

## Women at Warp Episode 17: Dragon Con Panel

**Melinda:** Hi, this is Melinda Snodgrass. You're listening to Women at Warp.

**Sue:** Hi, and welcome to Women at Warp. Join us as our crew of four-women *Star Trek* fans boldly go on our bi-weekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Sue, and thanks for tuning in. With me today is Andi.

**Andi:** Hi.

**Sue:** And we're here to talk about Dragon Con.

**Andi:** Which was awesome. Like, ludicrously awesome.

**Sue:** The main content of the show today is the Women at Warp panel on the Trek Track from Dragon Con. But first, we should talk a little bit about the Parsec Awards.

**Andi:** Yeah, we didn't win.

**Sue:** [laughs]

**Andi:** But it was still fun. Okay, just as a background, we were nominated for Best New Podcaster/Team, I think, or something like that. Is that our category? I can't remember. We lost, so who cares? No, no, I don't mean that. But I do mean that.

No, we went and we were super excited to be there. It was a really cool show. Veronica Belmont was there, who I adore. And we also got to see The Doubleclicks perform, which, if you have never heard of them before, I'm sad for you. But basically, it was like an award show. They had categories and they had presenters, and they had musical guest stars. It was pretty cool.

Of course, we were also counting down the time until we had to leave for our panel, which was like halfway through the Parsec Awards.

**Sue:** Yeah, our panel and the Parsecs definitely overlapped. But the cool thing about the Parsec Awards is that unlike a lot of other podcast awards, they're not a popularity contest. Every nominee literally goes to a panel of judges who listen to the shows, and they narrow it down to the finalists and then announce the winners every year at Dragon Con. So, it is a judged award rather than a popularity award.

I should say, it's a ridiculous thing to say, but it really is an honor to have been one of the finalists in that category. And also, really cool that we got two great shoutouts from the presenters in our category.

**Andi:** Yeah, it was awesome. We were basically-- And I feel bad because anybody watching us would have thought that we were completely bored or something because we kept checking our watches and clocks and everything. But they were really kind about our show, and that was really nice.

And it really was amazing that they chose us to be a finalist. And I know that's super cliché, and I joked to Sue beforehand that we had to put together our happy loser face, like the Oscars. You're like smiling and clap and pretend you're okay with it, but we were really okay with it. We were just super excited to be there at all.

Of course, then once they announced that our category, we literally got up and just jumped up and ran out of there. So, they probably think that we're super sore losers.

**Sue:** Hey, we stayed and applauded the actual winner and their speech.

**Andi:** Yes, we did. And then, we ran away. [laughter]

**Sue:** Yes.

**Andi:** But that didn't have anything to do with them.

**Sue:** To the room full of people waiting to hear us talk on the Trek Track, which was pretty cool.

**Andi:** Yeah, that was definitely the highlight of the weekend for me. First of all, I was super excited that the Trek Track was willing to give us a panel in the first place. And then, it was just amazing that the panel was full, that we had a full audience. And then when we asked for how many people actually listened to our show, there were a fair amount of people there, and that was surreal and awesome.

**Sue:** It was a really great room. And I talked to the assistant director of the Track the following day, on Monday morning, and he already said that he wants us back for next year.

**Andi:** Yay.

**Sue:** So, look for that. Yeah, joining us on the panel at Dragon Con, because it's not just the two of us, and Grace and Jarrah couldn't make it, were Carol Underwood, who was on the staff at Trek Track. She's sort of there as a track representative and introduces everybody, but she doesn't join in and talk too much. And then, there was Moxie Anne Magnus, who is, I guess, cosmetologist to the Starship Enterprise. That's the character.

**Andi:** Look, y'all, she looked awesome.

**Sue:** [laughs] And Hannah Hoyt, who had just won the Miss Star Trek Universe Pageant at Dragon Con, and she was an opera-singing Klingon.

**Andi:** She looked awesome. Sue and I were totally outclassed at our own panel when it came to costumes because we were both rocking Doctor Who. And then, Moxie had Rand hair, and Hannah was wearing this amazing Klingon costume, and then Carol was wearing a really cool Star Trek uniform, and then I'm wearing a Tardis dress, and Sue's dressed like Donna Noble. So, we were totally rocking Doctor Who fandom at our Trek panel.

**Sue:** Hey, it happens. That's what Dragon Con is for.

**Andi:** It happens.

**Sue:** But there wasn't really a topic to the panel. It's kind of free flowing, basically what the audience wanted to talk about. So, it went a lot of different places, and I think it was really fun.

**Andi:** Yeah, it was great. And I have to say that the crowd that was there was super impressive. Their questions were amazing. And it's hard to convey through audio, but even though there were a lot of people there, it really felt like kind of an intimate conversation. It was great.

**Sue:** So, it is a live recording of a panel room. We did our best to clean it up and level the audio, but some parts might be a little bit softer than others. We did our best, and I hope you can hear it all. So, here is the panel.

[incoming transmission stinger]

**Carol:** We can go ahead and get started. 7 o'clock. Welcome, everybody, to the Women at Warp panel. My name is Carol, and I'm going to go ahead and introduce these lovely people, and then we can begin. This is lovely Moxie.

**Moxie:** Hi.

[applause]

**Carol:** And this is our new Miss Star Trek Universe, Konora.

[cheers and applause]

**Carol:** This lovely lady is Andi.

[applause]

**Carol:** And the lovely lady on the far end is Sue.

[applause]

**Carol:** Why don't you tell us a little bit about the podcast that you run?

**Sue:** Sure. So, Women at Warp is the name of our podcast. Can I ask the room, have any of you listened to us before? Do you know who we are?

**Andi:** Oh, wow. Great. That's exciting.

**Sue:** Are you here because-- Yay, ladies, are you here because this is one of only six things that come up in the app when you search feminism? Are you here because you come to everything *Star Trek*?

**Audience Member:** All of the above.

**Sue:** All right, awesome. So, the idea for our show was actually Andi's. So, I'll let her talk about it.

**Andi:** Thanks, Sue.

**Sue:** You're welcome.

**Andi:** Basically, I started doing a live tweet of my first time through *Star Trek*. So, oddly, I have a *Star Trek* podcast, and I haven't seen all of *Star Trek* yet. I'm in the second season of *DS9*, if anyone's interested in that. It's under a Twitter feed called *@FirstTimeTrek*. And I did not think anyone would care at all. And then, people started asking me to be on podcasts, and I was like, "Somebody wants to hear me talk? Cool." And I would go and do those.

And I started to notice that there were a handful of awesome ladies talking *Star Trek*, like this one here, but there wasn't really a podcast just devoted to women in *Star Trek*, which I

thought was sad because I feel like women have a lot to say about it, and we're a big part of this fandom, and I wanted to see more of that. And also, I wanted to talk to Sue all the time.

So, I reached out to Sue, and our other cohosts are Jarrah Hodge and Grace Moore. And we put together a podcast, and here we are. It seems to have become a thing. Didn't think it would be a thing.

