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J.J. Abrams explains why Sydney Bristow from 'Alias' is still his favorite character

By [Bryan Bishop](http://www.theverge.com/users/bcbishop) (<http://www.theverge.com/users/bcbishop>) on October 25, 2013 02:38 pm [Email](mailto:bryan@theverge.com) (<mailto:bryan@theverge.com>) [@bcbishop](https://twitter.com/intent/user?screen_name=bcbishop) ([https://twitter.com/intent/user?](https://twitter.com/intent/user?screen_name=bcbishop)

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J.J. Abrams is a master of pop culture, having crafted or reimagined countless iconic characters over the course of his career, but his own personal favorite is one from the early days of his career. [Sitting down with *The New York Times*](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/books/review/j-j-abrams-by-the-book.html?_r=0) (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/books/review/j-j-abrams-by-the-book.html?_r=0) to discuss *S.*, the novel he created with author Doug Dorst (<http://www.theverge.com/2013/9/9/4712100/j-j-abrams-teases-his-meta-novel-s-with-latest-mystery-trailer>), the multi-hyphenate reveals that *Alias*' Sydney Bristow still holds a special place in his heart. "She was a character with a secret, and that is always a fun place to start," he says. "But she wasn't a superhero; she was terrified at almost every step. But still, she would do the right thing. I think we would all like to believe we would behave like that when the going gets rough."

Abrams discusses his taste in books — Mark Twain, H.G. Wells, Graham Greene are among his favorite authors — calling out Stephen L. Macknik and Susana Martinez-Conde's *Sleights of Mind* as a particularly insightful look at the way neuroscience factors into the way we perceive magic. If you'd like to hear more from Abrams, including how he placed an awkward phone call to Mo Williams of the Portland Trail Blazers, [check out the full interview](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/books/review/j-j-abrams-by-the-book.html?_r=0) (http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/books/review/j-j-abrams-by-the-book.html?_r=0).

SOURCE

THE NEW YORK TIMES ([HTTP://WWW.NYTIMES.COM/2013/10/27/BOOKS/REVIEW/J-J-ABRAMS-BY-THE-BOOK.HTML?_R=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/27/books/review/j-j-abrams-by-the-book.html?_r=0))

IMAGE CREDIT

GAGE SKIDMORE (FLICKR) (<http://www.flickr.com/photos/gageskidmore/4840605656/sizes/l/in/photolist-8NKNQD-8NKJ1C-DPKSFM-8QYWVD-DROLCE-DPPZ9D-7ZRDHX-9UMR1G-8QD5E1-EDV1ZF-8OZTV9-8OWJQT-80WKDI-8OZWMH-8OZTYF-80WJAT-80WJYD-80WKX6-9C70E1-B9AR7M-8N3UGG-8EC8RM-8SBFNT-AJBCRP-AJDZMC-9YUSVI>)

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[gus6464 \(http://www.theverge.com/users/gus6464\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/gus6464)

Alias season 2 to me is still TV perfection. Just like Buffy season 2 was also perfection.

Oct 25, 2013 | 2:50 PM (#193069401)



[catfoodstudios \(http://www.theverge.com/users/catfoodstudios\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/catfoodstudios)

imho Dark angel was still a better show.

Oct 26, 2013 | 5:43 AM (#193164261)

[theblankat \(http://www.theverge.com/users/theblankat\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/theblankat)

ALIAS would be a good show to do as a three or four episode "season", like Luther or Sherlock, if the original cast would come together again.

Not likely to happen, I know, but it would be awesome.

Oct 25, 2013 | 3:06 PM (#193072519)

[er3s \(http://www.theverge.com/users/er3s\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/er3s)

I agree, that's why I liked the later "Series" of Torchwood. "Children Of Earth" was great because it was only five episodes.

Oct 25, 2013 | 3:22 PM (#193075305)

[RyanFromQA \(http://www.theverge.com/users/RyanFromQA\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/RyanFromQA)

Completely agreed. Alias was at its best when it did shorter arcs. A season of 4-5 90 minute episodes would be awesome.

Oct 26, 2013 | 3:58 PM (#193230713)

[mvv88 \(http://www.theverge.com/users/mvv88\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/mvv88)

Alias was a great show that fell apart during the end of season 3. It didn't help that there were some major breaks between new episodes.

Sydney Bristow's character was also killed by the fact that Jennifer Garner got pregnant in real life and they had to write that into the script. Not to mention Sydney became a crier ruined things a bit as well once Nadia came into the picture.

Still, the Cliffhanger at the end of season 2 was one of the best TV has ever seen.

Oct 25, 2013 | 3:21 PM (#193075157)



[Spinfusor \(http://www.theverge.com/users/Spinfusor\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/Spinfusor)

Season 3 is much better on DVD. I didn't like the first half of that season when I watched it on ABC, but I loved it every time I watched it on DVD. It works much better without the "in three weeks on Alias" crap.

Oct 25, 2013 | 11:13 PM (#193149155)



[Spinfusor \(http://www.theverge.com/users/Spinfusor\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/Spinfusor)

"I just remembered: Francie doesn't like coffee ice cream" is by far my favorite TV line of all time.

Oct 25, 2013 | 11:21 PM (#193150033)

[lcg9q3 \(http://www.theverge.com/users/lcg9q3\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/lcg9q3)

Been so long since I've watched this show. Trying to get my wife to watch it with me but haven't made it there yet.

