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CULTURE

Twin Peaks

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A Breeze through the Phenomena of Twin Peaks

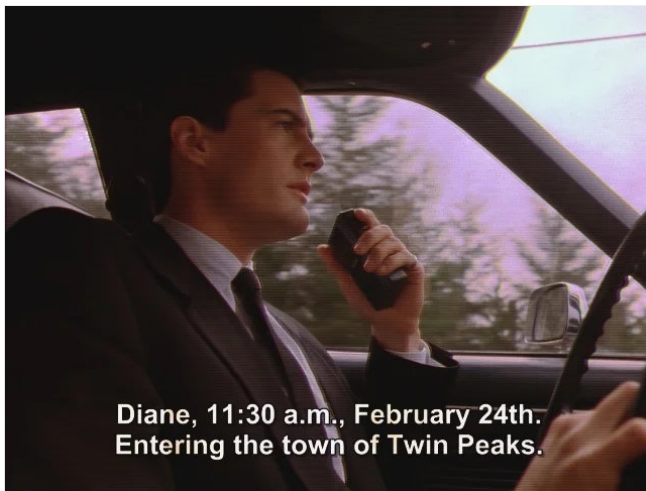
Diane, 11:30 AM, February 24th. Entering the town of Twin Peaks, five miles south of the Canadian border, twelve miles west of the state line. I've never seen so many trees in my life.

This is what FBI Special Agent Dale Cooper says to his dictaphone while entering the town of Twin Peaks. As a result of that, February 24th is chosen as an International Twin Peaks Day by the *Twin Peaks* fans who usually prepare something special at least for that day. For this special day *The Hidden Circle Gazette* brings you *A Double Feature Twin Peaks Special*: this article and the 1-hour special Twin Peaks event with *Vibrent* and *DaveDD* as co-hosts and co-tunatellers™ at The Lodge

Twin Peaks' creators [Mark Frost](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Frost)¹ and [David Lynch](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Lynch)² aired their pilot episode on the ABC Network on April 8th 1990. Frost and Lynch wrote the screenplay for the pilot and Lynch directed it with Angelo Badalamenti providing the iconic opening theme and most of the soundtrack. One of Lynch's favourite actors Kyle MacLachlan (*Dune* and *Blue Velvet*) portrayed the enthusiastic and ever positive Special Agent Dale Cooper.

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Frost

²https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Lynch



The legendary part of Cooper entering the town of Twin Peaks actually happens some half an hour into the pilot after we have seen Laura Palmer's corpse being found wrapped in plastic and after encountering the vibrant and eccentric folks of Twin Peaks.

There is something very special in watching *Twin Peaks* for the first time as you have no idea where all this will lead to. Is it a detective murder mystery, small town drama, soap opera, weird comedy, teen drama, suspense horror, supernatural thriller, surrealist experiment or whatnot? Cooper sums it up in the best way: "I have no idea where this will lead us, but I have a definite feeling it will be a place both wonderful and strange."

David Lynch never wanted to provide a definite and conclusive answer to what *Twin Peaks* actually is as he believed everyone should have their own version and individually interpret it as they seem fit. Mark Frost was more eager to talk about it, but it has to be noted that *Twin Peaks* in its core had that duality, from its title to the co-creators.

Frost's vision of what *Twin Peaks* is, is miles away from Lynch's. Frost provided the more realist framework and traditional narration, while Lynch obviously added the surrealism to it and complex non-linear storytelling. Frost was better with words while Lynch was better with the visual and abstract manifestation of those words. What makes *Twin Peaks* so special is exactly that collaboration which in 99.99% of cases would not work, but in the case of *Twin Peaks* it created magic serving as a huge inspiration for many up to this day and many years to come.

Twin Peaks turned out to be a global pop culture phenomenon that cemented the legacy of everyone involved. It would almost become synonymous with Lynch himself as very often he'd state it being his finest work. Everyone wanted to know who killed Laura Palmer back in the day and at the same time was missing a huge part of what *Twin Peaks* is actually about. As Lynch would say, focus on the donut and not on the hole...

The success of the first season of *Twin Peaks* (8 episodes aired on ABC in 1990) was a two-edged sword as we'll address later in the article. While not *Twin Peaks* TV cannon, close relatives of Frost and Lynch would also write novels set in the Twin Peaks universe adding more layer and backstory to some characters, where most notable examples would be the novel *The Secret Diary of Laura Palmer* by Lynch's daughter Jennifer Lynch from 1990 and years later, Mark Frost's own takes on *Twin Peaks* in the novel form: *The Secret History of Twin Peaks* (2016) and *Twin Peaks: The Final Dossier* (2017).