**Sue:** Yeah, we launched in March. So, we're just over six months old. And we have 1000 likes on Facebook. Does that happen? We were a finalist for the Parsec Awards, which we just lost.

**Andi:** Yeah, we literally lost the Parsec Award and then ran here. So, they're like, "You lose," and we were like, "Okay, bye."

[laughter]

**Sue:** We're coming to a room full of people who want to hear us talk. So, we win, right?

**Andi:** So that was actually amazing for us. And the Facebook thing-- I hate Facebook, by the way. But we actually snagged the name Women at Warp from Facebook, but did not intend to launch it until we actually had a podcast. And people started liking it and asking us when our podcast was going up. We were like, "Wait a second. Maybe we should put some pictures up here."

**Sue:** We weren't going to start till May, and we started in mid-March because so many people randomly found the Facebook page and liked it.

**Andi:** That's when we realized that maybe there was a need that we were filling because we hadn't even done a podcast yet and they were like, "When's the podcast? We need the podcast?" Like, we haven't made it yet, calm down. So, we launched it early, and it's been amazing, an amazing, an amazing time and we really have a lot of fun with it. And we're excited to be here to be able to just talk about women in *Star Trek* in general.

**Sue:** And thanks to [unintelligible 00:10:10] for letting us come on the Track and do that.

**Andi:** Yes.

**Sue:** We talked about it. We kind of want the panel to be really a discussion about the ladies of *Star Trek* and representations, etc. But before we go there, how about we go through the panel about some of your favorite ladies in the *Trekverse*?

**Audience Member:** I would say Doctor Crusher. I've always admired her as being a doctor instead of just some kind of romantic interest, that she's got her own fire and power. So, I love her very much.

**Andi:** You just made Sue so happy.

**Sue:** Because she is my girl.

[laughter]

**Audience Member:** Well, I'm of course old school, and it would have to be Uhura, who is just--

[cheers and applause]

That's where it all started in so many ways. I wanted to grow up to be Uhura and this is as close as I can get, I guess.

**Carol:** Well, Michael Jackson went from black to white. I'm sure you could manage.

**Audience Member:** [laughs] I don't know about that.

**Andi:** You have the hair.

**Sue:** Oh, my gosh. I just noticed your hair.

[laughter]

**Audience Member:** That's the first time I've ever heard that.

**Sue:** It is Dragon Con. I was actually noticing your awesome makeup first.

**Audience Member:** Oh, well, thank you.

**Sue:** Well, I mean, Uhura rocks the [unintelligible 00:11:33], so I'm seeing maybe a little bit of Rand and Uhura there.

**Audience Member:** Yes. Well, my favorite, I've gone through several. When I was younger, I really just loved Kes because she was really sweet, and you can be a really strong female character without being a strong woman. I know that's missing in a lot of stories. Right now, I really love Captain Janeway. Her strength as a leader really inspired me, especially being in college, doing any kind of major that is hard and involves any kind of math or hard thinking or whatever. I was doing film scoring, so a lot of technical things and musical and composition.

And so, I taped a picture of Janeway on my wall so I could wake up and whenever I thought I couldn't do something, I'm like, "Well, she got through the academy." I can imagine her cheering me on. So, yeah, she really inspires me.

**Andi:** I actually, as I said, haven't seen all of *Star Trek* yet, so I am very much looking forward to getting to Janeway. I love Kate Mulgrew in general, so I'm super excited to see a lady captain. When we first launched our podcast, I hadn't seen *DS9* yet. So, my answer at that time was Guinan. I really loved Guinan. She's just beautiful and mysterious and always there with a wise word. I just loved her, and I really loved her and Picard's relationship.

And now that I've gotten to *DS9*, I am a Kira girl. [cheers and applause] I pretty much loved her the second she came on screen and was like, "If you don't want to hear what I have to say, don't ask." I just love that it's so rare that you get to see just a really-- I won't even want to use the word aggressive, but aggressive character that they don't try and tear down. They let her be who she is, and they support her.

And I've only seen through halfway through the second season, but already the way that her and Sisko interact has really impressed me because you get to see a man who's not intimidated by a strong woman who lifts her up instead of trying to tear her down, but doesn't patronize her in the process, really just supports her. And so, Kira, woo. And also, Sisko, woo.

**Sue:** Yeah. Crusher has been my favorite since 1987. And I don't see that changing anytime soon. But really, anytime you get a snarky scientist lady who's not going to take anybody's

crap, that's the character I was drawn to. So, Jadzia, who I got to be on a panel with Terry Farrell yesterday.

**Andi:** She flipped out.

**Sue:** She hugged me and gave me a high-five. It was amazing. And then I cried. I started getting texts and those were like--

**Audience Member:** As long as you didn't pee yourself, close.

**Sue:** No, we came close. And then, Janeway and Torres, and anytime that-- Especially Janeway and Torres, I think, were the ones who influenced me in my own education, because *Voyager*, for me, came on the air around the time-- I was like 13 or 14. It's around the time that girls leave STEM fields, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, in case that acronym is unknown to anybody. But I think seeing these two women solve scientific problems together every week gave me, unknowingly at the time, the encouragement to stay in that field. And now, I have a degree in mathematics-

[applause]

**Andi:** Which I don't understand at all. Sue and I do podcasts, and she'll say things, and I'll be like, "Science."

**Sue:** So, we want to know what you guys want to talk about. Anybody? Topics?

**Andi:** Questions?

**Audience Member:** Yeah. So, for me, when you talk about your favorite-- I mean, I also love Kira a lot, but I also actually like Deanna Troi a lot. And so, maybe you could comment on the evolution. Because in the beginning, I didn't like her because I felt like she was a cop--They were trying to copy the Decker and Ayala relationship with her and Will. And I felt like in the beginning, it was clear she was sort of eye candy and was only talking to about, "Oh, I sense this," but I feel like her character evolved a lot. So, toward the end, you did see these strong characteristics, and you saw a woman who took what her strengths and talents and learned how to use them. So, if you guys want to comment on that?

**Andi:** Absolutely. We're definitely going to do a Troi episode, because there's so much to talk about there, both good and bad. Especially in the beginning. I mean, the first season alone, Marina Sirtis will straight up tell you they gave her nothing. And she's such a talented actress, and Troi had such an interesting presence on the bridge that they just did not utilize. And it was actually not until the second season episode, *The Child*, which is my least favorite *TNG* episode, by the way. But Marina Sirtis recently did an interview where she actually says, "*The Child* was my turning point. *The Child* is the time when they finally gave me something to do and something to act." And she really took hold of that, and that gives me a different perspective on that episode, but I still hate it because it really goes to what they did to Troi far too often, which is use her as a character that gets violated constantly.

**Audience Member:** Oh, yes.

**Andi:** And so, when it comes to Troi, we're going to be talking about her as a character. And she's also going to come up a lot when we finally tackle rape in *Star Trek* and how it's been portrayed, the good and the bad. I like Troi. Some of the strongest episodes in *TNG* are Troi centered. *Dark Page* is an episode that's about two female characters in the relationship, which we rarely get.

