

Women at Warp Episode 253: Terrorism and Resistance

[Women at Warp theme]

Andi: Hi. And welcome to Women at Warp: A Star Trek Podcast. Join us on our 10-year mission to explore intersectional diversity in infinite combinations. My name is Andi, and thanks for tuning in. With me today is Jarrah.

Jarrah: Hello.

Andi: Hello. And special guest, David.

David: Hi. So thrilled to be here. So thrilled to be back.

Andi: Yay. We always love having people back. Now, before we get into our main topic, we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is made possible by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron, you can do so for as little as a dollar per month and get awesome rewards from thanks on social media up to silly watchalong commentaries. Visit www.patreon.com/women@warp.

Looking for podcast merch? Check out our TeePublic store. There are so many designs with new ones being added all the time, and on so much more than just T-shirts. Find it at teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp. And lastly, but certainly not least, we have a birthday shoutout to give to Fiona, whose birthday is January 13th. Friend of the show, also was a guest with us and one of our favorite listeners. So, happy birthday, Fiona.

David: Yay. Happy birthday.

Jarrah: Happy birthday. [laughs]

Andi: Great. So, today, we're going to be talking about terrorism and resistance. But first, David, you want to give us a little bit of background about yourself and your history with *Star Trek*.

David: Sure. I am a college professor. I teach at Harvey Mudd College, which is one of the Claremont Colleges in Claremont, California, just east of LA. And since 2018, I have taught a course called Race Gender in Class through *Star Trek*. I also wrote a book on *DS9*, and I've been writing a few essays here or there on *Voyager* as well. So, I'm generally interested in the politics of race, class, gender, sexuality and empire in the *Star Trek* franchise, and in liberal multiculturalism more broadly.

Andi: Yeah. Very cool. And David is basically back, because when we did our last episode with David, which was our Bajor as Allegory episode, we went through a lot of discussions. I really enjoyed that discussion. But at the same time, we got towards the end and I was like, "We really have not talked about resistance or terrorism at all. We have to do another episode." And David was like, "Please invite me back for that." And I said, "Okay." And now, here we are.

So, very excited to talk about this. It's a very complex topic. Very nuanced. I feel like *Star Trek* is extremely interesting in its depictions of terrorism and resistance. A little bit interesting to see how it's changed from production era to production area, and where sits in the America media landscape is super interesting to me. So, I'm very excited to talk about this.

But I wanted to start off in honor of Jarrah, our definitions nerd, with a definition of terrorism that I pulled straight from Oxford Dictionary. So, Oxford Dictionary defines terrorism as the unlawful use of violence and intimidation, especially against civilians, in the pursuit of political aims. So, right off the bat, any thoughts about this definition that we want to talk about?

Jarrah: Who decides what's lawful?

Andi: Yes. And who decides what is violent?

Jarrah: And what is political?

Andi: Yes. [laughs] It's almost like these are really complex definitions.

Jarrah: Yup. I think that what we're taught in history class, and generally, there's a view in society that it tends to be, I think, an oversimplification of resistance movements that we've seen in history. You are presented with the dichotomy of Martin Luther King Jr. in Malcolm X and one is the right way to do it and one is the wrong way to do it. That is definitely an oversimplification.

When you have a situation where we'll talk about in some of the episodes where someone is deciding, this is not abiding by our laws and the political aim is something that we don't agree with, then something that might be characterized in a different way becomes terrorism.

Andi: Yes. And also, who is using it?

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: It's like, who is using the violence, I think really makes a difference in what gets defined as terrorism, what gets defined as, say, resistance or rebellion. The different ways that we classify violence very much depends on who is perpetrating it and who is it being perpetrated against.

David: I think approaching this question with ambivalence and curiosity [chuckles] rather than moralism is exactly the way that you're talking about it. Yeah, in terms of ambivalence of curiosity is really important. On the one hand, Andi and I are in the United States, right? This is the country where there's more guns than people. Most of the people who have most of those guns want people like us dead. [chuckles]

I personally sometimes struggle to see the strategic wisdom in violent approaches to achieving political aims that I might also share. At the same time, I am a geographer. And so, all of my training is about contextualizing. Geography, history, sociology, anthropology are contextualizing disciplines, excuse me.

When people are resorting to political violence that might be extra-legal, I think there are really important and interesting questions to be raised about where did that come from, what were the other avenues of resistance that these groups might have tried, and to what extent were those avenues foreclosed or frustrated that led to that point? I think the work of trying to understand that is different from necessarily apologizing for it or endorsing it.

Jarrah: I think you put it really well, David, that we need to look at the questions and the context and that isn't the same as excusing the actions. But if we can't understand things, because we are just applying a knee jerk reaction, then we're not helping anything.

Andi: Yeah, I agree. The thing is, is that when it comes to terrorism, it doesn't appear in a vacuum. Like, it's very rare that someone just goes straight to that. There is usually a long history of political oppression that precedes terrorism as a use. It usually becomes a tactic of last resort when peaceful political change has basically either failed or been cut off as an avenue for change.

Jarrah: I would say that's true where there's resistance movements. There are situations where there's terrorism in the absence of a resistance movement, or there's a broad shady movement, but one person takes it upon themselves to say, "Bomb a federal government building." That to me would be a little bit different in terms of not necessarily going through those stages of other types of approaches first.

Andi: Yeah, that's actually a really good point, because I was thinking of it through the lens of a resistance movement with a political goal. There are certainly actors that use terrorism that don't have that background and also might be acting alone without a group at all. It's a super complex issue. You're definitely correct, and in the frame that I was looking at it in.

David: That makes sense. I think this is where, as a geographer, I just go back to contextualization, someone who wants to attack or critique the state, so that they can do more oppression because the state isn't oppressing people well enough. [chuckles] They're coming from a very different context as a very different project than someone who is actively oppressed by that state. So, anti-statism, just to give an example, can have a range of ideological inflections. And so, context is primary.

Andi: One thing that I wanted to talk about when we talk about this, and I feel like it's very much clear in some of the *Star Trek* examples we get, is the idea of who has the right to violence and how. If the violence is lawful or by the, I guess, powerful group, then it's lawful or it's justified or it's okay. When it's not coming from that group, well, then it's a big problem.

