

## Women at Warp Episode 61: All The Klingon Ladies

ANDI: Hi, and welcome to Women At Warp; join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our bi-weekly mission to explore our favorite franchise. My name is Andi, and thanks for tuning in. Today I'm joined with Jarrah.

JARRAH: Hello.

ANDI: And Grace.

GRACE: Hey-y.

ANDI: And our special guest, Kennedy.

KENNEDY: Hiiii!

ANDI: (laughter) Hi. You wanna tell us a little bit about yourself..?

KENNEDY: Sure. My name is Kennedy Allen, also known as Storm Tribble. I'm one of the producers of the Philly geek talk radio show Black Tribbles. We've been on the air since 2011, bringing you the best in geekery all through the lens of the black perspective. And I'm incredibly thrilled to be here - thank you for having me. This is... amazing!

ANDI: We're very excited.

GRACE: Yes.

JARRAH: It is a good day to record.

KENNEDY: Yes. Oh gosh. Please, more Klingon references I can- oh, this is- I'm already- I'm sitting on my hands. I'm sitting on my hands!

ANDI: She's jazzed, she's pumped up!

(Laughter)

GRACE: How about we finish out the episode with a Klingon death-cry...? For the episode...

(Laughter)

KENNEDY: (Gasps) I'm with it. My neighbors might not like it, but I'm down. Screw those guys.

GRACE: That way you know we've got a really big one coming, the whole time.

ANDI: (Laughter) That sounds so dirty. (General laughter) So, as you may have guessed we are going to be talking about Klingon women today, and we're very excited. But before we get to that, just a little bit of housekeeping. So if you'd like to support Women At Warp and all that we do, we do have a Patreon which is at [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://Patreon.com/womenatwarp), and it helps us, you know, fix equipment, go to cons - do all sorts of good stuff. So if you are interested in supporting us, we would love that. So, now that that's out of the way, let's talk about Klingon women.

KENNEDY: Yaayyyy!

GRACE: Time to Kling-it-on.

KENNEDY: Ooh, nice one. I'ma take notes.

ANDI: I have a feeling that this is going to be Kennedy and Grace trying to top each other on Klingon references, and I am so here for it.

KENNEDY: See, I just- I- I'm struggling to stay speaking English and not to slip into Klingon so...

ANDI: I'm pretty sure plenty of our listeners would actually understand you, so, I mean...if you were going to do it, this would be the audience.

GRACE: It's true.

ANDI: So, the first Klingon woman that we see is in the original series and her name is...Mara? Merra?

KENNEDY: Mara..

ANDI: Mara..?

JARRAH: I'm pretty sure it's Mara, but I don't really remember her name being said like a ton, maybe just once, but she's pretty - well - interesting. I love her outfit, for sure. She's got this cool like silver..sort of... one-piece jumpsuit with this...

GRACE: Like you do, TOS-style.

JARRAH: Yeah, and awesome makeup.

GRACE: Yeah. There's some beehive-age going on there, too, isn't there?

KENNEDY: Yeah, it's very 60s.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: Very 60s. Could've done without the brownface.

GRACE: Yeahhh.

ANDI: Could've done without it. I will give her props for her extremely hardcore eye makeup. But yeah, the rest is uncomfortable although really the Klingons in general for TOS with the brownface is uncomfortable, so, I mean, she fits with the rest of them, I guess.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

JARRAH: Yeah.

KENNEDY: Now I got to admit I know TOS because I was raised on it. My mom's a big fan, so it was always on in the house, but it wasn't the show that I paid the most attention to. It was like the encyclopedia, and I was more interested in the spinoff matter through other series. I don't remember Mara; I'm going to assume that her name is pronounced Mara only because of how Klingon is as a language...but, you know, outside of that, like they looked funny - at least, they looked more human back then because of the virus that we found out later on in Enterprise, right? Like something they were trying to be...more human than human and then realized 'screw you guys, I like my ridges, what's up with that'.