And then one of our favorite, favorite episodes that we did a whole podcast on Romulan woman because of *Face of the Enemy* and how much we love that episode. By far, the best Troi episode and a good example of what a waste. She had the talent and Marina Sirtis had the talent. And sadly, we didn't get as much of Troi as I would have liked. Anybody else want to talk about Troi? Troi comments?

**Audience Member:** I don't know who she is. [laughter]

**Sue:** I think they had a really interesting opportunity with Troi to really explore mental health on the Enterprise, on this continuing mission where they don't go home. But also, Gene Roddenberry felt that by the 24th century that mental health problems would be fixed. So, I mean, it's kind of nice to think that they'll be treated better by then, but you still had a counselor on the ship and then you rarely ever used her in her professional capacity. And that could have been so interesting, examining the psychological aspects of a trip like that, because I know even with our short-term missions, that's something that NASA has always been really, really interested in.

**Audience Member:** Yes. First one, congratulations for having a degree in mathematics. I also have a degree in mathematics, and I tutor on the side. And one thing I try to do is always try to push young girls towards mathematics, because again, like I said, STEM programs are lacking in female representation. And I'd like to see more of that instead of just the male dominated field where we, for lack of a better term, push them out early so that they feel like they contribute.

Secondly, about Deanna Troi and *Star Trek: The Next Generation* is probably by far my favorite of all the Star Trek series. I can pretty much tell you every single episode like the back of my hand if I see the first five minutes. I do understand your comments about Troi. And I did not like the character in the beginning myself because I felt like she was the typical female trope. And yes, they did far too much negative to her throughout the series. There were two or three instances throughout the series and the movies themselves in which she experienced some form of assault or rape. I thought it was completely unnecessary and almost did nothing for the story, advancing her character in any way, shape, or form.

My favorite episode was when she was going through her training to become a senior officer on the bridge as commander, and she had to make the hard decision in the holodeck, trying to figure out how to solve this problem. It was the only thing she couldn't navigate her mind around because she values everyone's life on the ship, she doesn't want to put anyone in peril. And when Riker told her, "My first duty is to ship, not to the crew. I have to make sure that this ship gets through whatever we get into," and her having to realize that she had to send Geordi to his death in the simulation for them to get out of the problem that was created. So, I felt-- for me, that was her turning point as far as becoming more of a positive female role model on the show and having more to do throughout.

The only other thing I didn't like that they did with her was the way her mother always interacted with. "When are you going to find a husband?" I'm like, "Can she be more than this?" I mean, she's an officer on the bridge.

**Sue:** I kind of like her response to that too, where it was an obvious annoying thing, where it's like, "Mom, I work on a starship. I have a job. I like my life."

[crosstalk]

**Sue:** Yeah.

**Audience Member:** But I think this is a lot about the time that it came out.

**Sue:** Yeah.

**Audience Member:** When it came out, there was still this expectation as a woman that's sort of what you did. You went to college to get your [unintelligible 00:21:08] So, I think now that you don't see that as much as the case. I think there is a change there.

**Andi:** Star Trek has always been interesting in that it portrays the future while being written and produced in our very flawed times. *TOS* is a good example of that as well, in that they were looking forward but still burdened by expectations from the network and censors and stuff like that. So, you see something like that too where we actually have in *TOS*, there's a line from McCoy that's like, "As soon as she gets married, she'll be out of Starfleet. It's too bad."

**Audience Member:** "She's a good officer. It's too bad she's a woman."

**Andi:** So that's a disconnect that we have in science fiction sometimes, and one reason why, even though we're 50 years on from *TOS*, there's still stuff to find there because we get to see kind of a time capsule of what people in the '60s were looking forward to in the future and what they valued. So, as a time capsule, I love it so much.

**Audience Member:** Yeah. I think one of the interesting things about that to me is it's kind of like thinking about the United States Constitution. The ideals of *Star Trek* that were sort of the foundation for the show, the infinite diversity and infinite combinations, the ideal that sort of pervades the *Star Trek* universe, even though it's not necessarily always realized that we're looking at it through the lens of our time, but that ideal is there, and striving to better and to be more inclusive is such a noble goal.

**Sue:** Absolutely. And I think it's the heart of all of *Star Trek*, is that striving.

**Audience Member:** I totally agree with what y'all just said, but I just want to take a teensy step back to Troi for just a second, because for me, of course, now that I'm an adult, I know what was wrong with Troi's character and the storylines they gave her and stuff like that. But for me, as a kid growing up, all of *Star Trek* was a rerun for me. I missed everything except for *Enterprise*, but I was a kid then. You don't even really--

[laughter]

So, I was watching reruns, and for me, watching *The Next Generation*, I know that I've always been a really emotional person. And it was sort of telegraphed to me very early on that if you want to be taken seriously, you're already down one because you're a woman. You better not be emotional or you better not show it, at the very least. And so, the idea, for me at least, that your emotions cannot only be okay, but even be useful was really, really powerful for me. The idea that my picking up on other people's emotions could be useful in some way. And obviously, she's an empath. She's not human, but as a human, it definitely had an effect on me seeing someone who is praised in some way for being emotional and using her emotions to benefit everyone else.

**Andi:** Absolutely.

**Sue:** Yeah. I mean, Troi is basically a celebration of empathy, like our human version of empathy, not *Star Trek* empathy, but also traditional femininity, which has a place. I mean, there are numerous, numerous, numerous ways to be feminine, and you can portray someone as some of those traditionally feminine qualities in an excellent way and celebrate that without taking a step back for women at all, and I just wish that--



Part of the problem with Troi too is just consistency. You could see some of that come through when she was given good stuff by good writers. I love Troi.

**Carol:** Let's go here and then in the back, so here first. Yeah.

**Audience Member:** I don't know if any of you were at the *Measure of Man* panel this morning with Melinda Snodgrass, who was a scriptwriter and story editor on seasons 2 and 3. One of the questions actually I had asked her was about the treatment of Troi and women in general. And actually, the judge in that episode was actually probably the toughest woman we saw for the first few years.

And she pointed out that for most of the time she was on the show, she was the only woman in the room. And so, there just wasn't that voice there. And it's interesting because if you ever saw a presentation Kate Mulgrew did, I believe [unintelligible 00:25:32], she talked about how they still even when they were casting her for Janeway, weren't sure they were going with a woman. They kept a couple guys in reserve just in case.

So, it seems like it's more just the people behind the scenes were making most of the decisions on this. And I guess, particularly since you've got a podcast, what advice would you give to people to get more voices in this discussion? Because I think that's the first step, is we've got to have more voices.

**Andi:** Speak up. Yeah.

**Sue:** Writers tell you, if you want to be a writer, start writing. If you want your voice to be heard, start talking. That's what we did.