What made the original *Twin Peaks* so special was the fact that for the first time it appealed to a wider audience, from teens to older TV consumers, but it wasn't simply a consumerist product like most of TV shows at that time or almost everything exclusively before it. For the first time in TV history, there was some quality in a TV series with complex storytelling that challenged the TV audience to think more and not to approach TV as just an idiot box, but an art medium that can bring both quality entertainment and art like many any other art forms. It brought art cinema to a TV audience for the first time who up to that time were accustomed not to think for themselves about the product they'd just consumed as everything would be explained to them in the same episode on a silver platter (especially if it's a murder/detective mystery) or eventually down the line. *Twin Peaks* did the opposite.



In his later years, David Lynch would refer to *Twin Peaks* as a continuing story which became evident even from the first season. It was logical that the series would get green lit for a second season after all the buzz it initially created and the second season started airing later in the same year. Up to this day, *Twin Peaks* translates to popular culture as many artists became or still are heavily inspired by the world that Frost and Lynch created.

However, ABC executives insisted that the killer of Laura Palmer should be revealed soon in the second season as their entire marketing was more or less around the topic who killed Laura Palmer. Both Frost and Lynch would later agree that the reveal happened too soon, or rather sooner than they planned according to Frost, where Lynch would later often say that it was a mistake that they shouldn't have done in the first place.

After the reveal in Episode 7 of the second season, the rest of the season had a massive decline in viewership and Lynch eventually left, primarily because of other movie obligations. Even for the most die-hard fans of *Twin Peaks* the rest of the second season is a real struggle, featuring some lesser talented TV directors trying to be Lynchian and falling (no pun intended!) flat.

At the end of its run, ABC gave up on *Twin Peaks* after the decline in viewership but gave it a proper send off as David Lynch would return at the end of the series to direct the final episode that aired in June 1991. Again we saw the genius of Lynch who together with Frost tried his best to restore some of the mess the other wannabes created. The end of the second season is a shocking return to old form and a potential promise that some more *Twin Peaks* related stuff might come out eventually.

And it did, very soon (from today's perspective, maybe too soon). David Lynch directed and co-wrote *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*, a feature film from 1992 set to work as a prequel to the original series. It had no involvement from Mark Frost as the co-screenwriter was Robert Engels, which obviously means we got more of Lynch's vision of what *Twin Peaks* actually was or what it meant for him.

But the world was not ready for it, and it was a box office failure. Lynch wanted to rectify the way the ABC executives handled the Laura Palmer case, and many years later, both fans and many critics agree that Lynch did it quite well. Among many aspects that the prequel feature gave us is the legacy of the original soundtrack laying the foundations of what will be known as the dark jazz genre.

Twin Peaks: The Missing Pieces was released in 2014 and it essentially was a compilation of deleted and extended scenes from *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me*. It came at the right time after a renewed interest in *Twin Peaks*. It is a must see for all Lynch fans but also for *Twin Peaks* fans as it provides more material to potentially explain some *Twin Peaks* theories. At that time, it became evident how influential *Twin Peaks* was for TV as many creators cited it being one of their inspirations (from the *X-Files* and *Lost* to the *Sopranos* and *Fargo* and many more in between).

Did all this mean the world was ready for another *Twin Peaks*? Yes! *The Missing Pieces* were a kind of teaser for the majestic, triumphant and uncompromising return of *Twin Peaks* in 2017. Many critics and fans don't like to address it as season 3, but rather the way how it was initially advertised as limited series under the title *Twin Peaks: The Return* (alternatively as *Twin Peaks: A Limited Event Series*).

Coming 25 years after *Fire Walk with Me* (Laura did say the legendary line: "I'll see you again in 25 years" at the end of season 2...), it had 18 one hour episodes each being directed by David Lynch, and a screenplay from Frost and Lynch.

This time Showtime aired it and after some heated discussion, the Showtime executives eventually gave Lynch all the freedom he initially sought but never got in the first run with ABC.

Up to this day, it is one of the absolute highlights of TV as a medium, and Frost and Lynch yet again redefined and pushed the possibilities of a TV series which resulted in *The Return* being their finest work in their long and successful careers.

Join us on **February 24th 9:00 PM CET** at **The Lodge** for a one hour celebration of *Twin Peaks*. Write us your favourite Twin Peaks moments in the comments bellow, on The Hidden Circle Gazette's Discord server or share them with us at The Lodge or any other Twin Peaks related room in 3DX regardless of time zone. See you in the breeze, under the sycamore trees!

Happy Twin Peaks Day everyone! Wishing you blue skies and golden sunshine all along the way!