JARRAH: Yeah, so in *The Making of Star Trek* by Steven E. Whitfield and Gene Roddenberry it describes the Klingons physically, saying they are quote 'slightly oriental-looking; dark-complexioned with bushy eyebrows that arch up at both ends. The men without exception are bearded. They have no patience with women, even their own, and treat them as sometimes useful animals.'

KENNEDY: Booo...

GRACE: Really glad they changed that around.

JARRAH: Yeah - I mean there's some stuff to unpack in there for sure. I'll just say that I think that Mara is a bit of an exception. So she's the wife of Kang in...what's the episode...?

ANDI: Day of the Dove.

JARRAH: And even though she is...at least one point like put in a kind of damsel-in-distress position, she is the one who...she not only seems like she's being treated by the Klingons and by Kang as relatively an equal to him, but she's also the one who kind of talks sense into Kirk in the episode, as well. So I thought that she- and she's I think supposed to be a scientist...

ANDI: Yeah, she's the science officer on the ship.

JARRAH: Yeah, so she actually...for TOS, broke a lot of the barriers for roles for women.

ANDI: Yeah, absolutely. Overall, I like this episode, and overall I like her. I will forever love this episode for one of my favorite climaxes ever, in which they all just laugh hysterically at the fear monster or violence monster, I don't even know what it is, but that scene where they all go ha ha ha ha ha ha ha is one of the best things ever and I love it. The one thing that struck me when I was rewatching it, though, is that her one of her biggest moments in the episode is getting like...sexually assaulted by Chekov.

OTHERS: Yeah.

ANDI: Which is mad creepy and uncomfortable and also - Chekov? Really? Can you imagine Chekov trying to like...hit on the Duras sisters, like...this would not happen.

GRACE: Oh my god, we would be left with a Chekov pancake afterwards.

ANDI: I know, right. I'm picturing him trying to do the same moves that he did on her to, like, Lursa and just getting his balls back on a plate, you know. It just doesn't work.

GRACE: No, they would be sent mail order to his mother.

KENNEDY: I was 'bout to say that's cute that you think they would give them back at all.

(Laughter)

KENNEDY: I'm pretty sure they'd try to sit on it like 'look what I have, puny human nuts'.

ANDI: That's true.

GRACE: (Chekov accent) 'My testicles were made in Soviet Russia.'

(Laughter)

ANDI: But it does make this version of the Klingon women interesting. They definitely went in a different direction in TNG because she's very passive in that scene; she's very wide-eyed and frightened.

GRACE: That's not how we like our Klingon women.

KENNEDY: No.

GRACE: Not at all.

JARRAH: Yeah that's true. The thing that I think is interesting is the reason Chekov does it is partly because the fear monster is making both sides more xenophobic than usual, and they even start like being there's some xenophobia amongst the Enterprise crew, against Spock and stuff, and basically Chekov attacks her and he has this-this- like, it's super disturbing that he has this, you know - it reads like (slight Chekov accent) 'you don't die yet; you're not human, but you're very beautiful'. I guess 'wery beautiful - wery beautiful'.

GRACE: Hearing it in a cartoonish accent just makes it even creepier.

JARRAH: And it is super creepy. But I mean it does kind of show how in the real world there is that kind of idea of the intersection of race and gender in war. And using rape as a weapon of war to attack the men on the other side's masculine authority. So, even though I think it was like super uncomfortable to watch, I think that it had some grounding in how things actually work.

ANDI: Yeah. Also the like...fetish- fetish-uz-izzee-uh.

KENNEDY: Fetishisation.

ANDI: Yes! Oh my gosh, that word is hard to say.

KENNEDY: It is.

ANDI: Of...of women of color. I mean Klingon women I feel like are super-coded as...as at the very least people of color.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: So there's some extra racial tensions there, even though she's a white woman in brownface. So I hear you, Jarrah. That's why I think she's super interesting. And also in the end, she really is the one that is the only one that can get, you know, it together enough to make peace between them before they all get...murdered by

giant swords. I really love this episode in a lot of ways, I'm not going to lie. All of the scenes where the chess games turn into swords is like super funny.