**Andi:** And now, you can't get us to stop.

**Sue:** You weren't at the Snod's panel, right?

**Andi:** Okay, first of all, let's take a moment and say that we love Melinda Snodgrass, and we actually got to go together to a reading of some of her-- Because she writes Sci-Fi novels now, and I read one, and it's great. So, check that out. And it was a small little room, and the two of us-- well, Sue was cool. I was a total fangirl, and I was like-- One of our cohosts, Grace, at one point when we were talking about the Snod-- she calls her the Snod. And we're like, we're not going to tell her that we call her that. And then, it turns out Sue texts me. I was here at the *Star Trek* author's panel, and she said that George R.R. calls her Snod.

But yeah, after her reading, we actually spoke to her a little bit about *Star Trek* and basically had that same conversation, and she offered to come on the show. So hopefully we'll have a more in-depth interview with her in the future.

[applause]

Yeah, we taped everything she said, and I giggled a lot. [crosstalk] So, we got a chance to ask her some of those very questions, and unfortunately, she didn't have a fun behind the scenes experience with that. She was really sad with the way some of her further episodes were rewritten, things were taken out. I asked her--

And one of the reasons, by the way, why Guinan is my favorite character from *TNG* is because *Measure of a Man* is my favorite episode, and the scene between Picard and Guinan is my favorite scene. So, she was right there in front of me. And I asked her, "Did

they change anything?" She goes, "They didn't touch *Measure*. They didn't change a word in that." And I think that shows.

Also, as a fun fact, she was apparently writing it as a trilogy. She wanted to write a Data trilogy. *Ensigns of Command* was supposed to be the second one, heavily rewritten. She basically wanted to take her name off it like she was DC Fontana. And then, she was going to do a third episode where Data decides to plan and then execute a murder. She found it very interesting and wanted to go through that. Sadly, because of all the turnover for first and second season writers, we never got to see the end of her Data trilogy. I would have loved that.

**Sue:** But her version of *Ensigns of Command* is up on her website.

**Andi:** Yeah. She goes, "Check out the website. I pulled a Harlan Ellison." She is awesome, guys.

**Carol:** There was a question in the back.

**Audience Member:** Going off of what you guys talk about with Troi and seeing for the first time, seeing value in women and their emotions, I think a great dynamic is her mother, Lwaxana. She's the very opposite personality. She is cute. She's dynamic. She's dramatic. And you see that even though they have the same kind of values and the same expectations for themselves, you see it played out in these two very different personalities.

**Andi:** Lwaxana, I think, sometimes gets a bad rap and Majel is amazing. But yes, she's very focused on relationships, but she's not defined by them and she's not-- Especially when she thinks she's going to get married in that one episode, and she's like, "You want me to do what?"

So, I think that-- Yeah, it's interesting. And I don't think it's necessarily a bad thing that we have her being focused on relationships, because some people like to be in relationships and some people don't. And I think there is-- As you were saying, there is value in seeing her daughter come back and say, "That's not what I'm interested in right now. You go do your thing and let me do my thing." It's not *Star Trek*, but Amy Poehler says, "Good for you, not for me."

**Andi:** Yeah. As soon as I'm done with *DS9*, we're definitely doing a Lwaxana episode because I have so much to say about her. I actually just saw her first *DS9* with her and Odo, and I thought that was one of the best things I've ever seen with Lwaxana, so I'm really excited to move forward with that.

But I love her. I love how she walks into a room and dominates it. I love how she takes no crap from anyone, and I love how she does whatever she wants, and she is her 100% 110% of the time. And I think that's valuable and awesome. Plus, when Ferengi hit on her, that speech she does where she's like, "How dare you?" I love that speech. I wish I could use that in my everyday life. I wish I was a daughter of the Fifth House.

[laughter]

**Audience Member:** The other thing. Yes, she might-- She's going after relationships. But you also have to remember that she's an empath and relationships are built on emotion. So, this is her being herself.

**Andi:** Not only that, it's also very nice to see an older woman portrayed as still sexually desirable and still having sexual desire. That is super rare. Nichelle Nichols is another great example of that. And *Star Trek 5* has some problems, but--

[audience laughter]

**Audience Member:** You're kidding me.

**Andi:** Yeah, I know, right?

[crosstalk]

**Audience Member:** Honestly, I did enjoy it. I loved it.

**Andi:** Personally. I told Sue this and she was like, "No." I was like, if they had just stayed camping the whole time, I would have been just watching them camp.

[audience laughter]

**Andi:** Exactly. I'm like, whiskey beans and singing Row Your Boat, I would have watched two hours out of that. But there is this scene where Nichelle Nichols dances. And I have issues with that scene, but she loved doing, and who is still mad sexy, and they let her be sexy. And that is awesome, because unfortunately in Hollywood and in our society, there's like a cutoff date for women. Not cool, guys. So, it's cool to see Lwaxana be so unabashed in her sexuality and her love for men folk. I like it.

**Carol:** You guys, anything?

**Audience Member:** This is a little off topic, but I have a pet theory that Nurse Chapel is the Clara Oswald of *Star Trek*.

**Andi:** That would be amazing.

[laughter]

**Andi:** She's just sprinkled throughout all of *Star Trek*--

**Audience Member:** Yes. Yes, everywhere.

**Andi:** Well, she's the voice of the computer.

**Audience Member:** Yeah.

**Audience Member:** [crosstalk] There's some issues in *The Next Generation* with the consistency of this concept, but I always thought that Troi and Riker's relationship was really interesting for something on network television, because their relationship is kind of essentially polyamorous and they explore that in some episodes and others fall into tropes of traditional relationship mechanics. But I think that there's certainly at least a half dozen episodes that explore that idea. Did you feel that was executed well, or was it--?

**Andi:** Sometimes. But I agree with you that I like seeing a non-monogamous relationship portrayed well. And I like this in Picard and Crusher too. Sue probably is sad. Picard and Crusher shipper over here.

**Audience Member:** That's all I was paying attention to.

[audience laughter]

**Andi:** But it was cool to me that they could both pursue romantic relationships and still remain friends. And I think that's really cool because there are a lot of different ways to have a romantic connection, and there are lots of different ways to pursue love. And so, I actually really enjoyed their relationship.

And I actually really love Riker and Troi together because I love Kirk straight up. I love Kirk. And he kind of represented this masculinity. And then when we go to *The Next Generation*, you could kind of see them bringing that masculinity forward with Riker, but he portrayed such a thoughtful version of that nontoxic masculinity that I thought was awesome. And every once in a while, they'd make a misstep and he'd say some stuff that I was like, "No." But that is cool to me to be able to see a very feminine character and a very masculine character bounce off each other like that, and they smolder real well, so.

**Sue:** I think that they do it better sometimes than others. I think that seventh season thing where they added Worf into the equation. [crosstalk] Whether or not you think it makes sense, because there are arguments on either side, to me, in my head, it was clearly done to set up all good things and the falling out between those characters, but it doesn't make sense because of the relationship we know between Troi and Riker. Like, if she had made the choice to be with Worf, Riker would have been okay with that because that was their relationship. That rift, that is out of character.