Jarrah: Yup. A great example of this would be police violence against racialized communities. And then, the again, idea that reacting with whatever you're terming violence is that's not lawful and it's the job of the police to maintain order, what order for whom.

Andi: Mm-hmm. I was also thinking about this in the context of some of the protests in support of Gaza, because I remember when there was one where they in a university protest, they broke into a building and that was treated as extreme violence when no one was actually harmed.

That's why what I was getting at when I talked about like, what is violence? There is definitely a tendency for folks to consider violence against property to be violence, whereas there are others who are like, "Who cares the window was broken?" I think that it's interesting that the levels of violence that are acceptable change based on who was doing it.

Well, I think this is actually a good place to start with the first episode I want to talk about, which is the *High Ground*, which is the *TNG* episode, where Crusher is basically involved in a terrorist attack and then when she's helping with the medical aftermath, is kidnapped by the terrorist group and held hostage to try and use her medical skills to help them, but also to force the Federation and Starfleet into actually addressing the political problem that is here. So, any initial thoughts on the *High Ground* though we want to bring up.

David: I'm so glad that you're bringing us back to this one, Andi, because I hadn't seen it in some time, and I rewatched it a couple of nights ago. I also reread this incredible essay in an edited volume that I should plug, and we can include a link to maybe in the chat from the 1990s called *Enterprise Zones: Critical Positions On Star Trek*.

Jarrah: I have it.

David: You have it? [Andi laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah. Recommend.

David: Yeah. Ken Ono has a fantastic essay called *Domesticating Terrorism* on this episode. So, I rewatched it and then I reread that. And then, I also started doing reading about the *Irish Republican Army*, because the terrorist protagonist in this, who, Crusher kind of, it's suggested even though it doesn't actually happen seems to fall for. There's a way in which she's constructed as a very susceptible-- Not just susceptible to Stockholm syndrome, but I feel like the construction of Crusher in this episode is very gendered, that it's precisely her femininity or her open heartedness that makes her vulnerable to seduction by this character. But the lead Ansatan terrorist, Kyril Finn, has this Irish sounding name. It's played, I think, by a white actor and is really centered as like the protagonist of this struggle.

And Ono makes this really interesting argument that, it's because Finn is played by a white man, that he's entertained as a potentially reasonable terrorist and that if the casting had been different, that a 1990s audience would have processed that character in a very different way. But I wonder what you all think of that.

Andi: No, no, I'm so glad you brought that up, because that is something that I have been thinking about since we even started talking about Bajor when we were talking about Bajor's allegory is, it's not just this episode. When it comes to Bajor, overwhelmingly most of the key people are almost all white. There are only a few exceptions. I don't know if it's deliberate, but I feel like it makes it easier for the audience to have empathy for them. I think that that's very true in this. I think it's true in the larger media landscape, because especially in the 1990s, when you did see terrorist characters, if they were sympathetic terrorist characters, they were almost all IRA.

I'm thinking of *Burn Notice*. There's a main character in *Burn Notice* who is ex-IRA terrorist and she's the main love interest in that show. There's also that a really terrible action movie that I'm blanking on the name of *The Jackal*, where Richard Gere plays an IRA terrorist who becomes the action hero. I'm sorry, I do not think that a someone from Hezbollah would be presented in the same way and any of these instances. I think even if they didn't mean to, this is a good example of that. I'm glad you brought that up.

David: Thinking about Hezbollah and IRA as parallel cases is interesting, because often when we're talking about groups that are labeled terrorists in these contexts, we're talking about political parties that also have a militant wing. And so, whose militant wing ends up being pathologized, I think is an interesting question.

At the same time, I think the history of Irish solidarity say with Palestine or say with South Africa and the apartheid struggle, as well as the history of Ireland being one of the templates for English imperialism all over the world. There is this longer history of Irish racialization that is-- By the time we get to the 1990s, this has been forgotten by the Irish becoming white story that people like Noel Ignatiev have written whole histories of, but is potentially still there and is potentially still able to be activated and called upon in the present, which is, I think what you see in a lot of Irish foreign policy. Not in Northern Ireland, but in Republic of Ireland today.

Andi: Well, then, I just feel like too, America specifically has a different reaction to IRA because of the roots of Irish-Americans.

Jarrah: And because of the roots of America.

Andi: Yes, agreed. Irish-Americans were some of the biggest backers and funders of the IRA during the trouble. So, I just feel like American audiences are more disposed to look kindly on Irish portrayals.

Jarrah: Yeah, I was going to say that. I think those pieces of media probably read very differently in Britain.

Andi: Yes.

Jarrah: Yeah. But I agree that there's this thing about how terrorists are racialized or not racialized in media that cuts both ways. I think this goes throughout *Star Trek*. It's more oblique. But in the Xindi incident, there's these factions of Xindi. And the ones that are portrayed as like more evil, extreme, unredeemable bad guys are the reptiles and the insects. The ones that are more likely to ally with the humans are like the primates and the arboreals, like the tree people and the avians that were around.

So, it's a transposing of alienness otherness onto these groups that there's going to be ones that are more sympathetic and different. But the more different they are from us, the harder it is for us to cast them as complex or good guys. When I say us, I mean the white creators, white audience of this show.

Andi: I think it's interesting, Jarrah, that you brought up how the reaction might be in Britain, because this is the episode where we get the infamous 2024 Irish unification line [David laughs] from Data, which meant that in Britain they censored that. In some cases, they just edited that line out. In some cases, they did not show the episode. But it did play very differently to a British audience.

David: I have another question about this episode which is related to Britain in a way.

[laughter]

David: If the Ansatan are stand ins for the Irish, let's say, and then we have to also ask how they characterize the Rutians in this episode, who stand in for the British. Main Rutian interlocutor in the episode is this woman commandant who constructs herself as this former moderate, but who has been convinced through the firsthand experience she's had of these terrorist actions, that what we're dealing with in the Ansatans, in her words, animals, not people.

And so, on the one hand, you have this military that obviously includes women and allows women to rise to positions of leadership. So, it seems progressive. She's like, "I used to think of myself as a moderate on the Ansatan question." And then, on the other hand, you see the same kinds of hatred, that we might hear out of the likes of like a Gul Dukat. And so, I wonder like what you all make of that character and how she might resonate in the present.

