



# BRIEF Directive

## Title

### SLIDERS REPEATS (ON-AIR AND OFF-AIR)

This brief is concerned with promoting the off-FOX repeats of Sliders which will begin airing on SFC in March, 1998.

DURATION	
JOB NUMBER	
VERSION	DRAFT
PRODUCER	Alex Terapane
APPROVAL	
DEADLINE	

## Overview & Background

Sliders is the ultimate "What if" story. A science fiction series which ran for the past three seasons on the FOX network, it follows the adventures of a group of travelers who move through dimensional portals into alternate, or parallel versions of our own PRESENT DAY world. The differences between worlds are determined by the fact that in each of these parallel realities, history has diverged from our own at some crucial juncture, i.e. what would it be like TODAY if Rome never fell? This is a natural series through which to explore the idea of "Ever Wonder" and "Thought Provoking Possibilities".

The Sci-Fi Channel is producing a fourth season - 22 new episodes- of the series which will begin airing exclusively on the network in June, 1998. Also acquired are the episodes which originally aired on FOX. Thirteen hand-picked repeat episodes that will be begin airing in March on SFC will segue directly into the evolving mythology of the fourth season.

Sliders can help establish SFC as a "major player" in the television community through its continuing production of a popular network series with considerable quality cache.

Our challenge will be to promote the off-FOX episodes, along with their added value, while not losing focus on the fact that the new episodes are the really big news. We have to lead the audience through the repeat episodes and build anticipation for the new ones.

# Overview & Background (cont'd)

The ratings history of the show suggests that the series kept a fairly loyal audience, scoring ratings slightly below FOX's average daypart, but failed to grow that audience, or to form a solid block with The X-Files. While not a failure, it never achieved the ratings necessary to convince FOX to keep producing the high-budget show. However, if we can successfully tap into those viewers who loved the show on FOX-- 5.5 million households-- then the ratings boon to SFC could be very significant.

This series didn't seem to know what it wanted to be when it was on FOX. The FOX on-screen promo and off-screen advertising campaigns addressed each episode as a completely separate story, un-related by an overall show theme or series premise. The result is that while viewers may have known that a specific episode looked like "Jurassic Park", they may have had difficulty determining what the WHOLE SERIES is about. The show's new focus on SFC should help alleviate that impression with viewers, giving us a chance to attract both fans of the series as well as those who didn't watch.

## Objective

### ON-AIR PROMOTION, OFF-AIR BROADCAST AND RADIO

To alert Sliders fans that the show is moving to SFC with all-new, exclusive episodes, and will be heading into a more exciting, more interesting, higher quality direction, thereby setting the stage for the **evolving mythology** which SFC is bringing to the show.

### OFF-AIR PRINT

To announce Sliders on SFC, and drive viewership by promoting the show as the quintessential dramatic "what if" series, making it an excellent point of entry to SFC for sci-fi susceptibles.

## Competitive Considerations

Buffy the Vampire Slayer on WB @ 9pm Monday nights.

Monday nights are WB & UPN nights, both of which provide more choices for younger viewers (18-34).

All other network, cable, and syndicated SF & Fantasy series currently in production. Viewers will spend only a certain amount of time per week watching SF programming. We have to compete for that time.

Sweeps in May.

# Target Audience

Primary target is sci-fi susceptibles who are Sliders fans. Having held a steady 5.5 rating on FOX, if we can tap into even a fraction of these viewers and alert them to the fact that SFC will be running all-new exclusive eps of the show, our ratings will be proportionally excellent.

According to our research department, loyal Sliders fans are **primarily urban Males & Females (50/50) 18-49**, who are likely to be **highly educated homeowners with families**, and probably have **slightly higher-than-average income**. Many of them are **professionals, or in managerial positions**. They enjoy **classic rock radio, sports, travel**, and apparently read **Cosmo** more than any other magazine. They tend to be **“techy”**, owning and enjoying **video games, computers, expensive audio-video equipment, etc.**, yet they don't tend to read magazines devoted to these pursuits.

They are a mainstream television audience who appreciate quality science fiction but would not classify themselves as “sci-fi fans”. These are people who will be interested in thought-provoking television drama. They are not into sci-fi that's too “out there”. More interested in becoming involved in stories revolving around people, where the action emerges naturally out of the relationships between the characters, not to fulfill a special effects quota. These people are probably not terribly impressed by gratuitous SFX at the expense of good storytelling.

People who enjoy working as part of a team. The ensemble cast is a tightly-knit unit, almost a family, trying to survive among an infinity of parallel earths.

They are not teenagers.

## Barriers to the Target Audience

The concept of the show is a complex one. It isn't about time travel, or space travel, it's something very different and unique. This confusion may have played a part in the show's inability to build an audience on FOX. It is essential that our communications make an effort to explain the concept in an intriguing and entertaining fashion.

Viewers who tried the show on FOX and didn't care for it may be difficult to lure back for a second try.

The show might be perceived as being for teenagers only given the youth of characters in repeats.

Those Sliders fans who will want to watch Sliders on SFC, but do not have access to the network.

## Single Most Important Benefit

A show I really enjoy – which provokes me to re-evaluate how I view my own reality and appreciate it more -- has found the perfect new home on SFC, where it will ultimately be heading into a new and more exciting direction with 22 original episodes.

# Tone & Manner

Intriguing

Imaginative

Intelligent

Exciting

Adult

Current

Sense of Adventure (not SFX or stunt-driven)

# Communication Elements

Off-air print and broadcast, on-air, cross-channel on-air, radio, explore possibilities of exposure through other media.

# Mandatories

Promote the repeats (at least on air) only within the context of new episodes beginning in June. Stress the fact that new eps are coming, then talk about the repeats as a way to "jump on" and learn the back story of the series. This will give the repeat eps a sense of urgency, that these are something the viewer shouldn't miss out on.

# Executorial Considerations

Jan.  
Feb. print

We should be getting the message out about Sliders fairly early in '98.

# Additional Information

The fact that we have the cast open to participation should inform a great deal of our promotions. Jerry O'Connell is very recognizable from both Sliders and "Jerry McGuire", as well as the upcoming "Scream 2".

SFC will begin by airing 13 repeat episodes of the FOX series Mondays at 9pm. The new eps will begin in June, but as of this writing the time slot may change to Mondays at 10pm pending the development timetable of a companion series. We have to make sure to minimize the viewer confusion this may cause.

Jan. '99  
• 3rd series premiere  
• source for more original primetime shows.

First serious commitment to original series programming.  
• huge opt'y  
• block programming req.