[crosstalk]

**Sue:** So, that was one of the times that it didn't work so well, in my opinion. [laughs]

**Carol:** I saw hands up. Yeah.

**Audience Member:** [unintelligible 00:35:19] favorite character is the short-lived Tasha Yar.

**Sue:** Yeah.

**Audience Member:** What happened to her?

[audience laughter]

**Andi:** I think they didn't know what to do with her. And that frustrated Denise Crosby, I think.

**Audience Member:** And I think she was like, "You guys aren't using me." [crosstalk] Yeah, I'm going.

**Andi:** They set up this really a Kira like-- I think she's like a precursor to Kira. This really aggressive woman who has been through a whole heck of a lot. You don't learn it right away, but you find out later what she's been through and it's like immediately in the second episode, they take it back when she goes and raids Troi's closet. "I never had feminine things and I'm not a woman because I'm not feminine." And that is so harmful because the problem is not soft, flowy, feminine things. The problem is the lack of choice. And if you don't like soft, flowy, feminine things, that doesn't make you any less of a woman. That just makes you a different kind of woman.

And so, they didn't know what to do with her. She got frustrated and she peaced out, basically, as far as I'm aware.

**Sue:** No, Goo Monster got her.

[audience laughter]

**Andi:** Yar is another character-- To be fair, I keep saying-- we're going to do episodes on every female character eventually. You should see our topic list. It's like miles and miles long. Yar-- Goodness, Yar. I think what they were trying to do is basically like a Zoe Washburne from *Firefly*. They were trying to go with a warrior woman, which, woo, that's awesome to see. But they were also afraid of what they were doing.

**Audience Member:** They wouldn't commit.

**Andi:** Yeah, exactly. So, they would undercut their own characterization. When you're undercutting your own characterization, that means it's not consistent. The audience has nothing to hold on to. You know a good characterization when you can say, "Riker wouldn't do that." When you can think of a hypothetical situation and go, "That's how Picard would handle that," that means you know that character. When you ask, "Hey, what would Yar do in that situation?" It's like, "Nah-ah."

**Sue:** I feel like, to be fair, she left so early on that she could have become something that we really would want to see--

**Audience Member:** Before she left, I was sort of semi-attached to her, but the inconsistencies that they were dealing with her character was sort of like, "I'm not ready to fully commit to you because you're not fully committing to yourself."

**Andi:** When I was first time trekking it, I didn't know it was coming. Okay, Goo Monster came out of nowhere, and I was like, "Wait, what just happened?" [audience laughter] Whenever I'm first time trekking and something big is about to happen, all my followers are like, [audience laughter] And I was like, "Did Tasha Yar just get eaten by a Goo Monster? Like, what just happened?" And I felt the same way where I was, like-- [crosstalk] I wanted to like her. I was interested in her character. I wanted to see where they were going to go with her. And we get a sense of who she could have been in *Yesterday's Enterprise*. And what that character could have done under good writing. So, do you have more to say, on Yar?

**Sue:** No, no, that's about it.

**Carol:** There's a hand up over there.

**Andi:** Let's go.

**Audience Member:** Yeah. I read some things about Denise Crosby and what she said about playing Tasha Yar. And it was at the time, in the first season, we didn't know any of this would come out of it coming off of the original series where it was really about the McCoy, Spock, Kirk Trinity. She was told-- Like, she said, "Are you going to do anything more with me?" She was told by the writers, "No, no. This is the Picard-Riker-Data show. It's just about those three. You're basically-- You're Uhura, you're Chekov. You're one of those."

**Andi:** You're set dressing.

**Audience Member:** You're--

**Andi:** [unintelligible 00:39:32] frequencies open.

**Audience Member:** Not really having a character in mind for her, just as sometimes the secondaries on *TOS* could be a little consistent in what they liked and what they did.

**Andi:** Yeah. I mean, *TOS* was in a time when they didn't have serialized storytelling in the same way. So basically, they had their main characters, and they had side characters that were just meant to say a line anyone could say, which is why I'm sad we didn't get so much of Uhura as I would have liked.

**Audience Member:** But I think that's actually sort of the brilliance also of those original characters is because you could project so much onto them.

**Andi:** That's true too.

**Audience Member:** Because you weren't-- I think with some of the characters in *The Next Generation*, it's difficult to have that same sort of projection to say, "Oh, that person is just like me. That's the everyman for me. All of us can be in space. All of us can be scientists. All of us can do everything." So, I think that's almost part of the brilliance of the original series, is that we had characters that you could be. [laughs]

**Andi:** Absolutely.

**Sue:** It's just a totally different method of storytelling.

**Andi:** Yeah, really, it is. So, right here?

**Audience Member:** one of the episodes of *The Next Generation* that I don't remember the title, but I found it particularly annoying that Troi loses her psychic abilities.

**Andi:** [crosstalk] *The Loss*.

**Audience Member:** Right. Thank you. Okay, in her going for her education and going to get her PhD, I'm assuming that at that point in the 24th century, were there some guidelines that they had established for using your psychic abilities and when to use it and not use it? Because when she lost it, she lost it. And it's like, okay, yes, but Picard had to counsel her on how you need to be understanding because she was getting really ticked off it. She was so used to using her-- Okay, but in the training to become a psychologist, wouldn't they have whether you rely on it or not?

**Andi:** Yep.

**Audience Member:** Because that's ridiculous that-- I mean, there will be circumstance. What if not, it's completely gone, but there are other circumstances that you wouldn't use it?

**Sue:** She says there are races that she can't read, I guess. Yeah, no, that's really kind of a harmful thing they did there because, I mean, they could have done that episode with her having that loss and dealing with that without her than being terrible at her job because of it. That was really terrible.

**Andi:** Sue has lots of feelings on this. When we were doing our women in *TNG* episode and we had to do best and worst episode, this was her choice for worst because of this. Because we want to see Troi be competent. And unfortunately, there are a lot of times when they don't let her be competent.

**Sue:** And they're basically outright telling you that the only reason she's ever any good at her job is because she's using her empathic abilities as a crutch, and that's—

**Andi:** Sue has feelings.

**Carol:** Is there anyone? Okay, you've both talked before, so it doesn't matter. Let's go here.

**Audience Member:** So, on the subject of *The Loss*, I think it's important to note that the reason she's experiencing that loss is a consequence of that two dimensional being she's trying to empathize with. So as a consequence, she becomes really polarized and falls into these false dichotomies of thinking as a reflection of that kind of extreme limitation of her psyche. So, I think her reactions in that scenario make sense given that kind of confusion. It wasn't solely the loss of her abilities. It was that she was so immersed in a whole different species way of thinking which only knew how to travel one direction or the other.

Another thing I wanted to bring up though is Ro. We have yet to mention her. And I think Ensign Ro is another character that wasn't fully realized but has a lot of really strong qualities and kind of gets back to what Yar could have been in some ways, someone who lived on Bajor and explained all that. Do you guys feel that she was a failed character as a whole?

**Andi:** We did an entire episode on Ro because we love Ro. I think if you're looking at it from a progression, it was like Yar, then Ro and then Kira. They were tinkering with this kind of character type, and Ro really established-- She's in eight episodes. When we were doing our-- I know, when we were doing our background and breaking our Ro episode, we were like, "Wait a second. What?"