Andi: So, one thing that I was thinking when I was rewatching this episode, was that they very much do their best to present a both sides type [David laughs] construction. They're like, "Here's your sympathetic terrorist and then here's your sympathetic commandant." I love that you use that word. Here are their different points of view. We have our characters either like being sympathetic or in some cases pushing back on some of the things.

So, when it came to her, she was paired with Riker, most often. It made sense to me that they would construct it like that, because that's how *Star Trek* usually tries to approach moral quandaries, is they don't usually try to answer it definitively. What they try and do is convey that is complex, that people have different opinions and then they try and have a mouthpiece

for the various versions and then you're supposed to take your own opinion away from that. But the reason that I find it to be an interesting construction for this episode, is that we have Kyril Finn full on confronting Picard and being like, "You are acting like you're neutral in this conflict. And you are not." I feel like that's mirrored in how *Star Trek* itself is portraying this, as if they are neutral. But the power dynamics at play here means that being neutral means you're basically backing one side, because Picard is like, "No, we have nothing to do with this." But they are working with this government. They are treating them as legitimate. That is a 100% not being neutral.

I just found it very interesting, that they're trying to present both sides, but at the end of the day, it's pretty clear which side won this conflict. And in the end, they just leave and it's never [David laughs] addressed. So, I just find that that is interesting. So, in terms of her, that character, I feel like she basically was a good mouthpiece for that point of view. But in the end, like who survived? It was her.

David: Yeah, you're right. Like, they win. The Federation doesn't really reflect or examine its policy with respect to the trade that it's doing with the routines. I forget when this episode came out. But if it's late 1980s, early 1990s, this is a moment when the question of various US institutions and global institutions divesting from trade with apartheid South Africa is like a very live question. And so, for the Federation to not reflect on or alter its own policies, that itself is really interesting.

The other thing, I really appreciate your connecting neutrality to the neutral stance of the writers in some ways. The other thing is to think about non neutral analogies or examples. So, there's that moment when Finn compares himself to George Washington.

Andi: Yes.

Jarrah: Yeah.

David: And Beverly is like, "But Washington was a military general, not a terrorist." Finn is like, "Well, it depends how you look at it." That's where the American audience who has been trained to idealize George Washington is supposed to scratch their chins a little bit. But if you look at indigenous histories, like Nick Estes has written about this for the Seneca, for the Iroquois. They had a whole separate name for George Washington, which was Town Destroyer. So, he very much was a terrorist.

[laughter]

David: That's not a neutral example at all. I don't think the audience was ready to hear that in whenever this came out. [chuckles]

Andi: It's interesting that they evoke George Washington when to the British, George Washington was basically a terrorist.

Jarrah: He was literally perpetrating violence for political aims against the laws of the British Empire.

Andi: Also, they were outnumbered immensely. So, they were using guerrilla tactics that were considered to be dishonorable by the British. This is what we're talking about when we're talking about the power differentials. The British were upset that George Washington and the American army didn't just line up and shoot at each other, [chuckles] like they're supposed to, because that tactic very much heavily favored the British.

And so, the Americans after doing that for a while were like, "Screw that, we're not doing that anymore." [chuckles] The British were like, "Ah, wait a second. That's not fair. These are dishonorable people." So, I just find it amazing that they bring up George Washington in this context. I think it's funny, because Kyril Finn is correct in many ways in this, but also, it's also so oversimplified. [chuckles] I think it's actually really apropos, because it shows how people like George Washington are viewed so differently based on who you were in the conflict against him.

Jarrah: Yeah. I want to go back to the point about neutrality as well. The thing that I observed on looking at all the examples in *Star Trek* is how *Star Trek's* attitude towards terrorism is extremely story dependent and production era dependent.

[laughter]

Jarrah: But story dependent, a good contrast would be *The Hunted*, which is the one about the super soldiers where that planet has created a bunch of super soldiers, and one of them gets picked up by the *Enterprise D*, and then escapes and is leading a rebellion of the super soldiers on the planet led by James Cromwell that just stuck them all on this prison moon and didn't want to deal with them, even though they could have deprogrammed them.

And in that episode, instead of saying non-interference means propping up the government, they say noninterference means letting this revolution happen. They beam out clearly like sympathizing at that point and saying basically, "You created this problem, you clean it up" to the government, letting Danar and his people take over the Capitol building with weapons and being like, "Call us if you make peace and determine you're going to sort the situation out. Otherwise, you're never getting into the Federation." So, in that case, they do look a little bit more about like what is their place. But they're still using the excuse of noninterference to take a directly opposite approach.

Andi: Amazing. Going back to the high ground, one of the things I find so fascinating about it is because it tries to present both sides almost equally, you have exchanges that are actually very sympathetic to terrorism. So, you have Data literally saying, "It appears that terrorism is an effective way to promote political change," which is a wild thing to say on American television and not something I think you could say in the 2000s.

So, it's interesting to see how much the time period in which it was made-- It's almost like a time capsule in the American public's sympathy and thoughts around terrorism. But then, the final cap on that scene is Picard saying, "I have never subscribed to the theory that political power flows from the barrel of a gun." I just think that that is actually probably where this episode lands-

Jarrah: Yes.

Andi: -at the end of the day. So, they do try and present it as a more nuanced and complicated thing, but at the end of the day, they're basically saying that violence is not path forward to peace. It's capped by that quote from Picard, who's obviously our moral arbiter and in a neat situation.

Jarrah: Yeah, and they close with that moment where the child picks up the gun. It's very much this tonal thing about, the idea that violence begets violence and that by taking this approach, you're locking future generations into this cycle and stripping away their innocence. That's a theme we'll also see repeated later.

David: There's such an interesting shift, I think, in the way that Beverly is being characterized in terms of gender between the most of the episode and then the end,

because there's initially this seduction by Finn. But then at the end, it's like there's a total repudiation of that seduction and she occupies this more maternal stance, because we know patriarchal culture doesn't let women have sexuality and be mothers at the same. She says to that child like, "No more killing." So, she goes from open to this perspective that Finn has to be horrified by it, to curious about it, to firmly condemning it and in a very maternal register to this child like, "How dare you?"

