

## Women at Warp Episode 54: Indigenous Representation in Star Trek

\*\*INTRO MUSIC\*\*

Jarrah: Hi and welcome to Women at Warp, join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name's Jarrah, and thanks for tuning in! Today with us we have a little bit of a different format than usual, but I'm super excited about it. We basically have an awesome panel, and I'm going to introduce them and we are going to be talking about indigenous representation in Star Trek. So first we have Sierra Adare-Tasiwoopa Api.

Sierra: That was great.

Jarrah: We also have Molly Swain.

Molly: Hello.

Jarrah: And Chelsea Vowel.

Chelsea: Hi there.

Jarrah: And David Holquinn.

David: Hello.

Jarrah: So, before we get into our main topic I just have to do our usual housekeeping to remind you of the Women at Warp Patreon. Women at Warp is a listener supported podcast, and if you are able to support us and want to help out you can donate as little as a dollar a month at <https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp>, and in exchange you get access to cool exclusive bonus content and watch alongs, and things like that. So, hop on over to <https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp> to help us keep the show going. All right. So, as I said we're going to be talking about indigenous representation in Star Trek, and I wanted to get our guests to tell us a little bit about yourselves and your relationship to Star Trek. So, I'll start with Sierra.

Sierra: Well, I've been a science fiction fan all my life, and in particular with Star Trek since the original show aired on NBC. What fascinated me the most about the show was the fact that there was a woman of color on the bridge, she was a bridge officer. That to me was just phenomenal. And it really meant that there was a possibility of being able to be more than just the secretary, or the teacher, or housekeeper, or things like that. And despite the stereotypes of the women in the miniskirt things, it did provide a great role model and even in the first Indian episode "The Paradise Syndrome" [TOS Season 3, Ep. 3] which had its own issues with stereotypes, but at least it showed indigenous people that were living normal lives rather than running around killing settlers or fighting with the cavalry or the cowboys.

Jarrah: And you actually authored a really awesome book that I have plugged several times on this podcast called "*Indian*" Representation in TV Science Fiction: First Nations' Voices Speak out, is that correct?

Sierra: "*Indian*" Stereotypes

Jarrah: Yes, and it is awesome. Could you tell us a little bit about that process?

Sierra: Yes. Basically when *Voyager* was airing several friends and I would gather to watch it, and two of them were from Plains Nations and some from some other Nations, and of course this led to some very lively discussions about the stereotypes that were depicted through the character of Chakotay. And from where these “stock” stereotypes actually originated. Being from diverse indigenous Nations we all each found different inaccuracies, and brought them to light in our discussions of the various episodes. And this kind of sparked my curiosity and led me to seek out other Indian episodes in TV science fiction, obviously my favorite genre, so I was just ecstatic that Nick at Nite and TV Land are airing these vintage science fiction series. So, I started looking for them and taping them and showing them to my friends, and us discussing them, and all of this led to what eventually became my book, *“Indian” Stereotypes In TV Science Fiction*. And it gave indigenous peoples in particular a voice in what was going on in Hollywood, in what was going on on television, and there wasn't much of an avenue for indigenous peoples to actually put their voice out there.

Jarrah: It's a really cool book and everyone should read it, and we're going to talk probably a little bit more about it later, but let me get to Molly. Can you tell listeners a little bit about yourself?

Molly: **\*\*in native language\*\*** tânisî, Molly Swain nitisiyihkâson, otôskwanihk nitohcîn. **\*\*in English\*\*** So, hi, I'm Molly, I'm from Calgary in Alberta and I'm one half of the podcast Métis In Space which I do with Chelsea. So, it's an indigenous feminist science fiction podcast, and we do, what we do is very similar actually to Sierra's book. Basically, we hang out, we get together, you know in between Chelsea's pregnancies we both drink wine, or I just drink wine and when we're a little bit tipsy together, we watch a science fiction TV episode or movie that has something to do with Indigenous people, and indigenous representation and then we just talk about it usually eviscerate it. So, my relationship to Star Trek is 100 percent my favorite show. I did not actually grow up watching it. I came to it as an adult, but was completely and immediately hooked on it. I have to say TOS is my super-fave with DS9 coming in a close second, because of how they talk about colonialism and that decolonization, and all of the politics and the drama on how that kind of thing might play out. Yeah, I'm trying to think of what else, I just love Star Trek so much.

Chelsea: I know, you watch it so much.

Molly: I watch it every day.

Chelsea: Like literally every single day just binge watches episodes.

Jarrah: It's important. It's good self-care.

Molly: Yeah, absolutely.

Jarrah: And, what about you Chelsea?

Chelsea: **\*\*in native language\*\*** tânisî, Chelsea Vowel nitisiyihkâson êkwa manitow-sâkahikanihk nitohcîn. **\*\*in English\*\*** So, I'm from Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta, and my relationship to Star Trek is, so I you know, I didn't grow up with the original series so much, I mean there were some reruns on, but we just had Farmer Vision, so we had like whatever three channels, and so the Next Generation became our sort of family show to watch, like one of the few things that I would sit down with my family watch, and just

became hooked on that. And I would say that sort of like the origin of my love of Sci-Fi was was definitely the Next Generation. So, from there flowed everything else.

Jarrah: That's awesome. And yes everyone should definitely check out Métis In Space. It is an awesome podcast and super fun to listen to, and just provides I think a really important perspective on a lot of this media that we know and love. So, David do you want to tell people a little bit about yourself? I mean I know David because he used to co-host the All Things Trek podcast with our Women at Warp crew member Grace, so that was originally how we met, but what else should the audience know about you and your relationship to Star Trek?

David: Well first my connection to this topic is that I am of native descent. I have mostly on my paternal side, I have Apache from my paternal grandfather and Cherokee from my paternal grandmother, and then on my mom's side it's all Spanish and Armenian and other things, but I do get native heritage from my father's side, but I wasn't raised into it. It was something I had to seek out on my own in my teens and twenties and I was a whole journey of discovery. My connection to Star Trek is basically through my mom, I kind of say I was a Trekkie in the womb. She grew up in the 60s, and she's told this story before and I'll do it in a very condensed version of it, but she was in high school right around the Vietnam War, and a lot of their friends were shipping over there and every day on the news they would you know cover the war, but they would also in the local news say who was killed, you know recently, and it was a lot of people that they knew either from school or the community, and it just really hit her hard. And so, she totally just disconnected from the media, she was raising my older brother and then on a chance she happened to find Star Trek, and it just was an instant click for her that she saw the inclusion, the diversity, and she said that she could see like the surface of it, the cool zap guns, and you know spaceships, but she could also catch the the Roddenberry message behind it. And so for me personally, I just grew up with Star Trek in the house. I grew up watching the reruns in the 70s, then the animated series, I was there day one for the Next Generation, day one DS9, and I've just pretty much, Star Trek has been a part of my life ever since then. And, recently, also part of Trek radio which is a 24/7 online radio station dedicated to Star Trek and the greater Sci-Fi community and that's just furthered my love of Trek even more.

Jarrah: Cool. So, I want to let you guys you know go whichever way you want with this discussion, but just start off some questions to kind of get us started. So, Sierra, I already asked you a little bit about your book, but I was wondering what you thought was some of the most important feedback from your indigenous focus group participants when you were doing this book.

Sierra: Well, when I was growing up my parents did everything they possibly could to de-emphasize our Indian-ness, because it was really a rough time to be "other." And in particular to be "indigenous other." My father was Choctaw and Cherokee, my mother was Cherokee and it was it was very difficult. And so, when I was talking to other people about Star Trek and particularly the Indian episodes in science fiction, the main feedback was particularly with the Star Trek episodes, that showing that indigenous peoples and cultures were alive and well in the 23rd and the 24th centuries was something that was very important to people that had been basically growing up trying to stay invisible. And the cultures were practiced underground, and to have that ability to say "yes we're going to be there we're going to be a part of the future" was a really important thing for all of the people that I interviewed for my book, and in between times as well. So, I think that was one of the main things. But along with that was the questioning about the origins of the stereotypes, and why they were so pervasive, and the the fact that I have participants that their emotions range anywhere from sadness to outright anger about the lack of respect that was shown indigenous traditions and cultures within the episodes. Especially the lack of preparation for

ceremonies, and the trying to display some aspects of sacred ceremonies on television, and the participants really wishing that the TV shows would just flat steer clear of sacred ceremonies altogether.

