

The Orville ep209 - Identity Part II



Set 400 years in the future, “The Orville” follows the adventures of the human and alien crew of an exploratory space vessel. While the show could reasonably be called a comedy, the directive for visual effects was to be as epic and polished as any dramatic science fiction piece.

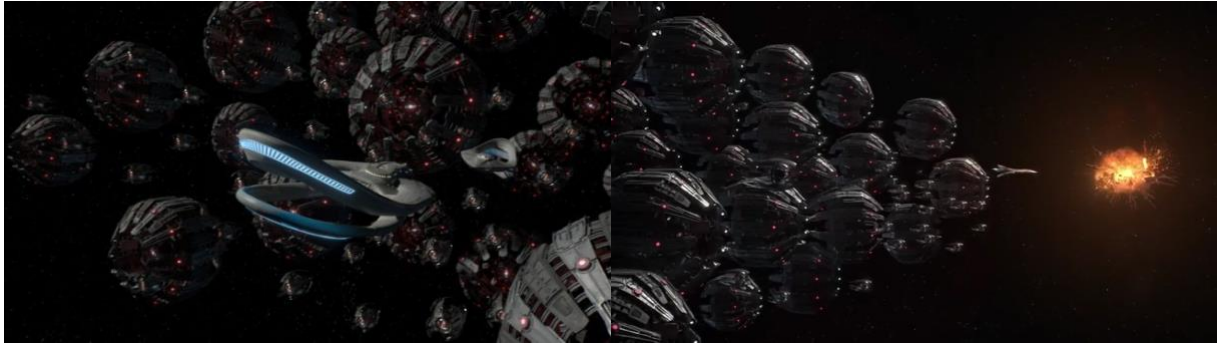
The **Kaylon**, a reclusive race of sentient robots, was introduced in the pilot episode with the Orville’s science office **Isaac**. In Identity Part 1 (episode 208), it was revealed that Isaac had been transmitting data on humanity back to his home world to determine how deserving they are of extermination. After deciding that humanity and all biological life for that matter is a threat to their expansion across the galaxy, the Kaylon take over the Orville. The Kaylon holds the crew captive as they lead a massive armada of Sphere ships and Interceptors to Earth. It culminates in a massive space battle in Identity Part 2, where the Union fleet attempts to fight off the far more advanced Kaylon fleet, only succeeding after long-time enemies the **Krill** join them.

Kaylon Armada

The imposing Kaylon Sphere ships and the smaller Interceptors were introduced at the very end of Identity Part 1. That episode ends as the Orville is boarded by Kaylon and departs for Earth. As Identity Part 2 opens, the comparatively tiny Orville is leading the armada. The Kaylon ships themselves were entirely CG and built in 3ds Max specifically for this 2-part episode based on a production concept. In addition to their immense design, the

Emmy Entry #1909986 - Category 113 – Outstanding Special Visual Effects

spheres' firing mechanism was designed to further sell the absolute tactical superiority over the less advanced Union fleet.



Kaylon Head Weaponry

First introduced in Identity Part 1, the Kaylon head weaponry was a big reveal to the Orville crew as well as the audience. The rounded and unassuming Kaylon heads contain a pair of sophisticated high-powered energy weapons, which deploy instantaneously when combat occurs. In Identity Part 2 we see the Kaylon use these fully CG weapons to control and threaten the Orville crew. The guns themselves were built in 3ds Max based on a rough concept and designed so they could believably be contained within their heads.



The Battle for Earth

Isaac frees the Orville crew and disables the Kaylon onboard (including himself), just in time for the Kaylon Fleet to reach Earth. What follows is an epic space battle involving the full military might of three galactic powerhouses. Rendered in 3ds Max and finished in Nuke 11, this space battle is over 8 minutes long, and contains over 80 shots of complex CG and FX work.



The real beauty of the sequence came from some extremely well-crafted Houdini explosion simulations. Though they were very time-consuming, in the end these sims were invaluable when it came to shots this like the one below, where three Kaylon interceptors annihilate a Krill destroyer. This moment alone took a Houdini artist weeks to accomplish.



Union Repair Station

After the battle, we find the badly damaged Orville and other Union vessels docked at a massive space station orbiting the earth. This CG asset was explicitly designed for this episode and given a high level of detail including flying repair drones and a moving tram system. The Earth in the background is an ultra-high-resolution digital matte painting.