Jarrah: She just needs to find someone who will draw a nice picture of her-

[laughter]

Jarrah: -and isn't a candle and doesn't want to earn children, and then she's good.

Andi: Yeah. 100%. One thing that I wish that we had seen more of is like, why is this conflict happening is very much glossed over. It's like, well, the Western continent, I think they say, is rebelling. But why? And also, we're given no background on like, is this an apartheid situation? Are these people being treated differently under the law? What is the reason?

They're very much more interested in a tactic's conversation, I guess, than they are about a like, "When is it appropriate to use violence to resist question." And so, it's very glossed over what the actual political background of this is and what kind of violence is perpetrated against them first. Finn does talk about how his child, 13-year-old, died in detention. So, that is pretty bleak.

The episode ends almost as if it's hopeful that this child put down his gun. But then, they arrest him. What's going to happen to that child? Is he just going to die in detention, and then the rebellion fails and then that's that, and the powerful win? There's no exploration of the final choice.

David: I kept waiting for Finn, just to echo you, Andi, to give a speech where he would detail, not just the personal losses he experienced as a result of this conflict, which 1990s is a time when everything is getting downloaded onto the family and any structural violence only registers as politically intelligible insofar as it affects people as family members, but a really thick account of they're taking our food, they're taking our water, they're taking our land, they're killing us for doing X, Y and Z normal civil society dissent things.

We don't really get that, I think, until Kira, in *DS9*. We get a little bit of it in this episode. But I agree with you that it's like really muted and privatized and personalized in this way. Whereas Kira is able to give us all of the registers of structural and violence, fast and slow, from the most intimate and embodied and immediate to the way that land is being commodified and value is being extracted and labor being extracted, etc., etc.

Andi: Yeah. This pivots us a little bit to both the Maquis and Bajor. So, we have talked about both of these groups in more depth before. So, we'll link the other episodes we discussed these in. But I don't think we can talk very much about terrorism and resistance in *Star Trek* without at least discussing these. The seeds for both of these resistances are in *TNG*, but they don't really flower until *DS9*.

I rewatched *The Wounded*. So, *The Wounded* is the episode in which a Starfleet captain goes rogue and starts attacking Cardassian, supposedly Cardassian civilian targets, which is why it was on my radar for this episode. And then, just is like, "No, they're arming themselves. They're getting ready for war. We have to fight back." That episode is also very much mired in this idea that violence is only justified if it's within the context of what is lawful. So, he defied Starfleet orders, therefore, it was wrong. Whereas if he had been given orders by Starfleet, it wouldn't have been wrong.

So, I find that to be an interesting to beginning to some of these storylines, because that is one of the first episodes in which we start to see how Starfleet's reaction to the Cardassians becomes extremely interesting, and in some ways is the beginning of *Star Trek* actually pushing back against the Federation as a concept. And so, yes, let's talk about *DS9*, where they actually do that a lot more. [chuckles]

Jarrah: Well, I did want to mention that *Journey's End*, I think, also sets up an important step in that ability to see the point of the Maquis. We have Wesley basically goes rogue in that episode, and that would be an example of indigenous resisters. But we have done other episodes on that, but I think it's important to mention that that's another key story moment.

Actually, there's a good novel trilogy called *Terok Nor* that's a prequel series for *Deep Space Nine*. A young Admiral Nechayev is stationed on Bajor building relationships there. And then, when the Cardassians occupy the planet, she's trying to convince the Federation to intervene and they won't. She is so wrecked by this experience. By trying to fight the establishment above her, she ends up getting basically promoted to uphold the system that she's been fighting against. And then, by the time of *Journey's End*, she's fully just, "I can't even with you, Picard." But in the novels, it's partly because it's shaped by her guilt that she couldn't do more on Bajor.

Andi: That's really interesting, because Admiral Nechayev is one of the-- and as a stand in for the Federation is someone that I did want to talk about when it came to the Maquis, because it was super interesting to me that she was just like, "Here's the orders. Execute them," to Sisko. She was the avatar for this out of touch Federation, which pushes Sisko to give his angry speech about how we don't live in paradise, like, "It's easy to be a saint if you live in paradise." The disconnect between Sisko and Federation and Starfleet in general is portrayed by her.

It's also *DS9* does this thing, where they're like, "What if the Federation is wrong?" I love it so much, [chuckles] because there are many times where I'm like, "Yeah. No, the Federation's totally wrong here." [chuckles]

Jarrah: Well, there's also some shifting attitudes towards the Maquis. I think on one hand, you have the way that Cassidy is treated where Sisko's mad about himself not realizing Cassidy is smuggling medical supplies for the Maquis. But even when she gets sent to prison, she's very unapologetic. He also is not really angry with her. It's just like, "I look forward to when you're back and we can hook up again," [Andi laughs] with some more deep moral overtones.

But then, there's also the whole thing with him in Eddington, where he feels so personally betrayed by Eddington, and the whole Les Mis analogy where Eddington [David chuckles] is trying to cast himself as Jean Valjean and Sisko as Javert. Sisko poisons an entire planet, the atmosphere of an entire planet, because he's so pissed off at Eddington. It's not a 100% questioned. Like, it's questioned, but it comes back to this attitude that we see in *Enterprise*, for sure, that this is a reasonable reaction, or reasonable given the stuff that these people are doing.

David: I wonder if the novel verse ever revisits that, because I know that the actions of *In The Pale Moonlight*, for instance, there's a whole novel by Una McCormack, the Great Una McCormack, [chuckles] I think is a past guest of this show, about that imagines possibilities for accountability for Sisko and Garak, at least to some degree. Federation citizens getting tired of the war back on Earth. But yeah, Sisko straight up commits ecocide and it's like, "It's is this ever dealt with?" [Jarrah laughs]

My question about the Maquis, I guess, and the way that we're talking about it here and the way that it's interesting, because it leads to interrogations of consolidated Federation power and how removed, I guess, Federation power is from the actual events on the ground-- I don't have answer here, but I think about two historical currents that I think are making this intelligible and attractive storyline, both for writers and for audiences.

