

# SWORD OF KAHLESS

A Brief History

**Dan Curry**

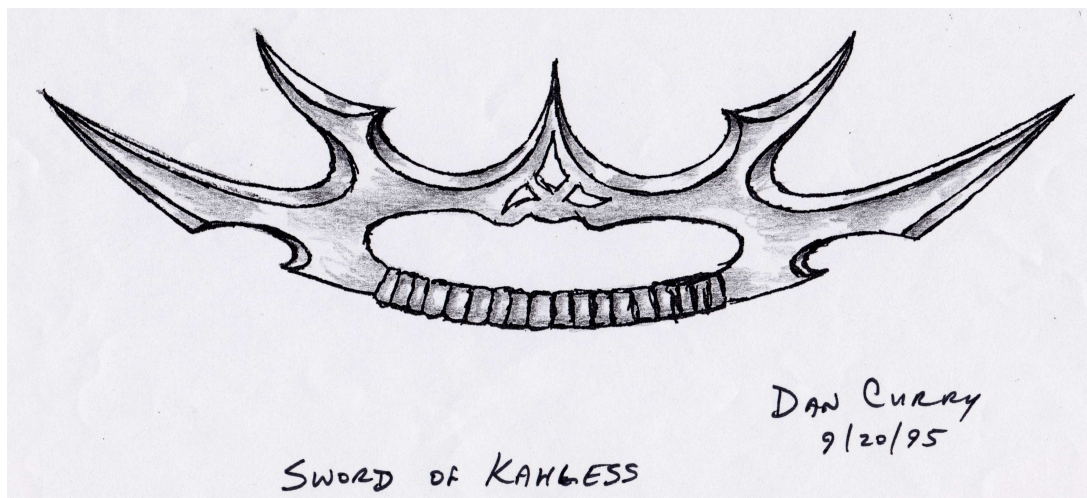
STAR TREK: The Next Generation, Deep Space Nine, Voyager, and Enterprise  
Visual Effects Supervisor/Producer/Director/ Second Unit Director/ Martial Arts  
7 Prime Time Emmys

In designing the Sword of Kahless for this episode, I took into account that the great primordial Klingon warrior lived in an extremely violent culture guided by a strong martial code of honor. As with the original Bat'Leth, I wanted something ergonomically sound that could be wielded with fluidity by a master of the Klingon martial arts style, Mok'Bara, inspired by my studies of Tai Chi, Tae Kwon Do, Hung Gar, and Muay Thai. It was also important that it was distinctively different than the original Bat'Leth, so I decided to go more baroque with more vicious lethal projections such as the central disembowelment flange and the adjacent grappling scoops. It was critical to serve the story that the Sword of Kahless inspired the reverence of the characters, and gave director, LeVar Burton, and actors Michael Dorn and Terry Farrell something cool to work with.

When Paramount Pictures was planning THE STAR TREK EXPERIENCE at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas I was asked to consult and provide visual effects images. One of the items they wanted to display was the Sword of Kahless. Paramount contracted with legendary knife designer, Gil Hibben, to make a special prop for display out of steel as if it was a real weapon, not a movie prop. I sent Gil the blue prints I had drafted and he went to work. Gil made two, one for THE STAR TREK EXPERIENCE and one for me - the only two in existence from Gil's forge. It amazed me how the Gil was able to fabricate these massive steel weapons. Gil is also a master of the Neolithic instrument, the rhythm bones, and is a member of the Knife Throwers Hall of Fame. I consider Gil a national cultural treasure.

*Dan Curry*

My Original Sketch



Gil

**Hibben** is an American custom knifemaker from Wyoming who is based in La Grange, Kentucky. Hibben designed the first line of Browning hunting knives in 1968, the American Kenpo Knife for Ed Parker, and the Rambo Knife for the films *Rambo III* and *Rambo*. Hibben's "Fantasy Knives" have been used in over 37 films and television shows, particularly science fiction, earning him the title "Klingon Armorer" from the *Star Trek* franchise. Hibben currently serves as a President of the Knifemakers' Guild, a post he has held for five years.

"**The Sword of Kahless**" is the 81st episode of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*, the ninth of the fourth season. It originally aired on November 20, 1995 in broadcast syndication. The story was created by Richard Danus and was turned into a teleplay by Hans Beimler. The episode was directed by *Star Trek: The Next Generation* alumnus LeVar Burton.

In this episode, Kor returns to Deep Space Nine to recruit Lt. Cmdr. Worf (Michael Dorn) and Lt. Cmdr. Jadzia Dax (Terry Farrell) to help to find the ancient Sword of Kahless. After they find the sword, they are forced to evade the forces of Toral (Rick Pasqualone), Son of Duras, and Worf and Kor come to blows over the future use of the weapon.

Critics later gave a mostly positive response to the episode and compared it to *Indiana Jones* and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.

**Props:** Dan Curry created the Klingon weapon, the bat'leth,<sup>[11]</sup> while working on *TNG*. Its first appearance was in the episode "Reunion" and has appeared in all live action series of *Star Trek* with the exception of *The Original Series*.<sup>[12]</sup> The sword in "The Sword of Kahless" was intended to be the first bat'leth made by, according to Klingon mythology, Kahless himself, which he used to defeat the tyrant Molor and unite the Klingon people for the first time in their history.<sup>[13]</sup> It was decided that the sword needed to be different from other bat'leths seen on the show,<sup>[3]</sup> and so a new hardened aluminum prop was ordered after numerous designs by John Eaves were considered and rejected on paper. As with the original bat'leth, Dan Curry created the prop.<sup>[14]</sup>