**Sue:** She has several of them. She's just like, "Yes, sir. I'll go do that." She's not a part of the story at all.

**Andi:** She made such an impact that it does not feel like she was in only eight episodes. It feels like she was a much bigger part of that crew and that is a testament to how well they used her and how well you can use a character type like that.

**Sue:** But even more than that, Ro's story, that first story, when they go to that planet, that one episode is setting up your next two series. That's when we learn about the Cardassian-Bajoran conflict that all of *DS9* is based on. And from Ro comes the Maquis that she decides to join, which is the beginning of *Voyager*. Don't listen, Andi. [audience laughter]

**Andi:** Because B'Elanna even kind of came out of Ro too, because they wanted that actress, they wanted that character and they couldn't get her, so they created B'Elanna.

**Sue:** Don't censor yourself on my behalf. Really don't. If she doesn't understand it, she just forgets it.

**Andi:** Yeah. I just feel [crosstalk]

**Sue:** Even like she influenced Kira and she influenced B'Elanna Torres as well.

**Andi:** So, Ro was really important not only to that crew, because we remember her so much but she's kind of important to what then happened in Star Trek for the next 10, 15 years. So, good on Michelle Forbes.

**Carol:** All the way in the back [unintelligible 00:45:44]?

**Audience Member:** Going off of what we were just talking about with Ro, but also to play devil's advocate for a second with Tasha and her feminine side we've seen in that one

episode. Being an adult and watching it now, I see what we were talking about how it's wishy-washy. They're not fully realizing the character. But seeing it growing up, it was, to me, a chance for that person to explore something they never had growing up. With Ro, she never had a chance to be a little kid. [unintelligible 00:46:11] and she's fully realizing it.

With Tasha, she always had to be strong. She always had to be the toughest one to make it through. And so, maybe she never had a chance-- even though if she secretly desired it, she never really had a chance to explore that side herself.

**Sue:** I have no problem with her going and wanting to put on girly things. That's not my issue with that scene at all. My issue with that scene is that she said that she's not really a woman because she doesn't do that. That's the problem.

**Andi:** I think that you could have gone some really interesting ways with that dichotomy you're mentioning, how we're not one thing. And if she was developed in a more real way, we could have seen more of that dichotomy. People are sometimes portraying something and feeling something else. That could have been awesome. But unfortunately, they weren't willing to spend enough time on that character to let us see how these two sides of her could coincide. So, we really just saw her doing one thing and then doing another thing and then doing a totally different thing, and I was just confused.

So, that's my issue with it as well, because sometimes I like to put on dresses and put on makeup, and sometimes I like to lounge around in sweatpants. We do all sorts of different things because we are human.

**Audience Member:** I have always been kind of disappointed about Trek's lack of portrayal of LGBTQ and non-gender-conforming characters. Considering we're talking about a galaxy full of different species and it's the 24th century. You would think that there would be some characters. I mean, they touch on it a little bit, but it's always disappointing. So, I wonder if you can comment on that.

**Andi:** Absolutely, yes.

**Sue:** You mean absolutely you agree. [audience laughter] I absolutely agree. Yes. I say this phrase a lot on the show. "It's better in the books." [audience laughter] It really is. [crosstalk] Really because there's no network, overseeing them saying, "No, you can't do that." They have tried to do some things to represent that without actually giving you a story within LGBTQIAP+. Is that all of them? But it's still like an allegory. It's still a metaphor.

In the books, there is a whole subseries about the Andorians and their nonbinary sexual characteristics. There are four genders of the Andorians, and they talk about their family unit and this fertility crisis, and there's this whole story about solving that for this planet, and it's super interesting, and that's something that they never would have put on TV because of the networks.

There are also some main characters that-- I think there's a gay commander on one of the ships. It's been a while since I've read one but-- What was that?

**Audience Member:** His name is Commander [unintelligible 00:49:16].

**Sue:** There you go. [laughs] Thank you. Yeah, I want them to do better, and I want them to do it soon.

**Andi:** Yeah. They're behind, to be honest, there are many, many things that *Star Trek* does phenomenally and explores phenomenally. This is not one of the areas that they are leaders,



I would say. And so, it's definitely something they need to correct in future properties, hopefully. And if we get a new *Star Trek* show, I will start writing my letter writing campaign right away. Way in the back.

**Audience Member:** Can I address that? [laughs] One of the things that I think is interesting, I, again, speak more from *The Original Series*, but I think there's a lot that's there about bodies, about entities outside of bodies, about our outsides not matching our insides, about gender swapping, gender switching. So, I think there are things there that can be read in different ways, and I think if you come from certain populations that, again, you read things into what you see, you put yourself into those characters. So, I think there's a lot of sort of interesting questioning there. But again, it's not dealt with.

**Sue:** It's not dealt with directly.

**Audience Member:** It's not dealt with.

**Sue:** It all sort of like you have to read it into it or

**Andi:** Subtext.

**Audience Member:** Yeah.

**Sue:** Having it directly stated.

**Audience Member:** But still, that message of infinite diversity and infinite combination, I think, comes through, even though it's not directly dealt with. I think that it's the hope for the future. And again, for future series, we still harbor that.

**Andi:** There's a lot of identifying with the outcast that happens in *Star Trek*, and I guess it just depends on what kind of outcast you think of yourself as.

**Audience Member:** Yeah. And I think there's a lot of acceptance of very strange things and creatures and things without bodies and gaseous clouds and all of that too.

**Andi:** Especially in the animated series. [laughter] I think that's really well stated. Thank you.

**Carol:** Let's go all the way in the back.

**Audience Member:** I think they did a good job touching-- They didn't touch on it specifically. You know how the network is really good about like, "We can't do this and this and this. But *Star Trek* says we want to talk about this issue." And I think they did a good job of that because with the J'naii, where they're only one gender, and when people that feel that they're one or another, male or female, they're really criticized. And I think anybody that felt outside of the mainstream in this society could relate to what's happening with the J'naii.

**Sue:** You had a story about *The Outcast*.

**Andi:** Yeah, I agree with you. *The Outcast* is amazing to me in a lot of ways. First of all, I don't know exactly what that air date is, but that's basically an episode about being transgender, and they put it on early, which I think is phenomenal and amazing.

**Audience Member:** 12th March 1992.

**Andi:** There you go, 1992, really? Yeah, that's amazing. And then, I think that speech she has still resonates so well today. There are problems with that episode, but that speech is

perfection. And actually, one of my favorite things about that is-- I was tweeting this episode, and I was like, "You know what? They should have hired a male actor for that role," because that would really--

**Audience Member:** Jonathan Frakes wanted to do that.

**Andi:** Yeah, that's exactly. So, I was like they definitely needed to get a male actor for that because that would really just bring that point home, that gender is complicated. And immediately got so many tweets. Jonathan Frakes really wanted to do that. I'm like, "Bless Jonathan Frakes." He was like, "Give me a dude to kiss. I'll do it. I love it." And that's just one reason why I love him so much. He understands storytelling, and he was willing to take that theme even further, and they wouldn't let him do it.