One is *Star Trek's* debt to the Western, because you see in the Western as a genre, which then gets transposed into the space Western. There's often this like, "Okay. Well, we can trust the local sheriff, but we can't trust the feds." Or, maybe the local sheriff who has a heart of gold will look the other way on, the town sex worker or the town bandit who's a Robin Hood figure, because he knows what's actually going on in a way that you couldn't trust the federal government to do. There's that suspicion of the big bad government power out over there, but some trust in local knowledge.

And then, the second thing you see certainly by the time we get to the 1990s, is Liberals are accepting this right-wing message that big government is part of the problem and big government is bad. And so, a lot of functions of the welfare state that had historically been centralized, which had certain limitations. The welfare state was implemented in really exclusive ways often and with really narrow assumptions about what it means to be a deserving subject, but it's being farmed out to community organizations that are competing for grants, because those organizations are presumed to have more local knowledge or more accountability to the communities affected, which is sometimes true and sometimes not.

So, there's this broader turn away from big government and in favor of local knowledge that is in some ways an evergreen part of the American cultural and political story, but is also ramping up in the 1980s and 1990s in some ways that I think make like, "Yeah, the Federation, the Admirals, they just don't get it," which you see in *TNG* as well, in conspiracy or in figures like Jellico. [chuckles] There's this suspicion to the people imposed from on high in relation to these forms of local knowledge that are understood to be more intuitive, more immediate, more authentic and so on.

Jarrah: Yeah, that's a great point. I also wanted to mention on for the uniform. The way that Sisko justifies this is, is that the Maquis are developing biogenic weapons. So, we have a pre weapons of mass destruction justification. And they've attacked a Starfleet ship. And so, Sisko basically cites this general order says that, "You've proven that the Maquis have become an intolerable threat to the security of the Federation, and I am going to eliminate that threat." And Eddington goes, "But think about the people you saw in the caves, huddled and starving. They didn't attack the Malinche." And he goes, "You should have thought about that before you attacked a Federation starship." And then basically is like, "This is just the beginning. I'm going to destroy every Maquis colony." And in the end, he stops because Eddington turns over the biogenic weapons and himself.

But there's this scene where he gets back where Dax is just like, "You didn't clear that with Starfleet, did you?" And Sisko's like, "Oh, I know, I forgot to do something." She says something else, and he says, "Well, sometimes that's what it takes to be a good villain." And then, Dax says, "Sometimes I like it when the bad guy wins," and that's the end of the episode.

Andi: Okay. Bye. [laughs]

David: Yay. Collective punishment. [Andi laughs]

Jarrah: Yeah. But it's interesting because it's acknowledging he's being a bad guy, but it also is still justifying it on the basis of the Maquis leadership were developing biogenic weapons,

and therefore all of these people huddling in caves supporting them are subject to whatever violence happens.

Andi: The other thing that *DS9* does when we're talking about Bajor, is we actually have, as David referenced, a character that is a terrorist be our main character. We see a whole arc that spans seasons about her choices while fighting in the Bajoran resistance and how she has to, I guess, come to terms with those choices now that the Cardassian occupation is over.

I find her arc extremely fascinating and I find it very interesting how sympathetic it is to Kira, much in the same way that I was surprised at how sympathetic the *High Ground* was. And part of that, I feel like, is because I have watched these episodes post-9/11 and post the cultural shift in the American landscape. So, I didn't watch these episodes when they first aired. So, my reaction to them, I think, is a bit different than those that watched it in real time when they were first being aired.

David: Yeah. I'm trying to think about the historical context for their reception in real time. Because on the one hand, this is the 1990s. This is supposedly the end of history. There's this popular myth that the US doesn't have any major enemies. [chuckles] On the other hand, Hollywood is scrambling to try to find new enemies. Joanne Sharpe has written brilliantly about this. There's a pivot from the Russian commie to the drug dealer or the Arab terrorist, right?

Edward said in the late 1980s, that in the American imagination at this point, the terrorist is imagined, just assumed to be Arab by default, or the federal government itself, like we see in *Rambo*. I forget if it's the sheriff or in the first one or if it's federal government that Rambo goes after.

On the other hand, there is a little bit more openness. The first intifada is happening in Palestine in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Globally, that is one of the first moments. You can maybe say, in 1982. But really, globally, that is a moment when a lot of people in Western civil society are realizing in new ways, "Oh, there's a real power asymmetry here between Israel and Palestine. We can't just both sides are way out of dealing with our own complicity in this colonialism that's happening."

On the other hand, if you look at the fallout from something like the federal building bombing in Oklahoma City-- What was it, 1994, 1996? I think it's 1994, the response to that is incredibly racist and racialized. Timothy McVeigh is a Christian white nationalist. What do they do? They make it harder to immigrate to the United States. They do that in the name of national security. So, there are all of these swirling, contradictory currents.

We could also say something about their policy of bombing and starving Iraq throughout the 1990s, but it's not that the longer war on terror, as Erica Edwards would say, is not present, but it's certainly not as full throttle or as censorious as it becomes in the post-9/11 period. So, I think of *DS9*, not just as the bastard stepchild of 1990s *Star Trek* Ira Behr would say, but in some ways, a bastard stepchild of 1990s culture when these weird experiments were possible.

Jarrah: Well, one thing that I noticed as a common factor as well in some of the more sympathetic portrayals in *Star Trek* is when they are an allegory for things that are farther in the past and specifically anything that is related to resistance to the Nazis. So, the fact that the Maquis are named after a French Resistance group like Janeway leading the hologram French Resistance in *The Killing Game*. While we talked about certainly Bajorism at stand in for many different things, there were some early Season 1 episodes where some of those links were drawn, as well as they talked about considering the war in the former Yugoslavia

as another influencing factor that was active at the time. So, I think all of those things shaped it.

David and I and Grace talked more about this in our Bajoran episode. But when the Bajorans were first introduced, it was, at least to me, very clearly an allegory for Palestine. And then, when we got to the first season of *DS9* and we got to *Duet*, it shifted to an allegory of the Holocaust. They go back and forth. I think it's Ron Moore even says that "They are a stand in for any oppressed people."

David: I think there's something really beautiful and really powerful about letting the Bajorans be both, [laughs] you know?