Jarrah: Yeah, I remember that. You talked a bit about “The Paradise Syndrome”, no wait, “Journey’s End” [TNG Season 7, Ep. 20], the TNG episode, and it seemed like overall participant's kind of like, liked a lot about that episode and how it showed defiance to colonialism, but that there was a big concern around Wesley taking part in the sacred ceremony, and having it all engineered by this white guy the Traveler.

Sierra: Yes, that was definitely one of the areas where they were just insinged that this Indian person who who the actor was actually native, which was wonderful, but then he he transforms into this Traveler who is a white person. That and then then chooses Wesley Crusher the white guy...

Molly: The whitest guy.

Chelsea: Always, always.

Sierra: To impart this indigenous knowledge to, it was very, in something that had been up to that point so well done, as far as touching on issues of removal, and even that the planet Dorvan V welcoming the indigenous people when when they moved there, and the importance of that, in that conversation that Picard had with the Indigenous Council, and the that part was being so well done. And then you get the traveller in the Wesley, and it's just like “ugh”. So, it was kind of that was the pinnacle of the best of the episodes that then ended up showing some of the aspects of the worst parts of the indigenous episodes.

Jarrah: For sure. Does anyone else have any thoughts on “Journey’s End” do you want to chime in with at this point?

Molly & Chelsea: Oh my goodness, so many thoughts.

Molly: I think when Chelsea and I did the episode for the podcast I think what we're focusing on actually was kind of like liberal humanist multicultural politics of the Federation and of Starfleet and how those play out in real life. One of the things that I find really interesting about Star Trek in particular Roddenberry's specific version of Star Trek is I think it really shows the weakness of that kind of like liberal humanist tolerance based framework. Right? And like “Journey's End” I think is a really good episode to highlight what some of those limitations are. Because you see Picard who is very much you know representative of all of those values, you know he's like a stuffy white guy who has this really specific sense of morality. He's a diplomat, he's an explorer, you know all these things that the Federation really really values and now he's trying to navigate all of these things that you know he himself is such a nice guy, he really wants to help, but he's constrained by all these outside forces you know, like what does he do, how does he make these decisions, like, oh no, you know it's all about kind of his angst. You know well Wesley Crusher's kind of finding himself and his special Indian powers, you have Picard on the other end trying to navigate all these politics.

Chelsea: But, also his family history, right? He's just so gutted to find out that some of his ancestors were involved in removals centuries ago, right. And it's just, so it's just talking about this stain you know on his hands and everything. Should I be, should I feel bad about that, should I feel bad about what my ancestors did, which is you know like the typical white problem, right, are we responsible for the sins of our ancestors? While he's like in middle of the exact same situation, right like it's not even about the sins of your ancestors is what you're still doing.

Molly: Yeah, and I also believe that you know these justifications happen, and even though just as Chelsea mentioned it happens over and over again, the justifications are different right the scene is different the environments different, now there's phasers, there's warp, there's everything else but...

Chelsea: The justifications are not that different. You know it's still about like protecting, you know it's couched in these terms of like you know, we have to make these hard decisions and we're protecting them, and you know where we're taking their best interests into heart as much as we can within the wider sphere of everybody, we have to move on everybody, right, we can't just worry about the Indians.

Molly: It's the greater good, the greater good!

Chelsea: The liberalism of the greater good, right, justifying all of these ,kind of like horrific things that end up going on, but always centered around sort of like the you know the the white people. You know what are they doing how are they feeling, how are they responding to these things.

Sierra: It's the colonialism. It's these two colonial powers making these arbitrary decisions about where the lines and the boundaries are going to be. It's the same thing between the United States and Canada. When they put the border in there, and it was literally through the Mohawk Nation, and then telling the Haudenosaunee well that the border is going to be 12 feet in the air, so that you can flow freely back and forth across the border, and that's a bunch of baloney.

Molly: It's like, don't walk on stilts across the border, or you're going to have problems.

Sierra: Exactly.

Molly: That would be an awesome part of Jay Treaty.

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Chelsea: You have to cross the border on stilts.

Jarrah: Yeah, and I mean it's an interesting contradiction because you know we have the Prime Directive which in this, isn't really applying to this episode, but it seems to be coming out of this liberal humanist viewpoint that you know we understand we did bad things, so here's how we would prevent this in the future, but then this episode kind of shows like it doesn't actually, and even still like I mean the Prime Directive is a big topic, but it implies that we still are on the right path, and the superior path.

Molly: Yeah this idea of like linear progression, like this development, you know, we're always moving forward, we're always pushing further, the final frontier keeps you know like we need to keep pushing towards it, you know, for these specific reasons of progress.

Chelsea: Yeah I really like the thing about the border making, too because that's really interesting because they don't show indigenous people in that episode doing anything but being on the defensive, right. When you look at a lot of the histories, particularly between Canada and the US, like indigenous people when that border was laid down, they really started playing with it, and they really started mobilizing that border, and building power on that border, to maneuver like politically and economically, to ensure like you know safety, and prosperity etc. etc. as much as they could, right, but a lot of the time

these episodes as indigenous people are being threatened in some way, and so they're on the defensive, right. It's always like protectionist.

David: And there's another layer, there's two things going on when I watched that episode, because there's definitely the colonization and the two outside forces trying to make decisions for the native people, but the other theme that is going on is forced relocation, and that's another theme that comes up in the film "Insurrection" where they talk about move moving to Ba'ku off of, and they're not depicted as natives or indigenous, but that forced relocation theme comes up again, and I was another another layer that I really appreciated being addressed, but not you know enacted that they didn't have to go through with the forced relocation. I like basically "Journey's End" is my favorite of the native indigenous episodes, but I still have some issues with it because, and there's a larger issue that that maybe we could get into later on but, the indigenous characters and especially what we later learned is the traveler, he's talking about specific aspects of their culture that he's telling to Wesley, and he mentions basically a sweat lodge type scenario but he calls it a Habak or something and I started looking up these words, like what is he saying, what nation does that come from, and I couldn't place it, and that was because they are pretty much made up, but then at the same time when he went, Anthwara is talking to Picard he mentions the specific Pueblo Revolt of 1680, and the Spanish in New Mexico, so I'm like, that's real history, like they're tying it into actual reality of US history. But then on the flip side, they're kind of like fudging what they're telling to Wesley and maybe that's because the traveler really don't know what he's talking about, I mean there's theories about that but, I remember reading that initially they wanted to make the whole episode revolve specifically around the Hopi and the Cucina dolls, but then it got changed later in the script and so there's even within the best episode for native representation, indigenous representation, there are still some issues there too.

Chelsea: Yeah homogenization is like really, really classic I think. From what, you know, we've been able see anyway across science fiction and fantasy, and speculative fiction, right it's like it's not really necessarily about indigenous people as people, it's what we represent as symbols and what, like you know, sci-fi, good sci-fi is all about working through different problems, right. It's about people working together through problems and trying to answer the big questions, right, and so, you know living in ongoing colonial societies, indigenous people are still one of those big issues that you know the mainstream is trying to wrap its head around and figure out how to essentially deal with the you know "Indian problem." And so, it's not about us as people, who are like full human beings who you know have our own agency, it's about you know what do we represent, what are these images. And so, it's like we're kind of this exotic, almost like a homegrown exotic that you can slap these aesthetics on, and you can like make up you know languages and make up whole tribes and whole nations sometimes, right, and you know it doesn't matter because it's not actually about us.

Molly: We're just a plot device right. It's either to me make people feel guilty or to like provide redemption. You know and in Wesley's case like to you know it's always the white guy who becomes more Indian than the Indians right. Like he's... We're how you find yourself, in one way or another.

Sierra: And then he out Indians the Indians...

Molly & Chelsea: Always!

Sierra: Kirk is the perfect example with that one. I'm a better Indian than the Indians are.

Molly: I am Kirok!

**\*\*laughter\*\***

David: Well, and that's another thing to me that also echoed the stories about the Aztecs and the South American indigenous people treating the Conquistadores as gods and then you see Kirk actually come out of the obelisk, and they're calling him a god. But again, it's like hit and miss because they're trying to be you know positive about it, or inclusive, but then in that episode "The Paradise Syndrome" when they first see the natives, the indigenous people across the water, Spock references the Navajo, Mohican, and Delaware but then they're all in generic fringe you know made up attire, there's teepees which none of the three nations that he mentioned lived in teepees. So, it's like you know they're mentioning real Native Nations again, but then they're also like they fall short again. And then another thing to really rubbed me the wrong way even back when I was seeing it you know in reruns, is that Spock also calls them some of the more advanced tribes. The more advanced and peaceful tribes, but then later in the episode Kirk is explaining to Miramane the concept of irrigation, and food preservation, which to me it's like for one native, indigenous people already knew about agriculture and irrigation and all food preservation. But then for Spock to call them these are the more advanced natives, and then Kirk still has to teach them about an oil lamp and irrigation, I was just like, it just, yeah...