**Audience Member:** Did that work? [crosstalk].

**Andi:** Can we ever get the suits out of our art? Come on.

**Sue:** It's right here.

**Andi:** Yeah, yeah.

**Audience Member:** Don't forget the episode of the Trill transplant with Doctor Crusher.

**Andi:** Yes. Oh, yeah.

**Sue:** I have thoughts on this.

**Audience Member:** It's very small, but it does touch on it briefly.

**Sue:** Yeah.

**Audience Member:** At what time it was.

**Sue:** The actual thing she says, I'm not sure if this is exactly right, but she says, "Maybe someday, our love won't be so limited." And she claims that the problem with like, "I don't want to continue this relationship with you," is because she can't get used to the change. She can't handle the physical body she's loving all the time, the possibility of that changing.

**Audience Member:** It's almost a symbiosis commission.

[crosstalk]

**Sue:** Yeah. "You're now this different physical person, and I'm not sure I can handle that. The person that I see in front of me that I touch is different and could change again. And I can't handle the constant change." And I want to take that at face value and say that for that character, "Okay. I want to believe that." And I choose to believe in my fanfiction writing head as a teenager that there was one last goodbye. [audience laughter] because if she can do it with Riker--

**Andi:** I think The Trill in general is. I mean, I'm just starting to get into the *DS9* version of The Trill, which is super interesting. But when I first saw The Trill portrayed, I was like, "This is an allegory. I like it." I like allegories.

**Audience Member:** I'm going to skip over to *DS*-- I'm sorry, *Voyager*, for a minute. B'Elanna Torres, there's one episode that I feel like kind of missed me when I was trying to understand

exactly what's going on in this episode where B'Elanna Torres, I think she's stranded on a planet, and for some reason, her body is split into two.

**Sue:** Yes.

**Audience Member:** She has half human and half Klingon and the conflict, they go back and forth. Could you touch on that as far as how you felt, your insight? Because I feel like I missed something watching that.

**Sue:** It's been a while since I watched it.

**Andi:** I haven't seen it at all.

[crosstalk]

**Audience Member:** I think B'Elanna is a lot like Spock. She's half human, half this other race, and the two races are very different. So, to me, the real point of the episode was B'Elanna trying to come to terms with the fact that she is this unique person that is half Klingon and half human. And I think what she saw was she saw this weakness in herself was because she was human and she sort of wanted to be more Klingon, but I felt like after that episode, she realized that she is this true melding of these two races.

**Andi:** Yeah, she was.

**Audience Member:** That was the opposite in *Voyager*, she doesn't like her Klingon half.

**Andi:** She says even at the end of that episode, she's like, "Wow, I still kind of needed her to survive." and she used the Klingon as like this, kind of like this, I don't know, thing that's haunting her. And in reality, I'm like, "B'Elanna, you were split into two people. You're both B'Elanna." Yeah, it's equal. And I feel like I'm not sure if either the show was trying to say that the human was the real B'Elanna or if that was just what B'Elanna came away with, but I feel like that really was what she was coming away with by the end of that where she's like, "Oh, well, I'm still not really the Klingon. Like, this Klingon is still just a thing that annoys me, that I have to put up with."

**Audience Member:** Yeah, I do think it's unfortunate that they didn't let her continue on that path because then when her and Tom have the baby, she tries to alter the DNA of the baby because she doesn't want the baby to visually look like a Klingon.

**Sue:** Yeah, I think--

**Audience Member:** So, to me, that was actually a more interesting thing on what we say is [unintelligible 00:57:31] and what we say is the norm.

**Sue:** Well, it's also kind of a story of self-hatred.

**Audience Member:** Right.

**Andi:** And I think it could have been a lot more powerful for B'Elanna, even if it was an ongoing story of her coming to terms with that and using this Klingon side of her to become a fuller, more rounded person.

**Sue:** Yeah. And I feel like in the books, there are some storylines where she really embraces her Klingon self more. It just took a long time to get to that point.

**Carol:** Yessir.

**Audience Member:** So, spoilers for you. [laughter] So in *Deep Space Nine*, one of my favorite characters of all time was Jadzia. And I thought they had finally got a female character who was both a competent professional and can have a romance and she doesn't have to be torn between one or the other. And then, season 7 happens and she turns into what I call the crying wimpy version of Dax. What were your thoughts of the evolution of that character? I mean, did you have any feelings on that topic?

**Andi:** You mean when she became Ezri?

**Audience Member:** Yeah.

**Andi:** It's disappointing replacing a character like Jadzia with a character like Ezri. However, I think the concept of the story where you are dealing with a really young woman who probably doesn't even know herself yet without a symbiont, is now trying to figure out who she is with the symbiont and figure out all of these past memories that it has. That's a really compelling story. And I think they just didn't do it well because *DS9* had all this other stuff going on. You know, I try--

**Audience Member:** [crosstalk]

**Audience Member:** Yeah, that's true. I was just disappointed.

**Andi:** Yeah, it was disappointing that we lost Jadzia. I hate to say that I'm disappointed in Ezri because I think there was some good things there and some good things came from that. But one of the bad things was trying to watch her flirt with Bashir. That was just painful and tragic. Ezri, anybody?

**Audience Member:** What does that say about it? One of the things I struggle with is I chose to have a career, not children. And I know other women who don't understand my choice. And so, there's a part of me that's like, "Well, I don't understand your choice that you can stay home and have kids?"

But the reality is, I mean, really, if we're about feminism and we're about supporting women, every woman should make their choice and be who they are. And I understand that because we have so many tropes of women who are weak and subservient that we backlash against that. But the reality is we need to come to a point where we say, "If this is who the person is, this is who they are," We shouldn't put our own judgments on them.

I sort of didn't like Esri for a long time, but then I realized that's not fair for me to make that judgment on her because that's the person that she was. And I don't think [crosstalk] women we should judge.

**Andi:** Right. That's what I'm saying. I'm disappointed that we lost Jadzia. I try not to be disappointed in Ezri. The hard part with her is that they also make her not competent. That's the hard thing.

[crosstalk]

**Andi:** If she's being assigned to Deep Space Nine, she should be competent at her job.

**Sue:** It would be nice if they were able to be characters and not have to bear this huge burden of being a woman character and you have to deal with tropes and everything. And if it's a male character, they can be whoever they are, and it could be like one type of femininity or

another. Like, if it was a male character, they can be someone, and it would be completely fine and you aren't taking this whole history of women in TV or in *Star Trek* and what that looks like and putting it onto them.

**Audience Member:** Well, that's a problem. You have few representations.

**Sue:** Yeah.

**Andi:** Exactly.

**Carol:** Yeah. So, we only have about four minutes left. So, I'm going to go right here to the person who has not spoken yet.

**Audience Member:** Look at that. So, I was just thinking back on the comment that you made of [unintelligible 01:01:58] deciding not to have children and sort of getting back to that, [background noise] sort of put my career aside and having sort of the opposite act, maybe like, what the hell do you want?