Oct 25, 2013 | 3:29 PM (#193076559)

[Kizzyle \(http://www.theverge.com/users/Kizzyle\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/Kizzyle)

I tried a couple of episodes on Netflix, but it couldn't capture me... Now Fringe to me was some of his greatest work.

Oct 25, 2013 | 3:36 PM (#193077533)

[freesets \(http://www.theverge.com/users/freesets\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/freesets)

milo rambaldi would like a word with you.



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2.0 impressions/thoughts/complaints

about 3 hours ago by ben dover

(http://www.theverge.com/users/ben%20dover)

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Please recommend an affordable camera for action shots

Oct 25, 2013 | 3:38 PM (#193077929)

[occono \(http://www.theverge.com/users/occono\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/occono)

He had very little input on Fringe creatively.

Oct 25, 2013 | 11:32 PM (#193151165)



[Jack Bauerr \(http://www.theverge.com/users/Jack%20Bauerr\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/Jack%20Bauerr)

Walter Bishop was the best character!



Oct 25, 2013 | 4:04 PM (#193081899)

[Danation \(http://www.theverge.com/users/Danation\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/Danation)

I agree, Walter Bishop is awesome, especially when you factor in the various versions of his character... Walternate, Young Walter and Walternate, post-machine Walter and Walternate, etc.

Oct 25, 2013 | 4:45 PM (#193087793)



[Hrungra Zmuda \(http://www.theverge.com/users/Hrungra%20Zmuda\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/Hrungra%20Zmuda)

My second favorite.

Oct 25, 2013 | 7:55 PM (#193113963)

[ChrisOz \(http://www.theverge.com/users/ChrisOz\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/ChrisOz)

Love Walter. He is the ultimate loveable anti-hero, everything and I mean everything that happens in the show is ultimately his fault in one way or another.

Avon – Blake 7 is also worth a mention.

Oct 27, 2013 | 12:27 AM (#193369427)

[max1001 \(http://www.theverge.com/users/max1001\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/max1001)

Reply (#) about 3 hours ago by .jay
(http://www.theverge.com/users/.jay)

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Nobody beats Jack Bauer. All time fav character from any TV show. Can't wait for new season.

Oct 25, 2013 | 4:14 PM (#193083435)

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Jack Bauerr (<http://www.theverge.com/users/Jack%20Bauerr>)

yeah! Damnnn it!

Oct 25, 2013 | 4:34 PM (#193086155)

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ericesque (<http://www.theverge.com/users/ericesque>)

throws back shot

Oct 25, 2013 | 11:38 PM (#193151699)

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apertotes (<http://www.theverge.com/users/apertotes>)

The best character is Sue Sylvester

...but only on 1st season :-(

Oct 25, 2013 | 4:17 PM (#193083741)

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sobu (<http://www.theverge.com/users/sobu>)

Lens flare is best JJ creation.



Honestly, try and count the lens flares in season 1-3 titles: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3ZafYc-90>
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w3ZafYc-90>)

...and season 4 titles: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo9e3XHmYj8> (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eo9e3XHmYj8>)

It's INSANE.

Oct 25, 2013 | 4:42 PM (#193087357)

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BoringCode (<http://www.theverge.com/users/BoringCode>)



Oct 25, 2013 | 4:43 PM (#193087489)

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TeamTech (<http://www.theverge.com/users/TeamTech>)

I rewatched the entire Alias series every year or so. I love it. Favorite drama series ever had a bit of everything, action, adrenaline, romance, heartbreak, suspense, mythology, betrayal, badassery hehehe. I even shed a tear or two during some intense emotional episodes...I love it all through the decline in quality everything.

Oct 25, 2013 | 4:56 PM (#193089311)

Reply (#)



Hrungra Zmuda (<http://www.theverge.com/users/Hrungra%20Zmuda>)

Best scene in TV ever was the lead in from the Superbowl where she came out of the bathroom in tight red lingerie and proceeded to kick Boris's ass. Probably the fastest capture of a whole new group of fans in the history of television.

Oct 25, 2013 | 7:53 PM (#193113665)

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rmontagud (<http://www.theverge.com/users/rmontagud>)

Don't worry JJ, we have all the time in the world to hear your excuses

Oct 25, 2013 | 9:14 PM (#193128731)

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scb1898 (<http://www.theverge.com/users/scb1898>)

I re-watched all of Alias on Netflix, and I loved it!

Oct 25, 2013 | 10:09 PM (#193140233)

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Dr_Spaceman (http://www.theverge.com/users/Dr_Spaceman)

J.J. Abrams explains why Sydney Bristow from 'Alias' is still his favorite character

His affection is understandable. She was the character that bought him a multi-million dollar house in Pacific Palisades.

Oct 26, 2013 | 12:52 AM (#193157355)

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[Daws001 \(http://www.theverge.com/users/Daws001\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/Daws001)

I still haven't watched Alias yet but season 1 of Felicity is still one of my all time faves.

Oct 26, 2013 | 12:33 PM (#193190597)

Reply (#)

[ounkeo \(http://www.theverge.com/users/ounkeo\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/ounkeo)

meh alias was alright. didn't do much for me but was watchable.

Oct 27, 2013 | 7:53 AM (#193391203)

Reply (#)



[RainyDayInterns \(http://www.theverge.com/users/RainyDayInterns\)](http://www.theverge.com/users/RainyDayInterns)

Firefly...

Oct 27, 2013 | 5:52 PM (#193518523)

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