Jarrah: And she can't take off his shirt.

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Molly: Yeah, well I mean that's the thing though, right? I think it speaks more to what settlers and invaders think as being my good qualities of the good Indians, then you know what's actually going on right. Like the more advanced peaceful tribes probably in this case, mean the ones who are like more welcoming to colonizer. Not not necessarily saying that the Mohicans and the Delaware were, but you know that's that's sort of the good Indian right, Chelsea calls it pointing the finger, right so like the white people point the finger and these are good Indians, and these are the bad Indians, and Miramane in particular is like always the good Indian. She's passive, she's like hypersexualized, she wants take off his shirt, even though she can't figure it out, right, everything the seller.

Sierra: Oh yes, she's the ultimate fantasy of Indian woman. Even right down to the fact that the Indian woman who marries the White Guy **must die**. It is a given in Hollywood they must die.

Chelsea: Yeah. And I actually read something about that, apparently originally she wasn't going to die but the network made them rewrite the script because they were worried about implications of mysogynation, right, so like this half-breed kid being born and then like Kirk just like effing off the planet, right. They couldn't have that, so she has to die.

Sierra: Exactly.

Chelsea: Wild.

Jarrah: And then, of course she dies because her you know sort of a spurned lover and half the rest of the people there decide to stone them to death. So, it goes against this whole you know image they were trying to create anyway of like look at this peaceful paradise, but actually they're all just savages.

Chelsea??: But that's the thing is there's the fear of the savage Indian of the inherent violence of indigenous peoples is always there. It's there like in every episode that we've seen, you know and it's even when Picard is talking about like moving them, and the relocation and all that, underneath is that fear that that you know the natives are going to get restless. And so it's all about sort of like controlling the inherent violence of Indigenous Peoples, you know, and it never looks like you know why might indigenous peoples react in certain ways, it's just like that that's just you know our state of being is we can only be violent and it's always there bubbling under the surface, so even when we're just getting together and playing bingo or whatever, you know it's like the threat of violence is there.

Sierra: Oh yes anytime like that Indigenous people gather it it makes white people uncomfortable.

Chelsea: Oh totally, yes totally.

Molly: And I was going to say, bingo can get pretty rowdy, I mean have you seen someone who calls out to soon? Not good! Have you seen those old ladies with twelve bingo cards? Like you've got to have a perimeter!

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Jarrah: So, let's talk a little bit about Chakotay.

Molly: Oh, god.

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Jarrah: So, I mean Chakotay is the only major indigenous recurring character we've had in Star Trek, which is kind of disappointing. I feel like indigenous and LGBT representation are the areas where Star Trek has fallen down the most, and they're basically like there's efforts to rectify the LGBTQ situation, but not so much on the indigenous front, but Chakotay, trying to do a good thing. How do you guys think it worked? I particularly want to start with Chelsea and Molly and your thoughts on "Tattoo" [VOY Season 2, Ep. 9].

Chelsea: Oh man, it's got, there's so much packed in there, too. Okay, what I do appreciate about this is that it's a slightly different narrative than we have you know in "Paradise" and "Journey". It's sort of this idea of the native person who is torn between modernity and their own culture and so it kind of very clumsily deals with that. But he's just like he's such a little turd as a kid, right. He's just like insufferable, as, I don't know if you noticed, but as like children are in Star Trek by the way, like they're all just these insufferable little turds, except for Jake Sisko, I like Jake Sisko, I would totally be buds with that guy. But anyway, that's another discussion. But, yeah, and so you know he's sort of like "I don't want to do this I want to use my buddies and everything." But, then like as an adult he just suddenly sort of gets this opportunity to rediscover the wealth and meaning of his culture and he just like goes all in, you know just like he's like right to have these memories and they're going to come forward and now I'm going to be the super Indian and just like redemption is the most Indian Indian ever. Yeah. Also, I am I feel like I'm probably the only person who didn't know this, but I didn't realize that Robert Beltran wasn't indigenous until like a year ago. I was devastated.

Molly: Yeah, it is devastating.



Chelsea: Yeah, because you catch a little bit of Voyager on the SyFy channel and whatever, like reruns or what not, he was the only indigenous person that I ever saw regularly on TV. And so even though I wasn't a Star Trek fan until adulthood I always had this sort of connection with him, I felt, you know it's like at least one of us out there. And then realizing that the actor wasn't even indigenous himself I was like, oh...

Molly: We can't even have this one thing. This one very problematic thing.

Sierra: He didn't particularly like the character that he was playing either.

Chelsea: Which I can see why... You know he doesn't have much of a personality. He's just, he's all reaction and rage...

Molly: And ceremony.

Chelsea: And ceremony, oh my gosh, yes.

Molly: In "Tattoo" we should also talk about the ancient aliens thing, right.

Chelsea: Oh yeah, I love the fact... That trope of like, you know, indigenous peoples couldn't come up with it, it had to be aliens. I personally love the fact that we're descended from aliens, I mean it's great, it allows me to do all sorts of like wild things that nobody else can do, you know, if I just need to heat up my fried chicken, I just have to look at it with my alien powers and it's like steaming and ready for me.

Molly: Yeah, if I just want to go into the vacuum of space, bam! I just went on right now and came back, it's great. It's cold, but you know, I wore a sweater, it's fine.

Chelsea: Gosh, thank goodness for the aliens that made us. But there is this idea, right, that until contact with Europeans essentially, indigenous people... First they like didn't... Weren't able to like contact each other, you know we don't really have relationships among ourselves, you know and certainly not ones that span the continents, which is obviously totally false because you know there are all sorts of trading relationships and networks and stuff, but we also couldn't, we really couldn't develop or design anything that settler people would consider impressive or worthwhile at all, right, it had to come from outside, it had to be given to us, specifically you know not by you know any of our own figures or historic people, or you know whatever you want to call spirits etc., it and always has come from you know beyond, something that the white people can explain with their white vocabulary, and so then that is translated into this alien thing.

Jarrah: Also, they're literally white guys, the aliens are literally white guys.

Sierra: And they're the ones that gave us the language that was brought out in this episode of "Tattoo" it was the aliens that gave us language, we didn't have it.

Molly: We're just sitting around each other kind of grunting at each other, but we had a deep respect for nature, we just couldn't express it.

Chelsea: They just knew somehow, we couldn't actually tell them about it, they just saw us, and they were like, "wow, yeah much respect, much nature." It's all that grunting was respectful grunting.

Sierra: Except Chakotay didn't like the insects.

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Chelsea: Not very respectful, Chakotay.

Molly: He was very disappointing to those aliens. Yeah, because remember he's supposed to have the power of the memory, but he lost the power of the memory because of the trauma of colonization. So, he is ultimately less indian than his ancestors.

Sierra: Well, even the aliens, when Chakotay gets there and meets them, they're behaving in true indigenous fashion as according to settlers, that because they're the children of the forest and they're shy, and they're scared of these new people coming in and then because Chakotay says "Oh we're fine and you know we're not going to hurt you," they somehow just instantly believe, it's like based on what.

Molly: They're so innocent.

Chelsea: Well, doesn't he take off his clothes?

Sierra: Yes, and puts on the garment.

Molly: That's the symbol.

Chelsea: He's okay because like he gets buck? And then is like, "it's okay guys, here I am!"

Sierra: I have no weapons.

Chelsea: "Oh you're one of us!"

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Chelsea: That's how we greet one another. Even up in cold Canada.

Molly: I hope nobody actually decides that that's how they should be greeting indigenous people. Please for the love of God don't do that!

David: And then he does the double how, not just to put the one hand up and says, "How", he puts both hands up, and yeah. Another issue I don't like about Chakotay, which I don't know if it was specifically that episode but it's been in several, was the spirit vision device, the bringing the technology, and I had to look it up, and it has a name it's called the Akoona, which I didn't like when I first saw it and then I looked into it, and apparently it, I don't know if it was Jeri Taylor's original idea but she liked the idea that it was controversial, and there's a quote from her that says, We are positing that maybe Native American Indians in the 24th century have a technology that allows him to tap into their subconscious in a safe way so they no longer have to take drugs, fast, or go into the sweat lodge." That right there implies that the traditions, and rituals, and ceremonies are "not safe" because now you need a technology, and so that was just, the whole thing about his spirit device, you know, I just didn't like that.

