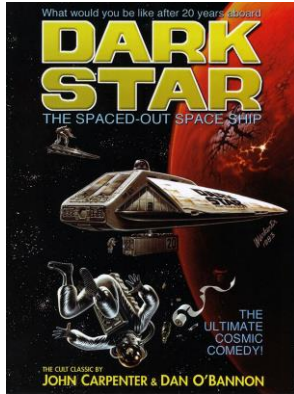


## Short Review: “Dark Star” (1974) by Dr. John L. Flynn



**Dark Star** (1974). Jack H. Harris Enterprises, 83 min. Director and Producer: John Carpenter. Executive Producer: Jack H. Harris. Screenwriters: Carpenter and Dan O'Bannon. Cast: Brian Narelle, Andre Pahich, Cal Kuniholm, Dan O'Bannon, Joe Saunders, and Miles Watkins.

The crew of the spaceship Dark Star, whose commander (Saunders) is dead but kept alive and animated in a cryogenic freezer, have grown complacent over the last few months in deep space, and that boredom has begun to affect every aspect of their mission to destroy unstable stars; in fact, the crew is slowing going insane. When the pet alien (which is nothing more than a beachball with claws) gets loose, the crew's mad chase through the ship inadvertently triggers a series of events that lead to the destruction of the Dark Star by one of its talking bombs. Made with the ridiculously low budget of \$60,000 over a three-year period by Carpenter and O'Bannon, while film students at the University of Southern California, the cult classic satirizes key themes from Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey," including paranoia, the breakdown of technology and the metaphysical boredom of astronauts on a deep-space voyage. The film is also very funny, particularly when Narelle attempts to surf down to a nearby planet on wreckage from the spaceship. Not to be missed.

Copyright 2015 by John L. Flynn, Ph.D.