Andi and Jarrah: Yeah.

David: Because we have seen in our own lifetimes how brave, and creative, and self-critical and self-reflective so many progressive Jewish people have been in connecting their own historical experiences related to the Shoah to an opposition to what is being done to the Palestinians.

I also think that the World War II and a particular rendition of the history of World War II. There's this general consensus that it was a good war, Liberals and Communists teaming up to fight fascists. Who could argue with that, well, other than fascists.

[laughter]

David: But what we remember about World War II and how that gets invoked, it has a particular shape, let's say, in the US context. We don't talk about Soviet casualties. [laughs] We don't talk about any war crimes that the Western alliance committed, say in *Dresden* or in Japan. It's a story in which we're the America's, the good guys. And that distorted version of World War II becomes a renewable resource, in a moment with broad disaffection with US military intervention abroad, like what did John Wayne do during Vietnam to try to shore up support for a war that he thought was justified against Communism. He made a World War II movie. That was the thing you did. And so, World War II, well, through the 1990s was renewable resource for moral legitimacy.

So, on the one hand, I think that is often done in a way that's trying to bolster contemporary US imperialism. On the other hand, in the case of the Bajorans, like I said, I think thinking about Jewish historical experience of the Third Reich in critical relation to Palestinian historical experience of the Nakba has the potential to lead to really important kinds of alliances, and coalitions and solidarities that refuse the way that certain suffering is selectively invoked to justify other suffering. So, there's something potentially productive about it, about World War II, being one of the things that's in the picture in that respect.

Andi: Agreed there. It's one reason why allegories can be so powerful, because they allow a distance that sometimes keeps people's minds open where they might shut. But it's interesting to dig in and be like, "Okay, but what are they really saying and what are they saying it about?" Like, "Which stories deserve this treatment and which don't? Which ones are effective and which ones are harmful?" There's so much to say about Bajorans.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: But that's why we did a whole episode about it. So, I do want to pivot a little bit to stay with *DS9*, but go to a different aspect of *DS9*.

So, one of the first episodes, a pair of episodes in this case that I thought of that I wanted to talk about was *Paradise Lost* and *Homefront*, which are the *DS9* episodes in which changelings are basically attacking Federation headquarters, and the Federation and Starfleet are reacting to that with a lot of security crackdowns. I find this episode fascinating, especially, specifically when it was made, because I feel like this is basically a 9/11 episode that was made prior to 9/11.

Jarrah: Yeah. Because it's in this whole part of *Deep Space Nine* where they're dealing with these, randomized blood screenings for changelings. It feels very much like the post-9/11 racial profiling. Not that racial profiling is new, but that degree of racial profiling when you're crossing the border, the more recent lists of countries with more travel restrictions and things like that.

Andi: Yeah. I was thinking about it. The security feeder, you have to take your shoes off at the airport, because one guy had a shoe bomb. that sort of thing like that, that definitely had that tone to it. But I think even more than that-- I think what that episode is trying to say in, and what I take from it is sometimes your reaction to the attack does more harm to your society than the attack did. I think that's absolutely what post-9/11 says to me about how America reacted and the way that American society changed was they damaged themselves more than the terrorists did.

Jarrah: Yeah. Because you see in *Paradise Lost* and *Homefront*, there's both the situation where random members of the public are attacking people they think are changelings, which we definitely saw post-9/11 of people essentially being brown in some cases, like Sikh or other folks from other backgrounds just being assaulted on trains and things. We also see that they're at Sisko's dad's restaurant, and there's Starfleet people patrolling the street, and after they institute martial law and yeah, that again, what have we lost here in the name of security?

David: Yeah. I think this use of an emergency to justify state overreach is, in some ways, as old as modern states themselves, the part of Nazis came in, was saying, "We're going to suppress the threat of communism," which they understood as a terrorist threat. There was quite a bit of anarchist terrorism in the West in the first couple decades of the 20th century. So, thinking about the 1990s too, I do think like, what were the writers working through about their own childhoods in the 1970s when they were writing this in the 1990s? Like, what kinds of state of exception? Certainly, law and order is a huge discourse. I know that Richard Nixon is a recurring bugbear for Ira Behr. Right?

[laughter]

Andi: Fair, honestly.

David: Yeah. Oh, absolutely.

Andi: Yeah. I think what it says about some of the things that the *DS9* writers chapped into is it resonated with me as a millennial who grew up post-9/11 as a 9/11 story. But it really is a timeless reaction. Both the attack and the reaction to the attack is something we've seen play out for human history.

So, it's one of those things where it's just like, they weren't prescient. It's just that history repeats. [laughs] But even with that caveat like they did, I think this is a really effective pair of episodes that I enjoy a lot. But speaking of post-9/11, I think we do have to talk about *Enterprise*. It's been a long road.

[laughter]

David: It certainly has. [chuckles]

Andi: Yeah. Because I feel like *TNG* had a certain viewpoint and *DS9* had a certain viewpoint, and they shared some commonalities but took different framing in some ways. But I feel like *Enterprise* is a whole new ball game, it's a whole new production era and it is our first post-9/11 *Star Trek* series.

Jarrah: They don't play baseball in *Enterprise*. They play water polo. So, it's a whole new water polo game.

Andi: Okay. Fair. Fair.

Jarrah: I would say that, yeah, you're right that there's a bit of a different standpoint that I think it's more what has been what was lost, is that ability to determine the Federation stance on a position based on the story needs. Because this was the time when it became more verboten to really examine in any way kinds of the causes of these things, or whatever systems of oppression. There is some of that in *Enterprise*, but really there's have two big season long arcs that are themed around types of terrorism, and they're interconnected as well as a whole bunch of random one offs. So, there's a one off which is one of the earlier depictions called *Desert Crossing*, where it takes place in a desert, so you can guess what type of terrorists it's allegorying.

[laughter]

Jarrah: This group is trying to convince Archer to bring the *Enterprise* into their fight, because they've heard that the *Enterprise* has been so great at fighting the Suliban. And ultimately, they agree like, "Your cause is sympathetic, but we could never do this, if only we had some prime directive to guide us."