JARRAH: And they're clearly foam swords and they have this like 'boing!' sound effect when they appear.

ANDI: It's great. Also, I love that when Scotty is all wide-eyed and super racist toward Spock, and Spock's just like 'Can I say that I don't always enjoy serving with humans' - I just love that. So funny. It's like earrgh god, why... So, an interesting first Klingon woman appearance, I would say, and positives, and a couple of things that I side-eye a little bit, but overall, I think, a positive interpretation.

KENNEDY: Cool.

JARRAH: Yeah.

GRACE: Yeah.

JARRAH: I mean, I think it's important to note when we're talking about this period of time about the whole- so- (pause) Yeah, you're absolutely right that they're coded as like racially 'other'. In the book *Star Trek in History: Race-Ing Toward a White Future* by Daniel Leonard Bernardi, he talks about how Klingons were designed to signify Soviets, and you can see that in the plotlines.

GRACE: You could also see that in their design a little bit, can't you - at least costume-wise.

KENNEDY: I always thought that while from a socio-political standpoint they did have, you know, communist undertones, especially Soviet relations... But if anything I felt like culturally they more work into...you know, that Shogun period of Japan - that very feudal, house-based honor code Bushido system.

GRACE: Oh definitely.

KENNEDY: That is even reflected in a lot of their armor - especially if they were on the Council, things got really extra fancy.

GRACE: And especially those early on Klingons with their pointy eyebrows that's...kind of straight out of the yellowface makeup handbook

KENNEDY: Right.

JARRAH: Yeah. I think by the time that they got to TNG there is some discussion, because by that point they were actually building more of a Klingon universe - the Klingon language, the Klingon armour, the forehead ridges...and they for sure did draw on Japanese- what their idea of Japanese Samurai culture was. But in the original series Daniel Leonard Bernardi says it looks more like the Fu-Manchu character - that's like this evil East Asian... He says the Klingons- [it] made them more striking or more readily identifiable and acceptable as a vile enemy.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: Yeah.

JARRAH: Like if they actually looked like Russians then they'd look the same as Chekov, and how could you tell they were evil..?

GRACE: Their little Beatles haircuts, clearly.

KENNEDY: Right, right.

GRACE: If they look like Chekov.

ANDI: And then we get to Star Trek V and Vixis who is...

JARRAH: Oh right...

ANDI: ...Mwwahh! Much more along the lines of what I think of when I think of Klingon women.

JARRAH: Yeah, for sure, she's like the navigator, or the security chief or something, it's not like- I think she's the security chief, but she's...uhhh... She was played by this bodybuilder, Spice Williams, who went on this sort of extreme regimen to...just basically train her arms and diet until she had a 21-inch waist and then...

GRACE: Holy hell.

JARRAH: ...trained her upper chest and basically said that she wanted Vixis to look like super otherworldly and bad ass.

ANDI: Well, she succeeded!

KENNEDY: Winning!

JARRAH: But also it's actually kind of slightly ironic because she gets to- there's the part where she kind of tricks - Starfleet, is it? - by talking to them on the comm channel without the Klingon accent, and it's like wow, she does better at communications than Uhura in Star Trek VI.

(Noises of discontent)

JARRAH: But anyway that's not a knock against Vixis; she has a couple of badass moments for a movie that's otherwise pretty unremarkable for women.

KENNEDY: Oh what, what what?! Nobody liked the fan dance?!

(Laughter)

ANDI: I...have such mixed feelings about the fan dance, but in the end Nichelle Nichols liked doing it, and I liked watching her, so...let's leave it there.

KENNEDY: Yeah - at the end of the day you can try and get on a feminist soapbox, but when the queen mother says she enjoyed herself, then...guess what, good times.

GRACE: Let her have her fan dance.

KENNEDY: Right, right.

ANDI: I mean, she looked great, so...

KENNEDY: When does- Like, I'm waiting for Nichelle Nichols to **not** look great. Like do you crack, ever?

