

'Star Trek: Discovery' casts a new lead, and Sonequa Martin-Green is not a captain

Sonequa Martin-Green is joining Starfleet as Lt. Cmdr. Rainsford on the upcoming CBS All Access series "Star Trek: Discovery." (Dec. 15, 2016)

By **Jevon Phillips**

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Sonequa Martin-Green, who plays Sasha Williams on AMC's "The Walking Dead," is joining Starfleet as Lt. Cmdr. Rainsford on the upcoming CBS All Access series "Star Trek: Discovery."

Rainsford had been touted by the project's original show runner, Bryan Fuller, as the central character of the show, and casting a female, nonwhite actress was a priority.

Martin-Green is the first African American woman to lead the cast of a "Star Trek" series. The most prominent African American female to date is Nichelle Nichols, who played Lt. Uhura in the original series.

The drama will also feature Anthony Rapp (“Rent”) as the franchise's first openly gay character, Lt. Stamets, a science officer who specializes in astromycology.

Other cast members previously announced include Michelle Yeoh as Capt. Georgiou, Doug Jones as Starfleet science officer Lt. Saru and a trio of Klingons to be played by Chris Obi, Shazad Latif and Mary Chieffo.

Though Martin-Green is currently on "The Walking Dead," her character, like others, is constantly in peril and could be killed off in future episodes. She was previously known for her role as Courtney Wells on "The Good Wife."

Fuller, who stepped away from the project to concentrate on Starz's "American Gods," handed the show-runner reins to executive producers Gretchen J. Berg and Aaron Harberts. He is still involved with the show and has always had a certain vision for Rainsford.

“We’ve seen six series from the captain’s point of view,” he told [Entertainment Weekly](#). “To see a character from a [new] perspective on the starship — one who has different dynamic relationships with a captain, with subordinates, it gave us richer context.”

The show is scheduled to premiere in May.

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