in Steven Moffat's 2011 series, companions Amy (Karen Gillan) and Rory (Arthur Darvill) are based in this exact time period without any mention of the problem, or evidence of global catastrophe elsewhere. Anders comments that in the past, the two shows had always "maintained a fairly tight continuity".[83]

Miracle Day received four shortlist nominations for the 38th annual Saturn Awards which are held in June 2012. The series itself was nominated as Best Presentation On Television, whilst Eve Myles, Bill Pullman and Lauren Ambrose received nominations for Best Actress In Television, Best Supporting Actor In Television and Best Supporting Actress In Television respectively.[84] However it won none of these.

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External links

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- Official US website (http://www.starz.com/originals/torchwood)
- Official UK website (http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0122tc1)

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