[laughter]

Jarrah: "But we can't essentially move towards violence in this situation." But they do wonder, would this have been a situation where the Prime Directive future thing that doesn't exist yet should have allowed it. So, that feels more-- In spite of some of the colonial representational problematic elements in this episode, and the fact that there is a shirtless desert lacrosse type game. It is a more like TNGE message. But that's potentially debatable. It's not a very good episode.

[laughter]

Andi: What?

Jarrah: But the really key 9/11 parallel comes into place at the end of Season 2, when at the time we don't know who attacks Earth, but there's an attack on Earth where this weapon burns a swath of land between Florida and Venezuela, and kills about seven million people, including Trip Tucker's sister. But they get this message that the people that attacked them are called the Xindi, and they believe that Earth is going to destroy their home world in 400 years from then in the 26th century. So, they're preemptively building a weapon of mass destruction that will destroy the Earth.

There are many moments like it's mostly through Trip, because he's got the personal loss. But even Archer, where there's repeated mentions of, basically, "This is the appropriate response to what they did to us." There's an episode where they are boarded by pirates, and they capture them and Archer has to debate whether it's reasonable to put someone in an

airlock and leak the air to get answer out of them which is clearly a waterboarding parallel. So, all of these debates were really mirroring what was happening at the time. But in my view, the discourse of *Enterprise* is not particularly interested in the nuances of the discussion.

David: You highlighted the pre-emptive nature of the Xindi attack, which I knew, but had forgotten about, to be honest. But what it made me wonder is, to what extent is *Enterprise*, or is that arc a fantasy of like, what if Earth were the victim of a preemptive strike, given, what happened in Iraq? You're making me think of-- David Higgins has this book, *Reverse Colonization*, about how the far right loves science fiction and is often looking for evidence in popular science fiction of white people being the victims of colonialism to entertain their own fantasies of persecution. [chuckles]

Because it really is Trip's pain. Even though it's his sister in Florida is the one who dies, it's like this centering of white masculine injury. That is the index or evidence of the brutality of this preemptive attack. But I had never quite considered before that in that way. Do you know what I'm saying? It puts the Xindi in the position of the US [unintelligible [01:00:17], just in that one respect.

Jarrah: Mm-hmm. Well, and it also one question I had was, does this count as terrorism? I guess they're saying because they didn't declare war first and tell us they were going to attack us. [David chuckles] But the Xindi have a council that's made up of the different factions, and they are attacking them based on-- It turns out to be false intelligence. But they have this intelligence that in the future, humans are going to destroy them.

So, the parallel here is they aren't so much casting the Xindi as particular groups in the Middle East, but it's the parallel to the attack of 9/11, and how the Enterprise crew and how Starfleet responds to this and these debates about like, what is a justifiable response here? But until the end and even there, it's pretty light. They're very centered on the perspective of, like you were saying, the wronged party here, the party that endured this tragedy and not so interested in really telling us a lot about the Xindi other than that they were manipulated into receiving this information.

At the end of the season, they have this information, and there's someone who's trying to convince Archer, like try to find a diplomatic solution, show them they've been manipulated. And at that stage, he's like, "No, I've had it. Plan's too far gone. We just have to end this thing." It ends up that, like, that he gets foiled and captured and then he does end up having to try to find a diplomatic solution. But then, the factions start attacking each other.

But there's this point where, yeah, comes around to this type of, "Okay, but *Star Trek* wants you to negotiate." [David laughs] There's no negotiating with terrorists, which is the-- That was like, another narrative of the time, right?

David: For sure.

Andi: It's interesting that a preemptive strike based on false intelligence.

[laughter]

David: Ring any bells?

Andi: Oh, yeah. That's an interesting way to frame that. The other thing I was thinking about when you were talking about that, Jarrah, is would this be considered terrorism? I think that that's an interesting question, because based on-- This goes to what some of the flaws we

pointed out in the definition at the beginning, which is, what is unlawful. So, was it lawful by the Xindi standards or by ours? You know what I mean?

Jarrah: What's a political aim in this case? They're not trying to change the Earth government. They're trying to destroy the planet. So, it's not saying it's good, but it's a little bit of an odd situation as a parallel.

I did want to highlight an episode that happens in this third season that is not about the Xindi, but does get into a more direct allegory about terrorism linked to religious extremism, because the Xindi are not motivated by that. There's an episode called *Chosen Realm* where it's basically the *Enterprise* version of *Let that Be Your Last Battlefield*, the classic original series episode with the half black, half white aliens, except for you have religious factions. Thing that it turns out about them is that they're suicide bombers.

So, one of them blows himself up, and kills one of the *Enterprise* crew members and they take over the ship. So, they go back to the planet, and it turns out the planet has been totally razed and there's nothing left. And the two groups, much like *Let that Be Your Last Battlefield*, have essentially killed each other off. And then, they ask basically, "Why do you think they're heretics?" Or, like, "What's the difference between your groups?" And the guy goes, "Oh, well, we believe that the creators made the sphere in 9 days and they think it was 10."

Andi: Well, that's definitely worth it.

Jarrah: Yeah. So, this is also not considered a great episode. But part of the problem is even *Let that Be Your Last Battlefield*, which was 40 years earlier. Well, not quite. 30 odd years earlier, had more nuance than this episode where they had Bele and Lokai, and they had them talking about, "They didn't let our children go to school, they like blocked us from jobs," that kind of stuff. This is literally just acting religious wars happen, because someone has such a tiny difference and there's no other interest in, "Okay, but what are the other factors that triggered this?"

When you look at actual religious wars, it's seldom ever just about a point that fine. It's also about land and power and wealth and other types of things like that. So, that was to me quite a missed opportunity, and just comes to this whole religious extremism is bad and will destroy everything. While that on the face of it, not a message I disagree with. I don't love religious extremism, but I also think there's more to it than really tiny points of doctrine.

Andi: Well, also the point of *Let That Be Your Last Battlefield* was that it was stupid.

Jarrah: Yeah.

Andi: That was part of it. Obviously, it seems like they were trying to recreate that just being like, "Look guys, it's actually not that serious. You can let it go. But you need an underpinning for that."

