

# Wildlife: Filmmaker Frederick Kroetsch and his 85-year-old dad revisit Arctic



FISH GRIWKOWSKY

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to come sometime Tuesday night, I'll plug it in and notify on Slack SUPPLIED

Ten years ago, Frederick Kroetsch opened a dusty ammunition case in his parents' basement. What he found inside — reels of old 8-mm film — would take him on a journey of a lifetime with his 85-year-old father.

"I grew up hearing all these stories about the High Arctic," Kroetsch says. "When I saw this film I was like, 'Wow! My dad's stories they're ... they're not bulls-t!'"

Fred's dad, Hugh Kroetsch, was a Hudson's Bay Co. engineer. At 17, his dad headed north to a job delivering supplies up the Mackenzie River and through the Northwest Passage. Along the way, he pulled out and pointed his camera. The younger documentarian Kroetsch says proudly: "He filmed everything. Out plane windows. Lots of ice. And lots of Inuit communities."

As the younger Kroetsch watched the footage, he came up with a plan to take his father to the north again to retrace his steps — and go they did, 67 years since the elder Kroetsch had last been there.

The resulting hour-long documentary premieres 8 p.m. Friday on AMI-tv. It's called Last of the Fur

Traders.

The father-son journey took them through Fort McMurray, Yellowknife, Gjoa Haven, Taloyoak, Cambridge Bay, Inuvik and Aklavik.

“Of course, we brought the footage with us and showed it in the communities we went to — to see if anybody would be interested.

“Entire towns showed up, wanting to see everything.”

One long-ago shot of a young Inuit woman with a child bore amazing fruit. Now an old woman, that same girl was in the room watching.

“It turned out to be way more meaningful than we thought,” says the filmmaker.

The film also sparked many conversations about notorious residential schools in the Arctic, the last in Canada persisting until 1996 in Inuvik.

“My dad had heard rumours of this stuff back in the '50s. Going back all these years later was incredibly eye-opening.”

This altered the course of the documentary. “It stops being about my dad,” says the filmmaker, “and starts being about the people of the north.”

Of them, he notes, “The warmth of the people was amazing. They treated my dad like a super elder, with serious amounts of respect. It didn’t matter that he was white — he was a part of their stories.

“One person up there, Roy Goose, related the fact oral histories are really important, too. My dad’s oral histories haven’t been recorded before — but some of my dad’s footage and stories confirmed some of the oral history they have.

“He said he got 50 years younger when he got on that plane with me,” Kroetsch says happily. “He’s 85, and he would spend eight hours a day just talking to people.

“I was tired and he wasn’t.”

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A few notable concerts go on sale 10 a.m. Friday through [Live Nation \(https://www.livenation.com/\)](https://www.livenation.com/).

Indie pop band Alvays plays March 30 at the Starlite Room. Tickets are \$20. The Sheepdogs, meanwhile, are at Union Hall Feb. 20 — that’ll set you back \$36.

Meanwhile, the Foo Fighters’ Concrete and Gold tour is coming to Rogers Place, way off on Sept. 4, 2018. Those tickets are \$59 to \$99, and go on sale through Live Nation 10 a.m. Saturday. Note, the shows have been selling out, including in Las Vegas, NYC and Toronto.

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Finally, our recurring visit to outer space this week contains Star Trek: Discovery spoilers — at least from this universe.

The recent “mid-season finale” is as good a stop as any to look back at the ongoing storytelling mission of Star Trek, nine episodes into the franchise’s first TV series in 12 years.

First up, let’s shake off two basic myths. Rumours the new show was going to be the first arc-driven, non-episodic series were untrue from the incubator, as Enterprise — even Deep Space Nine, for that matter — got at least as arc-y as Discovery. And, let’s face it, every single one of Discovery’s nine episodes — even the recent two-parter — felt episodic: Space tardigrade. Mudd on the Klingon ship. Sarek down. Office party time loop. Saru unleashed. You get the idea. And there’s nothing wrong with episodic, by the way.

For example, Magic to Make the Sanest Man Go Mad felt the most like the old Trek, presenting a villain and a problem to solve within the show’s run time — fittingly, not the first time loop episode in

Trek.

The best Easter egg here was Harry Mudd wearing what looked like an Andorian helmet as he runs out of that space whale. I've been bummed by the show's reliance on core-character nostalgia, especially the half-baked narrative involving Sarek. But subtler touches like the blue helmet or briefly seeing the names of Jeffrey Archer and Christopher Pike on a "best captains" list don't suck the air out of the room the way having an episode indirectly about Spock does.



OK, second myth: Discovery is the first show not about its captain — Michael Burnham is the main character. Well, except she's really not. I'm intrigued by Sonequa Martin-Green's performance. As a human raised on Vulcan, her vibe seems to be very chill all the time — hints of Data and Spock. But calm and capable is no match for the spore-infected flipping personalities of Stamets or — you got it — the Sun Tzu long-game bastard moves of Lorca. He's the show's most interesting character. He's also, let's note for the record, Discovery's captain.

And, of course, there's also the whole Ash Tyler sex-prisoner thing, where, for some better-be-important reason, we haven't seen Klingon Voq since Tyler showed up. Is this some kind of Polka Dot Door Polkaroo phenomenon? Time will tell.

Anyway, here's the thing: I'm speaking about all these arcs and twists and people with passion. I want to know what's going to happen next. I am, in short, hooked. Star Trek wins again!

And it looks like they're addressing one of the most illogical phenomena in Trek ever: parallel worlds. The fan-favourite Mirror Universe aside, remember all the almost Earths of the original series? It's like there was a fire sale on Tattered American flags in '68 in L.A. But in the semi-finale, Stamets and Lorca are talking about divergent realities — so we're right on the doorway of making potential sense of all that weirdness.

And maybe, just maybe, explaining why Discovery's Klingons look absolutely nothing like the ones we're used to — both the sweaty guys in brown makeup and the long-haired pro-wrestlers you can short-circuit by calling them "Chicken."

Lots to think about. In the meantime and meaner space — the show returns Jan. 7.

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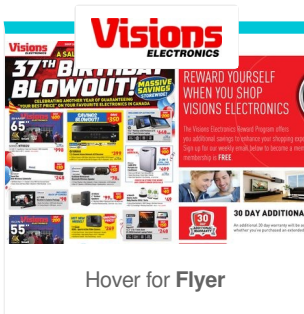


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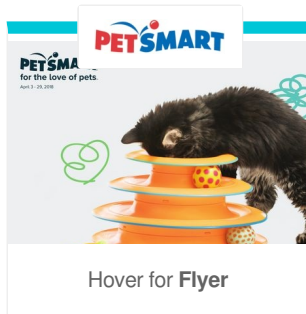
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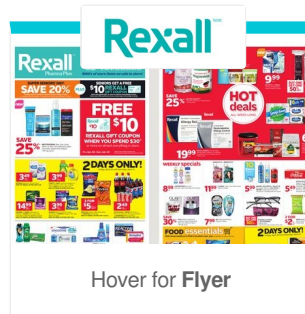
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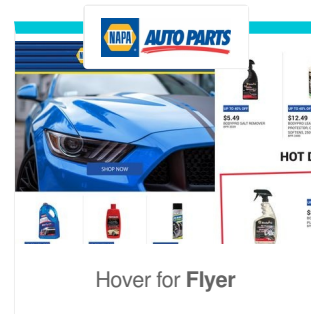
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