Molly: Well, it would also suggest that ceremony isn't technology, right. We've talked about on our podcast before, like indigenous people we can never be modern, we can never access technology, but we're also not really magical, right, like we don't have magical powers, we're not wizards, right, but we have this sort of like third thing, of like some kind of an indigenous power that we can use, right, but it's never technology, it's never because an intellectual and technological tradition that has enhanced our life, and that we use to survive and thrive. It's always this other mystical, unknowable thing, that's always going to be dangerous. That savage thing.

Chelsea: But, white people can get it, and they can get it even better.

David: And the idea that it needs to be a technological, electronic device, I mean, so referencing quote unquote "drugs" and sweat lodges, but the drugs part, I mean obviously to me is a reference to peyote and other things, but to me well that's not a mechanical device or an electronic device, but to learn that over time you know from the eons, decades, whatever you want to call it, it would involve chemistry, biochemistry, horticulture, so there would be some kind of science behind it, just not a physical, mechanical device, or electronics, but you know you don't just stumble upon a mushroom and then go hey I'm going to build a culture around this.

Chelsea: Or just like, "hey, I'm going to eat this and see what happens". I think that's kind of like that idea, right, that you know we're basically at that level, we're just kind of wander around like bumping into each other grunting...

Molly: Accidentally finding out stuff. We don't we don't science, we just intuit.

Sierra: Right. Where do you think modern medicine came from?

Chelsea: Yeah, I know, exactly.

Sierra: People don't stop to think about the fact that it all started with the plants, and the people who knew the plants, who were the indigenous people, and they don't make those connections, and it's just like "oh well we can take this stuff that's from the willow bark, and we can condense it down and can distill it and put all this other stuff in it make this super pill!"

Molly: Or even like that, a couple centuries ago Europeans were afraid to bathe because they thought water had diseases. So, they literally were just rolling around in their own crap nonstop for their entire lives, you know like what is so superior about these people.

Sierra: But, we're the dirty ones.

Molly: Yeah. It's absurd. But, we're never allowed to have that technology, we're never allowed to be advanced in any area, if we are it's an accident or it's aliens.

Chelsea: Aliens, yeah.

Sierra: Yeah, they gave it to us.

Jarrah: I just wanted to just quickly interject with a couple of facts. So, one thing is about Robert Beltran's ancestry, because I've had some questions about this in the past and apparently he's of Mexican, Native

American ancestry, so, I believe that he has indigenous ancestry at like his grandparents level, and he describes his own heritage as Herridge as “Latindio”. So, that's just what he says about it. But, another fact about Voyager is that when they decided to create the character of Chakotay, they hired a First Nations consultant who turned out to be totally bogus.

David: Oh yeah.

Chelsea: Oh no way!

Molly: No way!

Jarrah: So, in some ways they actually kind of did something kind of like what they should've done, like “hey let's get someone who knows his shit and is indigenous.” And it turned out like he wasn't, and didn't know anything, that's partly why we got like Chakotay having a medicine wheel, and a medicine bundle, and the rubber tree people, and like all this you know it's symptomatic of that same homogenisation you were talking about that you know we're going to take these symbols and mash them together into one character. But, it also was partly because they were trusting somebody who had no idea what he was talking about.

Molly: That's amazing.

Chelsea: I can't wait to re-watch Voyager with this new knowledge.

David: I'm not sure if I'm saying his name right, but it was like Jamake Highwater.

Chelsea: That guy! Oh no way!

David: Yeah. That's what I was referencing with “Journey's End” because it even goes back to “Journey's End” initially I think it was Ronald D. Moore, or one of the main writers wanted it to be Hopi, Cucina dolls, you know everything authentic, but then he steps in and starts changing it, and that was a thing where it carried into Voyager, and so that every time they wanted to do something like positive, or progressive, or do something right it was shot down, and they were basically wanting to do what was right so much that they were beholden to what he says, and he would just make things up and homogenize, and do this like Pan-Indian blender thing, where it's like a little bit of this, a little bit of that, and that was the thing that I didn't like about Chakotay, because I loved TOS, TNG, DS9, and then I hear Voyager's coming out with a native character, I was like super pumped about it, then what I see is the homogenisation like just throw things in a blender, and it made me think back to Suu was Japanese, he wasn't some pseudo-Asian-Oriental hybrid thing, Scotty was Scottish, Uhura, all down the line, and then even in the next generation Keiko O'Brien has a wedding and she's in traditional Japanese attire. So, it's like there is specific culture, and nation, and heritage, but then what they do with Chakotay was just, it was just like a disgrace to me, and it kind of turned me off of Voyager for a while, but then I stuck with it because it's Star Trek and I knew that they were intending to do right. All these years later when I find out it was that consultant, that just kind of you know made it that much more worse, but then kind of gave me a little forgiveness for the writers, and actors because they were just following with this charlatan basically was telling them.

Molly: Wow. And that's actually really interesting as well because you know, Voyager was what, a decade at least after after TNG, and yeah, in a lot of ways you know the Next Generation deals with Indigenous

people, and portrays indigenous people much more respectfully than Voyager does, right, I think with science fiction portrayals of indigenous people, you can't really count on you know time making things better or more respectful.

Chelsea: Some of the worst things we've seen, are very recent. Like worse than anything from like even the 50s and 60s.

Molly: Yeah, I wonder, part of me is wondering if maybe that's why, right, like they're just talking to the wrong people.

Chelsea: Yeah, they get these fake consultants, oh my gosh there's probably a whole bunch of them, right, like a whole industry of like fake native consultants for TV.

Sierra: Well, when they hire indigenous consultants for, like particularly children's books, because that's what I've been focusing on here lately, is the Indian stereotypes and children's books, and they will hire an indigenous consultant, and then they won't pay any attention to what that person says.

Molly & Chelsea: Yeah, oh yeah.

Chelsea: Right, it's the box, they just check the box and they move on, like thanks but that's not working with the story I'm trying for.

David: Yeah, and that's what makes it even kind of like more sad is that when it comes to Voyager they wanted to follow what the consultants were saying, they just had a bad consultant. With every misstep, you know there is, I kind of look at what was the intention behind it, what were they, was there an agenda, and obviously there's long history of agendas when it comes to indigenous representation in television and film, but with Star Trek I've notice that they'll make mistakes, they'll do things wrong, but they at least are trying to make the effort, and I kind of wonder to myself at times, like I don't even know the answer, yes or no to myself, but I wonder sometimes is misrepresentation better than no representation at all, because you have the "Paradise Syndrome" where they were you know doing quote unquote "the best they can" at the time maybe, but then in the Motion Picture I was really happy to see that when when Kirk pulls everybody into the cargo bay, or wherever the big meeting room was when they they show them the V'Ger cloud, and they panned the crowd or the crew, there's native indigenous people in the crowd, in uniform, but they're also still wearing regalia, and it was you know, they didn't speak, they weren't characters, but they were there and I thought that it's nice, it was to me I connected to that like saying, "look we're there, we're in the future, we're on the Enterprise." And then, another thing where they kind of make an attempt, but kind of also get it wrong, or you know not as good as it could be, was in "Generations" when Soran is wanting to destroy the star and Picard and Data are in that stellar cartography, they're talking about what planets are going to be destroyed if he blows up the star. Then there's one that has a population that is similar to a Native American, some estimates of Native American indigenous people of North America both north and south, and then right as they're saying that that planet is going to be destroyed, if you watch the star field it's moving around, there's kind of like a connect the dots picture of an Indian head that goes over either Data or Picard's shoulder and it kind of just zooms in and moves out of the frame, but it's the stereotypical you know profile with a feather pointing up, so like they're trying to make the attempt to say hey look we know we want to protect this indigenous pre-industrial population is what they call it, and then there's the iconic or you know stereotypical Indian head. So, do they get points for that or do they get deducted for that, because they're trying to, but it just

goes wrong and that's the thing where Star Trek least tries to make the attempt and sometimes it's good, sometimes it's not so good.

Molly: Yeah, and I think you know that's actually a really good point, right, because I think as much as we love to tear this stuff up, right, like we all, first, we love Trek, right, but also you know part of what colonialism continues to attempt to do is to eradicate us, to disappear us. I've legitimately had people tell me that I couldn't be indigenous because there are no Indians left, right and so it's that kind of thing that makes representation even if it is super stereotypical, super ridiculous, and even like you know downright offensive and sometimes harmful, you know, I do think it's important that you know as you said, at least they are trying and they continue to try, right. But, you know at some point it's also like it's you know it's 2017 now...