David: In a way it just ends up flattering the audience, like simultaneously telling the audience like, "You are more rational and wise than these silly people." But then, it also gives the audience license to be incurious [chuckles] about all the factors you just named Tara around politics and history, political economy empire. [chuckles]

Jarrah: Yeah. I'll just briefly mention that Season 4 pivots and says, basically, the result of this entire thing, is that humans have become more xenophobic. And so, then, there's the rise of a terrorist group called Terra Prime that wants all aliens gone from Earth. And so, this is something like we see in a few different *Star Treks* are these xenophobic alien purity or species purity groups, I guess.

And in this case, then it still is interesting though, because there's a point at the beginning of this season where Phlox is assaulted on Earth by someone who is now xenophobic. He basically brushes it off as like, "Well, look what they had to go through." And it's like, "No, it's not actually okay."

[laughter]

Jarrah: So, later on they deal with this group after a whole bunch of shenanigans. But that would be a case of going back to that. Sometimes, these groups are portrayed more as parallels to a group that thinks the state isn't oppressive enough.

Andi: So, when I was thinking through what I wanted to do for this episode, I told a friend of mine who's a Trekkie that we were doing an episode on terrorism and resistance in *Star Trek*, he was like, "How are you going to have time to talk about everything?" And I'm like-

Jarrah: "We're not."

Andi: -"We're not."

[laughter]

Andi: I was like, "Oh, that's easy. We're not going to." But before we wrap up, I wanted to see if there were any one-off episodes that we wanted touch on before we wrapped up. I did want to say that I wish that force of nature, the *TNG* episode about ecoterrorism was better.

Jarrah: Oh, yeah.

Andi: Because I feel like that is an episode *TNG* absolutely should have tackled and could have tackled really well. Unfortunately, the execution was just not there. But I feel like *Star Trek* should, in this era, really start exploring that, because I feel like we are going to be seeing that more as climate change continues to ramp up. And again, as people die to the violence of climate change that world governments are ignoring, especially the American government. I feel like eco-terrorism is going to be something we see more of. Honestly, going back to what is violence, there's the one group that throws what, paint on works of art, like masterpieces.

David: Soup.

Andi: Yes, Soup. That's right, Soup against like famous paintings, and they're like, "You care more about these paintings than our planet." There's been a lot of discussion about these kinds of tactics and whether they're helpful or not. At the same time, no person was harmed. So, I think that these kinds of conversations are going to be even more necessary in the coming like decade or two.

Jarrah: I do think that *Thirty Days* is a slightly more watchable eco-terrorism episode where Paris is supporting this alien society that is essentially going their version of oil crazy, where they're destroying their planet to refine oxygen. He joins a group to try to blow up an oxygen refinery, so that they have to adopt this cleaner but more expensive technology that they refuse to do otherwise.

He gets put in the brink for *Thirty Days*. And Janeway's ultimately like, "You're being demoted and you're going to get a letter on your file. I admire your motives, but not your methods." That would be another case where it essentially would be property violence. But it's also just a more interesting episode, I think.

Andi: Also, I think it goes to a general discomfort with certain kinds of tactics that are direct that I feel like is very prevalent in liberal thought, especially, where it's that whole like, "I agree with that you have a cause, but way you're going about resisting is uncomfortable to me. Therefore, you're pushing away allies that you could have." And it's like, "Okay, but what are you doing as an ally?"

Jarrah: Yeah. Well, and I think in both these episodes, in *Thirty Days*, they show they science a better option for the planet and they refuse to do it and they present it to them. I think in *Force of Nature*, they've also been flagging this issue for the Federation and the Federation's just not doing anything about it. So, there are episodes in *Star Trek* where they show that this is an escalation, but it didn't start there.

David: Part of me wondered if the whole burn arc in *Discovery* was an attempt to revisit *Force of Nature*, but it wasn't very direct if it was.

Jarrah: Well, and I feel like there's many, many, many examples and we certainly won't get time to go through them. I will say what I think is the best earliest example, is *The Cloud Minders* with the miners.

David: Yeah.

Jarrah: But we've also, I think, done maybe a whole episode on that or we've just, for sure, talked about it. But that's another one where they discuss the structural oppression that's taking place and they do find a peaceful scientific solution, but they're not outright condemning the miners for the efforts that they're trying to make to, I guess, free themselves from, in their case, being poisoned by gas that's making them less intelligent, so that they can just serve in the mines the rest of their life.

Andi: Yeah. The number one thing that I took from a high-level view of *Star Trek* and this topic is very much that *Star Trek* is willing to be sympathetic and explore the motivations behind what prompts certain terrorist actions sometimes. But that it's not applied evenly throughout the series, which makes sense. Also, that ultimately it doesn't like to make definitive statements and has too much of an instinct to just fly away at the end and never address it again. *Force of Nature* is a great example of that too. Like, nothing happens.

David: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Andi: So, I feel like, this is honestly better than the general American media in trying to take a nuanced look at this topic. But it definitely has more that it could explore, and more deeply and ultimately doesn't really take a stance.

Jarrah: Yeah. Which I get it's hard to make definitive statements about the things that they're extruding from the origin very definitively. But I think that I appreciate the types of questions that it can prompt and the type of discussion that it can provide, because I think that it's worth making ourselves a little bit uncomfortable to think and talk about these things.

Andi: Agreed. Well, we did not talk about every instance of terrorism-

[laughter]

Andi: -in *Star Trek*, but I think that we did try to at least take a high-level view of it all. So, I appreciate very much having this conversation with you all and thanks again, David, for joining us. Always wonderful to have you.

David: My pleasure. Thank you. Thrilled to be here.

Andi: Before we wrap up, did you want to shoutout where people can find you on the internet?

David: Oh, yeah, I suppose. [Andi laughs] I am on Instagram at [@seizofresistance](#). But the main thing would just be to buy the book, *A Different Trek: Radical Geographies of Deep Space Nine*. It's on pretty much all the major online booksellers. You can also buy it direct from the University of Nebraska Press, which is probably the best thing to do, because then you can support a public university press.

Andi: Very cool. That's about all the time we have today. To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit [womenatwarp.com](#), email us at crew@womenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook or Instagram, [@womenatwarp](#). Thanks so much for listening.

[Women at Warp theme]

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