



PBS

PBS and HHMI Tangled Bank Studios Celebrate 40th Anniversary of NASA Voyager Launch in *THE FARTHEST* (w.t.)



Credit: Crossing The Line Films

PASADENA, CA; January 15, 2017 – PBS President and CEO Paula A. Kerger announced today at the Television Critics Association Winter Press Tour the production of **THE FARTHEST (w.t.)**, a two-hour documentary that spotlights the extraordinary success story of NASA's Voyager mission, which began 40 years ago this August. The twin Voyager spacecraft revolutionized planetary science, resolved key questions about the outer planets and raised intriguing new ones about the evolution of our solar system. **THE FARTHEST (w.t.)** will celebrate these magnificent machines, the men and women who built them, and the vision that propelled them farther than

anyone could ever have hoped. Originally approved to travel only to Saturn and Jupiter, the spacecraft took advantage of a once-in-176-year planetary alignment and used gravity-assisted slingshot trajectories to extend the missions, with Voyager 2 also visiting Uranus and Neptune. The two spacecraft, equipped with less computing power than a cell phone, sent back unprecedented images and data from all four outer planets and their many spectacular moons.

Four decades later, Voyager 1 has traveled more than 12 billion miles and Voyager 2 more than 10 billion, and both nuclear-powered spacecraft continue to send back data. In 2012, Voyager 1, which is traveling at more than 320 million miles per year, became the first human-made object to enter interstellar space — leaving our solar system behind and ushering humanity into the interstellar age.

“This is one of the boldest and most spectacular space missions of all time,” said Executive Producer Sean B. Carroll of HHMI Tangled Bank Studios. “As we approach the 40th anniversary of the mission's launch, with both spacecraft still going strong and farther from Earth than any other object humans have created, we felt it was important to tell the story of how Voyager came to be and what important discoveries it made possible. **THE FARTHEST (w.t.)** is a thrilling tale that will inspire awe and admiration in viewers of all ages, and we're delighted to join with the PBS and Crossing The Line to bring it to the screen.”

“Voyager was a game-changer,” said Producer John Murray of Crossing The Line Films. “A group of enterprising scientists and engineers sent these two tiny probes on a mission of discovery, but they couldn't have imagined how successful the mission would be. Voyager laid the groundwork for so much of what we know about the outer planets and their many, incredibly varied moons, and both spacecraft are now breaking new ground with the information they're sending back about the edges of our solar system and the nature of interstellar space.”

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With the participation of more than 20 of the original and current mission scientists, engineers and team members, the film tells the captivating tales of one of humanity's greatest achievements in exploration. From the aluminum foil from the local market that was added at the last minute to protect the craft from radiation to the near disasters at launch to the emergency maneuvers to fix a crucial frozen instrument platform, viewers get a sense of how difficult — and rewarding — space exploration can be.

And then there is the science: Between them, the Voyagers explored all four of the giant outer planets of our solar system, 48 of their moons, and their unique systems of rings and magnetic fields. Highlights include the discovery on Jupiter's moon Io of the first active volcano beyond Earth; spoke-like structures that form and disappear between Saturn's rings; the Great Dark Spot, a giant storm on Neptune that is the size of Earth and similar to the Great Red Spot on Jupiter; and active geyser-like eruptions on Neptune's moon Triton, which spew gas and dust from the moon's interior miles into its thin atmosphere.

After completing its mission to the outer planets, Voyager turned its camera back toward Earth and, at the request of famed astronomer Carl Sagan, took one of the most famous images of Earth ever created. As described by Sagan in the film, the image showed Earth as a pale blue dot on which “everyone you love, everyone you know, everyone you ever heard of, every human being who ever was, lived out their lives ... on a mote of dust suspended in a sunbeam.” The eloquent and insightful Sagan was one of the masterminds behind another of Voyager's most iconic elements: the Golden Record. **THE FARTHEST (w.t.)** reveals how this famous record, which has never been released on Earth, was created and how it presents humanity to any creatures who may find it.

“Between the Voyager anniversaries, the full solar eclipse that will be visible across the U.S. next August, and the dramatic end of the incredibly successful Cassini mission to Saturn, we're looking at a spectacular summer for space-related stories,” said PBS Chief Programming Executive and General Manager, General Audience Programming, Beth Hoppe. “Voyager was — and continues to be — a trailblazer and a beacon of success for space exploration. And who knows — billions of years from now, human beings may all be gone and it could be carrying the very last evidence of our existence out into the universe.”

THE FARTHEST (w.t.) is a Crossing The Line film presented by HHMI Tangled Bank Studios in association with The Irish Film Board, ZDF, ARTE and the BBC. The film is written and directed by Emer Reynolds and produced by John Murray and Clare Stronge. Executive producers are John Rubin, Sean B. Carroll and Dennis Liu (HHMI Tangled Bank Studios) and Keith Potter (Irish Film Board). Executive in charge for PBS is Bill Gardner.

THE FARTHEST (w.t.) will be available to stream the morning after broadcast on all station-branded PBS platforms, including PBS.org and PBS apps for iOS, Android, Roku, Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV and Chromecast.

About PBS

[PBS](#), with nearly 350 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and online content. Each month, PBS reaches nearly 100 million people through television and nearly 33 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and



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performances. PBS' broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry's most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. PBS' premier children's TV programming and its website, pbskids.org, are parents' and teachers' most trusted partners in inspiring and nurturing curiosity and love of learning in children. More information about PBS is available at www.pbs.org, one of the leading dot-org websites on the Internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or through our [apps for mobile devices](#). Specific program information and updates for press are available at pbs.org/pressroom or by following [PBS Pressroom on Twitter](#).

About HHMI Tangled Bank Studios

HHMI Tangled Bank Studios is a production company established and funded by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) as an extension of its longstanding science education mission. Dedicated to the creation of original science documentaries for broadcast, theatrical and digital distribution, the company's award-winning programs address important contemporary issues and capture compelling stories of discovery across all branches of scientific inquiry. For more information, please visit www.tangledbankstudios.org. HHMI is a science philanthropy whose mission is to advance basic biomedical research and science education for the benefit of humanity. The institute is the largest private supporter of science education in the country.

About Crossing The Line Films

Crossing the Line is an Irish based production company producing authored wildlife and science documentaries for theatrical release and many of the world's leading television broadcasters and documentary financiers. In the last five years their films have garnered five Emmy nominations and multiple awards at the world's most prestigious natural history film festivals including Best of Festival at the UK's Wildscreen in 2014 and an unprecedented two Best of Festival prizes in a row at the 2011 & 2013 Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festivals – the Oscars of the wildlife film world. Other past work includes the landmark film on the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Missile Crisis for PBS, which was nominated for a Grierson Award - the UK's most prestigious documentary prize. The Farthest is the company's first collaboration with HHMI Tangled Bank Studios.

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For additional information, photos, interviews and more, contact PBS or HHMI:

Carrie Johnson
PBS
703-739-5129
cjohnson@pbs.org

Anna Irwin
HHMI
301-215-8861
irwina@hhmi.org

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