Chelsea: You can talk to us! We're on the internet!

Molly: Who are you getting this from, don't just call fake Native consultants 'r us and just grab somebody out of that pool, right, like go and talk to communities, figure out what it is that you're actually writing about and who you want to portray and whose stories you want to tell, because we're out there. And also like Indigenous people are making sci-fi, and we're making more and more of it because we're nerds. So, like, you know there's all sorts of options for folks now.

Sierra: There was indigenous consultants, and indigenous actors in Hollywood in all these timeframes that they could have gone to and talked to, and they didn't choose to do that. And then of course there are the indigenous actors that don't look Indian, so they've never had Indian roles. James Garner instantly comes to mind, he's Cherokee, hitting the name of his production company Cherokee productions, and he was very proud of the fact that he was Cherokee, but he didn't have the "classic Indian look," so he never got an Indian role.

Molly: Yeah, so then there hiring all these Italians instead.

David: Well, it brings to mind especially you know calling back to the "Paradise Syndrome" episode, I really want to get your book because I'm always fascinated with you know TV and movie cinema history in general, but obviously when it connects to cultures, and then obviously you know close to home the indigenous cultures, but there's a really good documentary that I've seen and it's on Netflix now, you know February as we're recording this, but I've seen it come and go off of Netflix, but it's called "Reel Injun," and it talks about how the depiction of indigenous people has shifted over the decades from the silent era, to the 60s, 70s, you know all the way up to, you know, what tropes have shifted, what's the predominant trope, and the only, and it's interesting because that documentary was made in 2009 and Voyager had its complete run before that. it ended in 2001, the only image that they use in that documentary is the picture of Kirk as Kirok, you know the extending his arms now that he's found blissful peace that now he's a God you know among these child-like.

Chelsea: Worrying the medicine badge.

Molly: Yeah, focus is more on the western Zen and other movies, but it doesn't look at sci-fi so much.

David: That was what I felt was missing specifically when I watched it, there was that one little brief shot of Kirk in that episode, but then I thought well where's Chakotay they could have said it was good or bad, you know, they just didn't, they passed it over. But, it does kind of bring back to, you know, the white

savior, the teacher of the children, like almost like a parent role to the child, where the colonialism, the government people, are like the teacher, the parent over the child like, you know a native Indian indigenous population, but then also you know as the enemy then like "Dances With Wolves" where they want to find peace and happiness in that culture, but, oh wait, they still have to teach them how to fight, how to do irrigation and all that.

Jarrah: I would be remiss if I didn't just briefly mention the animated series. I don't know if you have watched it, but there is a character Ensign Dawson Walking Bear who is, I mean everyone on that show has basically voiced by the same people, so he's voiced by James Doohan, but I would say I would maybe add that to the list of you know attempts that were not quite on the money, but probably helped more than hurt. He's basically just a Starfleet officer who's a scholar of many peoples in Earth history, and is a helmsmen and has kind of a small role in a couple episodes.

Molly: And see, I actually love that too, right, I think that you know there needs to be just more native people around just doing stuff in sci-fi.

Chelsea: Yeah, not being super native, like Graham Greene in "Die Hard" he's just a cop. He's not like an Indian cop.

Molly: Yeah, he's not, like, you know, they don't need to do a big exposition on how native he is, he's just there, right, like why can't we just be there sometimes, you know without having to be these token characters, so they can check off these boxes, right. Yeah, like have a native helmsmen who just like comes to work every day, does the eight hours on the bridge, and then like effs off to, you know, go play bingo or go like run on the treadmill or whatever. Like we think we do need a lot more of that too, because we are just around, and you know as you mentioned right. We look all sorts of ways, right there is black natives, white natives, Asian natives, like everybody, right. Show the whole range, and show you know, don't just show the Cherokee, don't just show the Hopi, you know, anybody else, you know there's a whole range of us from everywhere all the time, with like science, and math and gym, and you know obviously all the subjects all of the things.

Sierra: It would be great if when they get Discovery off the ground that they would have maybe a season arc that would involve having an indigenous crew member, and who really does end up debunking the stereotypes that Hollywood has created. That yes, this indigenous crewmember would rely on their, his or her, past experiences, his or her people's experiences, traditions, stories to inform them and guide them as a crew member. But, at the same time that they would draw their strength from original instructions, and traditional knowledge, but that would be an integral part of their everyday life, not some kind of hokey occasional ceremonies, or pseudo mystic plot devices like Chakotay and his medicine bundle, and his personal medicine wheel. It could be done very respectfully, that this is just one of the regular crew, who happens to be indigenous, and uses that as a personal strength, instead of some kind of mystic spiritual sort of way that when they're in trouble they have to rely on the Indian sidekick to come to their rescue.

Molly: Yeah, or maybe even, you know one of the things that I liked about Chakotay, and Chelsea mentions that like young Chakotay's like a total turd, but you know they don't really play into this very much more, except in the angst way, is that he's not necessarily super connected to his culture, right, like he came to it pretty late, he knows the specific types of ceremony, and like some stories, and some tradition, but he's not really all that connected.

Chelsea: And he's internalized some ideas, like some negative ideas about it as well, like he's also not super positive about it, right. He's got like these sort of contradictions and shames, and feelings of inferiority.

Molly: Yeah, also having you know having characters who you know are really embedded in their culture, and their tradition, and their language, and use that on the day when it's not a big deal. Then also having characters who were trying to negotiate those things, or yeah that were adopted by non-native families, or who you know were disconnected for whatever reason and are trying to find their way back and doing that in respectful ways as well. And just showing that there are all sorts of different ways of being indigenous.

Sierra: That would be great.

David: When you mention the character from the animated series, Ensign Walking Bear, it sparked a memory, and I had to look it up real quick. In the DC Comics Star Trek comic book series there was a native character called Ensign William Bearclaw and it says he was noted for being prejudiced and antagonistic, so you know kind of an a-hole, but then it says unusual traits for a fictional Indian, but then so what if... That makes me think, are they supposed to be peaceful and agreeable and docile all the time?

Molly: The sidekick, yeah.

Chelsea: Maybe he's a bit like Ensign Ro, right, like maybe he's antagonistic towards the white people.

Jarrah: Yeah, so he's a big character in one of my favorite most ridiculous Star Trek comics, called Star Trek Bachelor Party.

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Jarrah: It is incredible, I have written a whole article on it on trekkiefeminist if anyone wants to go google it. But, Bearclaw says that like he doesn't drink because the white man screwed over his ancestors with alcohol, and basically what happens in this comic is that Kirk says, "Sure you can have a big bachelor party for this crewman but you can't drink" and Scotty and McCoy are like "no way". So, they independently both spike the punch, and so the punch is basically all alcohol, and everyone gets super drunk, and then Bearclaw starts being just super racist against everyone who's not him. So, it's weird. I think Sulu does, too, like there is this whole thing that if you get drunk you get racist, and then they get in a big brawl and someone hits Kirk on the head with a bottle, and then Kirk lectures them all, and that's pretty much the end.

Molly: That sounds awesome.

Chelsea: That sounds so good.

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Jarrah: Yeah, so I mean, back to Discovery, so we've seen a lot of casting announcements, we haven't seen an indigenous actor cast. We've seen a fair amount of people, of racialized people, and a couple key women of color, but the more cast I see, like the less optimistic I am about it, but you know maybe



they're holding something awesome back, and what would you want to see? Can we maybe talk a little bit more about what you would want to see out of Star Trek Discovery.

Chelsea: How about like an Inuit actor for once?

Molly: Yeah or a Two Spirit?

Chelsea: Yeah or a Two Spirit, or an Inuit Two Spirit! Yeah, because there's some amazing work being done by Inuit directors, and actors, and communities. Some of the most amazing, authentic, indigenous movies coming out right now are Inuit made, right, so just have somebody, like just go get somebody.

Molly: That would be super, because those folks like they get left out of everything. And even when I think even in general discussions about indigenous people and you know modernity or the mainstream you know they're just constantly being marginalized. And they're like, badass! They do so much incredible stuff, and like the sci-fi community needs them!

Chelsea: And man, like Inuit people can be so sci-fi, like it would not be difficult to sort of extrapolate like how Inuit people are living right now, you know into future centuries like, it'd be so good.

Sierra: As long as aliens haven't taken us to another planet dumped us there and we haven't progressed for centuries.

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Jarrah: Yes, that's the other thing about the "Paradise Syndrome" is like literally that is supposed to be 3000 years, and people still haven't figured out how to preserve food. And even as David pointed out and it says in your books Sierra as well, that like clearly people did know how to you like where do you think jerky came from?