**Andi:** Can you speak up just a little louder please? Sorry. Thank you.

**Audience Member:** The opposite of sort of what she was saying about deciding not to have children and sort of having judgment about who you are and what you're supposed to be, I kind of feel like the opposite of that of deciding to have children as a sort of step back from my career and having lots of friends, and people would be like, "What did you go to law school for? You're not using that." And being, I don't know, sort of annoyed with this attitude that I see, this is sometimes with panels such as these, and please don't take it personally, that sort of every character on the screen is supposed to be this representation of just the greatest female character that you could ever be, as opposed to some of us do make other choices for many, many other reasons, and that doesn't make us less feminist for doing so.

**Sue:** Absolutely not.

**Audience Member:** And I feel that, maybe doubly because I'm an African American woman and sort of seeing the portrayal of us on screen and want to see us doing something other than being so strong and have that archetype and knowing how damaging that has been to my community as a whole, black women with mental illness and things and not seeking help and doing the things that they should to protect themselves, because that's sort of how they're viewed. And that's even in our community, it's like, we're the ones who hold the family together. [crosstalk]

**Andi:** Well said. The one place where we do have a mother on *Star Trek*, Crusher, we never actually see her doing any mothering. I mean, there's Keiko, but every time that Wesley needs speak--

**Audience Member:** K'Ehleyr.

**Andi:** Okay, yes, K'Ehleyr. I mean, regularly on the show. Every time that Wesley needs to speak to someone about something that's happening in his life, he goes to Picard or Riker. He goes to-- [crosstalk] You never see Wes actually talking to his mom, who presumably raised him since his dad died, all by herself. He talks to Picard or Riker. [crosstalk]

But wait, you have an opportunity to show that relationship [crosstalk]. I don't know what happened. [audience laughter]

**Audience Member:** I think, to what you're saying. I think it's really important that we write characters when we write, that we're not writing ideology when we write. Otherwise, we end up having communist propaganda operas. [laughter] But I think it's really important to have characters who do have flaws, who do have problems. But I think that we also have to not be as sloppy as we are sometimes. I don't know if you've just seen the new *Walking Dead Fear*. We were just having the discussion of this, that we've had three black characters, and all three have died in two episodes, and nobody in a meeting says, "Hey, we've got--"

**Audience Member:** [crosstalk] I get that. I have a joke with my friends that we call that, Ensign [unintelligible 01:05:30] or something. He's the first to go. He's the black guy. [crosstalk] I really, really do but at that the same time, I don't think we can make or expect writers and producers, everyone, to make something or the archetype that we wish we could see, people--

**Audience Member:** But we could expect them to kind of let go of certain tropes that we see over and over again and incompetent, showing women who are incompetent and doing things that men are competent at. Showing them-- One of the brilliant things about *Alien* is that we you've got a woman who was cast in a role that was just a role.

**Andi:** Yes.

**Audience Member:** And I think that's what feminism is that we cast people in character roles instead of saying, "Well, this is what a woman does, and this is what we're going to put in this role."

**Audience Member:** But at the time, in defense of Ezri, who I wasn't a big fan of, [laughter] at least it's-- That happens too.

**Audience Member:** Yeah.

**Andi:** Yeah.

**Audience Member:** That happens where women are--

**Andi:** You should be allowed to not be competent [crosstalk]

**Audience Member:** At least to me, to these sort of African-American stereotypes that we're already strong.

**Andi:** You should be allowed to not be--

**Audience Member:** [crosstalk] kids are not going to-- That sort of thing is that "We can't shit. Really?"

**Andi:** Yeah. If Ezri was a male character [crosstalk] yeah

**Audience Member:** And I think we saw some progression with Ezri from the very beginning, like, who wouldn't be all jacked up in the head.

**Andi:** Totally [crosstalk]

**Audience Member:** It just happened to them.

**Andi:** I just don't think--

**Audience Member:** And towards the end. And while I get in the overarching and overwrite, this is what we see all the time, I didn't-- You had to give credit to her character.

**Andi:** Oh, absolutely. [crosstalk] That's what I was trying to say. Like, that story idea of trying to figure all of that out is fascinating, but they didn't serve it well. They didn't explore that with her as much as they could have. [crosstalk] No, they didn't and that's because all of that other stuff was going on in *DS9*.

**Sue:** See, the thing is, even though we're finding so many things that we wish, oh, this could have happened or that, every single thing that we've come up with, about every single character, that character is still. Still reach out and touch someone.

**Andi:** Absolutely.

**Sue:** And that's just really amazing to me how, like, "Oh, yes, we wish, for the future we want, this or that, and we look forward to these days." But even amongst all of that we can criticize all we want, but these women have still managed to be completely amazing. And even as [crosstalk]

**Audience Member:** Like having any representation at all is so important is because even though it's flawed, it's there at least.

**Sue and Andi:** Yeah.

**Audience Member:** And you can have somebody connect with each moment or whatever.

**Andi:** I think what it comes down to is we care about *Star Trek*, and we care about how people are portrayed on *Star Trek* because it matters. The way you see yourself in media and the way other people are portrayed in media, this whole trope that black women can't be vulnerable, that sort of thing is really damaging. The only way to combat that is to have so many different versions of women that every—Or women, LGBT, everything, every kind of person, so we don't have to hang our hopes on these very few and then break them down to--

[applause]

**Carol:** That was perfect. We are three minutes over, so thanks everybody for coming. Grade us in the app. Give to the charity. We have cards up here if you want to take them to the show, and we'll hang out for a few minutes if you want to talk. Thank you.

**Sue:** Thanks for coming.

**Andi:** Yeah. So, that was our panel. It rocked.

**Sue:** If you want to help us get to more conventions, you can help us out by donating through the Women At Warp Patreon, [patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://patreon.com/womenatwarp). And that's what's helping us record panels. That helped us purchase the recorders we needed. That's helping us get to Star Trek Las Vegas next year for the 50th anniversary. And every little bit helps. And thank you so much for those of you who have donated, and it was great sharing our panel from Dragon Con with you, but this is just one of the many things being discussed on the Trek.fm network recently. So, here's a quick look at some of the other things you may have missed elsewhere on Trek.fm.

[Trek.fm ad segment]

**Sue:** We also wanted to let you know about the Trek.fm Patreon. Trek.fm is a listener supported network. You can help us keep the *Star Trek* discussion coming by pledging a donation at [patreon.com/trekfm](https://patreon.com/trekfm). Thanks for listening. I'm Sue, and you can find more from me over at [anomalypodcast.com](https://anomalypodcast.com). And, Andi?

**Andi:** Yeah, easiest way for me is Twitter. I love the Twitter, [@firsttimetrek](https://twitter.com/firsttimetrek) where I'm live tweeting my first time watching *Star Trek* and then tweeting a lot about *Dragon Age* as well, which you guys care about, right?

**Sue:** Totally.

**Andi:** Totally.

**Sue:** Awesome. So again, thanks so much for listening. And you can get more content from Women at Warp over on Facebook, Twitter or at [womenatwarp.com](https://womenatwarp.com).

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