Sierra: Yeah, and if you can't preserve food then how do you survive as people?

Jarrah: Yeah, exactly.

David: One of the things I'd like to see, you know in terms of an indigenous character, is a lot of times the stereotype and the tropes come down to the brave, the Indian brave and the warrior or the shaman, and it's it's a lot of even to Chakotay it's a lot about the men, and one of the things that I always like was a spark for me, like I always thought was you know important and just cool, was Sacheen Littlefeather accepting talking at the Oscars you know instead of Marlon Brando. So, I would love to see a strong, but you know multifaceted Indigenous woman in Star Trek.

Molly: Yeah, because that's something we've seen in so many shows is you know when they do, they're sort of like a very limited range of characters available for Indigenous men, but the range for women is even less. Like you know, even if the story revolves entirely around an Indigenous woman, sometimes she won't even have a speaking role. Like it's the Indian princess, or the temptress or whatever but she's not supposed to do anything, she doesn't have any agency, she's just there as an object of either desire or revenge, or you know something but that's it. Yeah.

Chelsea: Or the wise grandmother.

Molly: Yeah, the wise grandmother.

David: Right, right.

Molly: I would also like to see a more, and I think DS9 did this really well, sometimes, but I would like to see more of an anti-colonial analysis of the Federation.

Chelsea: Oh God yes.

Molly: Because the Federation is messed right up. And actually by doing close readings of Star Trek, and TNG especially, really like starts to uncover the ways that the Federation is ultimately like hyper exploitative, it's like a hyper exploitive conquest organization essentially, right it's like of the big imperial powers the galaxy. But you know, TNG and like Picard, is just you know, he's right in there. But, it would be great to see, and like especially indigenous characters, start you know questioning the Federation and Starfleet, and the idea of a global government and what that means from an anti-colonial standpoint. I would love to see that.

Jarrah: Yeah, I actually thought that we were maybe going to get that in "Star Trek: Beyond" when I saw those first previews, and they had sort of that line the frontier pushes back, and I was like wow we're going to see people who are like hey, you guys have taken it too far and you're not actually that superior. And then that wasn't what it was about at all, I still love it, but...

David: Well, in terms of the Federation, you know, whether it's relates to the Klingons or Romulans or other global governments, or super powers, whatever, but I've also just in terms of the Federation itself, like how are they depicted, how are they represent what their goals are, a lot of times I have seen it kind of especially more than the original series, but that the Prime Directive and the goals of the Federation kind of are take offs of Manifest Destiny. Where Kirk is bringing civilization to the savages, or you know saying join us, or you know sorry we can't help you, but that's why I went back to DS9 and I really love that scene between Quark and Garak they're saying the Federation is insidious, you know, they move in and they take things over, but you kind of like you know they have good tools or whatever. So like yeah, but the Federation isn't always so great. And we always hear a lot about how Star Trek was originally conceived of, or pitched as Wagon Train to the stars, and I've heard I've heard some people say well, does that mean outer space is that Indian territory. If they are venturing out to you know take over, and that kind of plays into the Manifest Destiny, westward expansion, all that, like you know it's out there we need to just you know move in and take it over from the Federation perspective.

Chelsea: Yeah. Well, I've often wondered, too, if that's why they don't focus so much on indigenous representations, because the assumption is that all the peoples that they encounter are sort of supposed to represent indigenous peoples, you know different aspects of it. But, I think that falls flat, too, you know like they are, it is still very much cowboys and Indians, but you know science fiction always does this, right, it always takes sort of like the real life anxieties at the time and tries to pick at it and talk about it, right. So, when you look at sci-fi at different ages you can sort of see what the anxiety was at the time. But, no, it's not like all the people that they encounter are supposed to be indigenous, they're supposed to represent many things, right. Like, communism, or fascism, or you know racial diversity, all of that, right. And so, again we get subsumed into this micro-minority, and I think that's probably where we're not going to see like a new character, it's just they're trying this idea that the way that they come at diversity is sort of a numbers game, right, and we're seen as such a tiny, tiny population that representation of us is not

that important when it comes to you know like who else that they could put in there, and that invisibilization is really problematic because it means like even if we do get a character it's probably going to be a really bit role, because they're more interested in making sure that everybody else is represented.

Molly: Or even Chakotay, right, he's like you know he's supposed to be this big Maquis commander, who has tons of experience, and is a bit of military genius, but then his actual character is a kind of beta male, which actually kind of honestly I like that about him, I like that he's just like I love you Janeway, I love you, I'm here for you, I'm going to support you, I'm just with you I don't even care. I love that about him, but you know it's also like that's all he gets, because as particularly as an Indigenous man, he's always seen as, you know that violence is very much embodied in an Indigenous man, right. He's always on the edge of violence, so they have to make him super, super passive in Voyager in order to you know try to offset that anxiety. And so, you know that's a major problem when it comes to representation, right, like how do you, how do non-natives approach creating a fully human indigenous character, who doesn't have to be super passive, who doesn't have to be strictly supporting role, you can have, you know all sorts of different problems, and story arcs, like you know Worf is one of my all time favorite characters because of that. Like, as a person he's like not actually a great guy, he's not a great dad, he's quite hyper conservative, you know you think about the episode for example where he gets paralyzed and is trying to get everybody to kill him, right. ["Ethics" TNG Season 5, Ep. 16] Gosh, you know that's like super messed up in a lot of ways, and he's you know, people are constantly trying to control him and regulate him because of that you know perceived uncontrollability of Klingons, and then like it's almost the opposite when they have an indigenous character, right, because there's that real fear that real indigenous people are going to be violent and uncontrollable.

Sierra: They allow the violence to come through, in particularly like the Klingons, and look at K'Ehleyr, who was the half Klingon, half earth person and she shatters the glass table because she's got these vying and conflicting emotions going on with her and all of the time frame. ["The Emissary" TNG Season 2, Ep. 20] Or, with B'Elanna who, you know the episode where she's trying to pick out all of the Klingon DNA from her child that she's going to have with Paris. ["Lineage" VOY Season 7, Ep. 12] But they were allowed to have their violent times, because it was part of their nature, but you can't do that with Chakotay. He can't represent that because it's going to be too overwhelming, or the instance with him ending up with Seven, who is the unemotional, damaged, white woman, blonde, my gosh talk about the stereotype, that's the only person he could end up with, because it would be too much of a threat for him to be with anybody normal.

Jarrah: Well, also everyone else was taken except for Janeway. It was like, "Oh crap we have to make everyone hetrosexual, it's the end of the show!"

Chelsea: Yeah, we can't put Janeway and Seven together, which we've obviously been building to for seasons and seasons at this point.

Jarrah: And there's no gays in space, so we can't make like Chakotay/Kim a thing.

Chelsea: Oh my God Chakotay/Kim would be such an awesome thing.

\*\*laughter\*\*

David: Well, in referencing the Klingons, a lot of time, and I'm a big Klingon fan, I've learned the language, I've played with the language for a long time, I do the makeup and costuming, so I've spent a lot of time

thinking about it, but then a lot of people ask me about Klingon things and I've heard you know the jokes or the comparisons like "oh Klingons are the space orcs, or the space pirates" but as much as there's things I like about the Klingons, and I think you know represented well and well-written and fleshed out, there have been times I've kind of thought of, aside from the space orcs or pirates, there is the times I kind of think the Klingons are kind of in a way the space Indians, because there's always that underlying violence that you know you got to watch out around them. The knife, you know the stereotype of that instead of the, it's either the bow and arrow or a knife that's the stereotype, and so you know Klingons are all about the blades and then you know obviously the long hair and some of the you know depictions of it. And so bringing it back to Worf, there's some like you know legitimacy to it, some reality behind it, but there's also that trope of being caught between two worlds, he's not fully Indian and he's not the half breed, like he's not fully Indian, he's not fully white.

Molly: Yeah he's raised by humans, a. k. a. white people, like yeah.

Chelsea: He walks in two worlds.

David: Exactly. That's another native stereotype or trope that I saw applied to Worf.

Molly: Yeah, like how do you have you know indigenous or you know indigenous connected character who's not just super angsty about their identity, can we just have that.

Chelsea: Yeah, can we just have one of those one time please. That would be nice.

David: Well, in thinking of the tropes just like the catchphrases of it, you have like the savage, and that applies to the Klingons but then there's the twisting of it like the noble savage, they kind of played into that too, with the Klingons.

Sierra: One thing that I like about Star Trek, particularly in the Next Generation is the juxtaposition between the Borg and the Federation, and what are the Borg? The Borg are the assimilation, you know everybody's going to be assimilated, and resistance is futile, and anybody catch the irony of the Federation going against that when the Federation is this colonizing thing...

Chelsea: And does the same thing. I love it. It's beautiful and it's so interesting because what I, like when I started talking to people about that initially everybody said, "no no no they're not colonizers they're colonists." And I was like, "Say what?" Yeah, because they're communal, right? And then the whole red scare thing, we've had the white scare, and this looks a lot more like that.

David: And then, with the Federation and the Borg at times I kind of saw it as the flip side of same coin, or like the mirror opposites, because you have the idea of in American history the whole melting pot and the Federation is sometimes depicted as "hey look we're the melting pot, we got all these different aliens coming together in the Federation" and then you have the Borg that say they want all of you know technology and culture will be adapted to service us, but then your culture is like stripped away from you. So, they become a homogenous like one type of monoculture, and so it's kind of like the Federation is you know kind of doing the same thing but they're using the whole melting pot.

Chelsea: And individualism, like that's the big difference. It's like, okay, yeah sure we subsume all these cultures and make everybody the same as us, and we all have the same goals, but we're still individuals.

Molly: And also that illusion of choice, right, the Federation is all about this illusion of choice, even though they are this large imperial power, and you know these individual planets and systems are often like caught between do you want to be part of you know the Cardassian Empire, the Klingon Empire, the Ferengi Consortium, or the Federation, right, and so there's always that kind of implicit threat of you know the Federation has like, advanced technology, they're you know it is nominally kind of like the peaceful liberal alternative to these other scarier options.

Jarrah: Yeah, benevolent.

Molly: Totally.

Jarrah: Yeah and I mean you know if there are people listening who you know haven't really thought about this before, you just go back and watch some of the episodes where Kirk goes and lectures a planet, or Picard goes and lectures a planet, and they say you're not good enough to be in the Federation.

Molly: Oh, love it, it makes everything so clear.

Chelsea: Or even just the ones with the Prime Directive, right, where it's like, you know the Prime Directive only applies if the society hasn't achieved warp. Like that's completely arbitrary, right, like what does that mean? No toaster strudels, sorry.

**\*\*laughter\*\***

Jarrah: Yeah, so it talks a good game but maybe we don't always see it represented. But, another thing I wanted to just ask, is I want to talk a little bit about fandom and particularly cosplay of First Nations characters and how, like I've been at conventions and I've seen white people cosplaying Chakotay as well as the characters from the "Paradise Syndrome," just wondering what your thoughts would be on that or like what you would tell someone who is thinking about that.

Chelsea: That's interesting, I feel like for me Chakotay and like Miramanee are two wildly, wildly different things, you know. Like nobody should ever cosplay anything from "Paradise Syndrome" because it's a trash episode, let's be honest, in a lot of ways, but also like it's clearly red face, you know the way that those indigenous people are portrayed, they're not played by indigenous actors, it's hyper, you know as folks been saying, homogenized pan-Indian stereotypical, like the fringe, the buckskin. With Chakotay, if you want to dress up and you know have Chakotay's tattoo and be wearing the uniform, I personally don't see anything wrong with that. He's a character that's recurring, he's one of the main bridge officers, that to me is kind of fair game, right. I think it's different if you're dressing up, if you were to be wearing regalia or something, I think that would be different.

Molly: Yeah, if you threw him into buckskin, you know, no. Just don't do it.

Sierra: Yes. Oh I agree with Debbie Reese when she talked about being disrespectful for whites to play Indians. Whites don't dress up and play other ethnic groups, she used in particular they don't dress up like Jews for Halloween, and they don't dress up like Catholics for Halloween. Or the argument that they use, "Oh well we're honoring indigenous peoples by having one for our mascot or you know dressing up like them met at a Star Trek convention." And the reality is it's just a justification that if you really want to

honor indigenous peoples, do it by actually including real indigenous peoples and listening to them and respecting them and their values.

David: Yeah, the whole playing Indian is a trope that's been in Hollywood for a long time and that's you know plays right into Kirok, or Kirk with the "Paradise Syndrome" and in Wesley and all that. About the cosplay, I kind of agree about Chakotay, that it's basically you know putting the tattoo which can be you know indigenous or like the Pacific Island you know people would do tattooing. People cosplay as like Geordi, I've seen different people of different ethnicities do the VISOR with the Geordi uniform and I'm not really opposed to that, but I did see at one of the conventions we went to there was an entire group that basically did the "Paradise Syndrome" as a group cosplay, and so you had you know the Kirok and then I think pretty much everybody else were women, were female. So, you basically had a harem of Miramanee clones. Yeah, and it was the same you know fabricated, you know fringe and you know a triangle pattern headbands, elastic headbands and whatever. And to me, I thought you know, and I know the people some of the people in that group, and I know they didn't mean it to be negative, or insulting, or you know anything against, they probably thought it was a cool episode, or you know like they're honoring the native. To me I cringed internally, but then I also again there's that side of me that goes well what was their intent or you know the meaning behind it. And I don't think it was meant to be you know mocking or insulting, so to me I like I cringed, and I didn't like it but I thought okay so maybe that's one of their favorite episodes because they just buy into the tropes and the stereotypes and the romanticism of you know Hollywood, and to me I would recommend you know against it. Well, on one hand it was definitely a stand out episode, and with Star Trek cause play I've seen the gangsters from the Trickster episode, I've seen pretty much any episode that is stand out, that's not just your basic uniforms people have cosplayed so that could have been the other thing like hey what stand out episode have we not done yet.

Chelsea: Sure, but I mean like gangsters are it's a profession. Like, you're dressing up as a people. Intent is also based on like what people think that they know about us, which is based on all of these stereotypes. So, we go back to that main issue of is it better to have no representation at all, or is it better to have bad representation, and then out of bad representation comes these ideas of how we look, and how we are, and people aren't, none of that is malicious right. But, then people take those things internalize them and then express them, and so it's like it's all part of this sort of wider issue of the fact that we, that they don't know who we are. they just make us up, right. So, it's not that we would need to be like you know get all up in our faces about it, but I do think that now because we are available on you know we have access to social media, we're more accessible maybe than we were before, when people are asking and we say no this should just be like, okay, I got my answer instead of like there's always justifications about honoring us, you know and I didn't mean it and blah blah blah. Just like when we say no, just don't do it.

Sierra: I think the "Paradise Syndrome" resonates so well even today with people, is because it represented exploring vicariously through Kirk/Kirok, getting more in touch with a more natural lifestyle, one that's less technologically dependent, a slower less stressful pace, when the episode aired in the 60s, America was embroiled in the Vietnam War, there was all the strife over civil rights, there was the feminist movement, the Cold War, the very real terrors of scientific advancement through nuclear bombs and things like that. It was really if you will a machine in the garden syndrome where people physically and mentally had lost touch with the soil due to the invention of the tractor. It really is that way in the "Paradise Syndrome" because as we become a more technologically advanced society, we are yearning for something a little cleaner, and more simple, and less stressful. And I think that is the embodiment that's in the "Paradise Syndrome" and why people actually really enjoy that episode because it gives them that little taste of being able to... That it's okay to step away from technology.

David: Yeah, get back to nature, and you know in that episode they mentioned the Tahiti syndrome, but Kirk is like there's no command decisions, there's no pressure, and it's just his quote I think it is "just living." So it's like yeah.

Sierra: And I think that's why that's such an important episode. And yes you should forgive people for wanting to be part of that, even though it's got all of the bad things and they probably really don't know that. And I agree with what has been said about that, it isn't malicious intent.

Chelsea: But, I think you know at the same time it's you know ultimately it's about you know is you wanting to tap into that like justification enough for dressing up as like a hyper stereotype of a race, because I think the difference between Chakotay and dressing up as Chakotay, or say dressing up at Geordi with just the VISOR, or just the tattoo, and dressing up as say, Miramanee, is that you know Geordi and Chakotay, the VISOR isn't what Geordi's race is, right, like you're not pretending to be an entirely different people, and with all of that baggage, and what that stereotype is and the same thing with Chakotay, if you slap on a Chakotay tattoo and you're not really playing Indian, you're playing Chakotay, because he's one character, and you have you know he's seven seasons, you have the chance to learn about him, you know and you're not... You know I think if you dressed up as Chakotay doing one of his ceremonies, like to me that would be unacceptable because you're tapping into this idea of whole people is, and this stereotype of what people is. And so to me that's kind of the difference between you know doing other types of cosplay and cosplaying as Miramanee for example, because she is just a stereotype ultimately. And even if you want to tap into that Tahiti Syndrome thing, and that getting away from it all thing, I don't think cosplaying as that character is the appropriate way to do it.

Molly: You could do that Baku.

Chelsea: Absolutely.

Molly: A whole bunch of white hippies.

Chelsea: Yeah totally. And they dress better, you know. So, yeah I think the main thing is like when you're when you're thinking about you know wanting to cosplay as indigenous character, or an episode with an indigenous theme, just like think really hard about what that might mean for you know for example David who is also there, who is he going to be cringing inside. Like if a Native person saw you at this ComicCon, are they going to feel like they're being honored, or are they going to feel like crappy about seeing you dressed up in buckskin pretending to be them, right.

David: A kind of an analogy I would make with that is you know to give another example, similar but flip it is the "Code of Honor" [TNG Season 1, Ep. 4] episode where Yar is you know having to fight the very stereotypically racist, you know Simba African, kind of turban wearing, so if you're if you were to cosplay that how would an African-American, or an African person seeing that, how would they think about it?

Chelsea: Yeah, totally.

Jarrah: Well, we should be wrapping up but, this has been a fantastic discussion. I'm going to go around and give you a chance for some final thoughts and then we'll do some outros. So, let's go reverse order from before, so David, any final thoughts you want to add?

David: Yeah again, there's been missteps and mistakes in it, to me, coming from a positive place more than a negative place, it could obviously be more informed and sometimes I take the you know the stereotypes as a chance to inform and educate the people who are misinformed and don't know what the real history is, and I just hope that we see more cultural representation in Star Trek. And then also just in science fiction one thing I really loved about Star Trek as opposed to Star Wars, and other things is that it is Earth, it's projecting our future so it has all of our history behind it. So, as much as I want to see you know positive and informed indigenous representation I loved seeing Keiko in her kimono in her cultural attire for the wedding. I want to see more of that to bring it back to you know we're not just "oh we've evolved past culture and heritage and our history in the future" to have you know more people connected to that. So you know that's the good thing about Star Trek is it is supposed to be us in the future.

Jarrah: Fabulous! Final thoughts from Chelsea?

Chelsea: I'm still super hopeful about sci-fi, like I love it it's my favorite genre, and you know Star Trek really like embodies a lot of the things that I love. The forward thinking, imagining us and in the future, and sort of like dealing with these these human problems that we're going to continue to have. I think though, that I'm sort of, would I... My hopefulness is going more towards there being more inclusion of indigenous directors and actors, because some of the sci-fi that's coming out you know straight from indigenous traditions of peoples, is really really exciting and I think that it be really awesome if Star Trek could tap into some of that. We've seen some stuff, you know like looking like the Navajo going to Mars, and stuff like that, that I think would just be brilliant. It would just be so good. And we have really really talented creative people up there so having them involved would be for me, ideal. That's what I want to see.

Jarrah: Awesome. Molly?

Molly: Yeah I think just much, much of the same was what's been said. Star Trek is just so incredible, and you know, having the opportunity to watch it, and talk about it, and analyze it, and re watch it and again and again and again, but like from an indigenous perspective and from an anti-colonial lense, I think just provides so much more depth and complexity to what Star Trek does and attempts to do, and sometimes succeeds, and sometimes fails. But yeah, going forward, I have to go with what folks have said, you know like you know taking these opportunities to do educational work I think is really important. And yeah including you know representation not just on the screen, but also behind the camera, in the writing room, you know through castings, through you know all those different things, like we're everywhere and we're there all the time, and I think everybody you know, all the Indian nerds out there would love to hop onboard with Star Trek. So, I think that there's such such an opportunity there that I really hope that Star Trek beyond takes advantage, or Star Trek Discovery, I should say.

Jarrah: Yes! And Sierra?

Sierra: I agree with what everybody else has been saying. Star Trek is the promise for the future, and it is a promise of what we could be as Earthlings, as diverse peoples, that's part of a group that's not homogenous, but one that, where they're taking their strengths from their diversity and using diversity as a platform of which to become better as a cohesive group. I think that is the message that Star Trek has sometimes very well-done, and sometimes not so well done, in this very format but the potential is there. And if Star Trek fans are the ones that are going to be involved in the production of the new movies, and of the new series Discovery, I'm hoping that they will understand that it is important for Star Trek to include this diversity of this wonderful group of indigenous peoples that can bring so many different perspectives and lens on the way of looking at things, and going about things, that I think that's really my



hope for Star Trek for the future, is that there will be this burst of inclusion, so that we get all this lovely diversity that we have, that most people don't really see because they're so stuck in that, "well all Indians are all part of the same culture and the same traditions and the same cultures." Or maybe there's a couple of different ones. There's the the Eastern Indians, the five civilized tribes, and the Plains Indians, and the people down in the southwest, but other than that there really isn't anything else. And the fact that there's so much richness to draw on I'm just hopeful that that will occur.

Jarrah: Alright, well thank you everyone so much again. I'm thrilled that we were able to have this discussion and hope that we can get you to guest on some other topics in the future. Usually what we do now as we go around and just say you know where people can find you and your work or your web site or whatever your Twitter or whatever else you like to plug at this point. So, I'll start with you Sierra, where can people find you and your work?

Sierra: Well my book "*Indian*" *Stereotypes in TV Science Fiction* is available through the University of Texas press. I'm currently working on a book that I have no idea who is going to publish it, but it's about the in the invisibility of Indians, and ironically in Indian captivity narratives.

Chelsea: That sounds great!

Sierra: Well, the title of it for now is *Color Me Red: Communicating Indigenous Cultural Invisibility* with invisibility being in and then visibility in children's literature 1682 to 1824.

Jarrah: Amazing! And Molly!

Molly: So, Chelsea and I, if you want to check out Métis In Space, it's a podcast, we're actually part of the Indian and Cowboy media network which is a podcasting platform specifically for indigenous people and so we're one of many indigenous run podcasts out there and I really recommend that folks check that out at <https://www.indianandcowboy.com/> if you're interested at all about, you know anything that we're talking about and more because they do incredible stuff over there for Métis In Space specifically we are online at <http://www.metisinspace.com/> so you can check out our blog, our column, and the podcast there, and we're on the iTunes if you search out Métis In Space, and we also do the Twitter, which I think is just [https://twitter.com/Metis\\_In\\_Space](https://twitter.com/Metis_In_Space) Yeah, So, I think that's it. Anything else, did I forget?

Chelsea: No, that's it. So, I have a book called *Indigenous Writes: A Guide to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit issues in Canada* and it's sort of a tool for people to debunk some of the myths that are out there about indigenous peoples and it's specific to Canada, so talks about some of the legislation here, and you can also find me blogging and tweeting as <https://twitter.com/apihtawikosisan> Easiest way to find that honestly because I never expected anybody to read anything so I chose a name that was not easy to just out it's just google Chelsea Vowel, vowel like AEIOU, and you'll find all my social media stuff and the book.

Jarrah: Awesome. I'm totally going to check out your book. And David where can people find you elsewhere on the interwebs?

David: Well every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Pacific 10:00 p.m. Eastern you can find my show on <http://www.trekradio.net/> I do a show called The Warriors Den which is a pretty much themed around the Klingon lore, content, language, but I talk about everything Star Trek, you know Star Wars, Tron, all kinds

of good geekery and nerd culture stuff. But I also play a very wide diverse selection of music including world music at times, you know I play a lot of it, you know, jazz, metal, polka, but I do share world music especially Native American tribal music from pow wow music to you know some of the big names are Carlos Nakai, John Trudell, Joanne Shenandoah, so many different ones that you know I just enjoy a wide range of music, but I definitely want to include cultural and tribal music into that mixture. And you could find me on social media, basically Facebook and Twitter is my Twitter is [https://twitter.com/DeyvID\\_KDF](https://twitter.com/DeyvID_KDF) and that's basically a Klingon spelling of David.

Jarrah: Cool, and I'm Jarrah, and you can find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jarrahpenguin> or at Tumblr at <http://trekkiefeminist.tumblr.com/> And if you'd like to get in touch with our show we are at <https://twitter.com/WomenAtWarp> We are also on iTunes, we love reviews, if you have any thoughts on the show we are on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/womenatwarp/> and you can e-mail us at [crew@womenatwarp.com](mailto:crew@womenatwarp.com) So, thank you so much for joining us today and thanks to everyone for listening.

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