ANDI: That will never happen. That will never happen..

KENNEDY: I feel like she needs to be submitting samples of her DNA to science so she can be... whatever is in her genetic makeup to preserve her this well, the rest of us can just like bathe in, or breathe... I don't know. But I digress.

ANDI: We saw her in person at...

GRACE: Oh my gosh...

ANDI: ...in Las Vegas and she is just that gorgeous in person; she's breathtaking.

GRACE: Yeah.

KENNEDY: (Sotto voce) Oh god. (Normal voice) She's coming to Philly next weekend and I just want to bring her a fruit basket, and flowers, and adorn her feet with oils, and light incense - just pay proper tribute and hope that her security's like 'get this lady out of here'.

(Laughter)

GRACE: At that point I think she'd just be like 'Thank you, thank you. Your adoration is appreciated.'

KENNEDY: Ohhh. Let's just bow out gracefully. Don't make eye contact.

GRACE: Exactly. Like unto the queen. Don't touch her.

KENNEDY: Right.

ANDI: Ahhh, that's hilarious.

GRACE: I'm still looking at pictures of Spice Williams.

KENNEDY: ME TOO!

GRACE: Oh my god.

JARRAH: Ok - so the very end of that movie when Chekov and Sulu are just like 'Yeahh' and they're just like following her.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: It's so funny to me and she's just like 'Yes, this is my due. I am completely fine with this.'

GRACE: There's an adorable photo op of the three of them floating around online - of all of them hamming it up together. It is very cute.

ANDI: Ah, man. It's good stuff. And then we also get Azetbur in Undiscovered Country, who is definitely one of my favorites. Definitely one of my favorites. She's just so...regal?

KENNEDY: Yeah, I was gonna say: she definitely never dropped her crown, even when her dad died.

GRACE: I know. She was like what Queen Elizabeth wished she was doing during the Princess Di thing, but did not. Besides, she didn't have that awesome sort of chainmail-y-looking dress going on.

KENNEDY: Mm-hmm.

ANDI: We actually got a lot of comments on her from Facebook. One of them from Alejandra was: 'Azetbur is my favorite. I read the Star Trek VI novel by J.M. Dillard, and there they explored her character more; how because she was female in a Klingon society she wasn't really respected as a diplomat - or a Klingon. They also explored her love life and the struggle to choose between duty and love.' I just think that's lovely. She was one of those characters that doesn't actually have a whole lot of screen time if you lay it out, but makes a huge impact.

KENNEDY: Yeah, she definitely ate up all of the scenery and that's saying something... One, like you say because she didn't have a lot of lines, but also because she's sharing, you know, a camera with the cast of TOS and Christopher Plummer and all of these, you know, stellar, incredible actors, and at the same time while they're talking, I can't stop looking at her.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: Yeah; she's a scene stealer, for sure.

GRACE: And one of probably my favorite Klingon outfits that we've seen in all of Star Trek. I just got to put that out there; just the combination of that standard Klingon aesthetic, and mixed with her sort of regal diplomatic thing, I just love it!

KENNEDY: I have a feeling that this crew, before they stepped off the Enterprise for this dinner, for this diplomatic summit, if you will, they were like: 'All right, guys. No effin' around. Bring out your good shit, Ok? No no no - put that back. Break out the good leather we bought on Karth a couple of years ago. Yeah that one. Get that one. Shine your boots, too!'

GRACE: 'Shine your head piece. We're all going for the matching red leather. We're making this work. Ok? Ok.'

KENNEDY: Trust me they don't know what to do. They'll be eating out of our hands.

GRACE: Freak them out with glam!

ANDI: The other thing that I like about her, too, is that she calls out racism.

GRACE: Oh yeah.

ANDI: And I love that about her. She really does - and she does it both subtle and straightforward, but there is a couple times where you can really just see her going 'Really? Really.'



JARRAH: Yeah, the whole like you know 'Listen to yourself talking about human rights; the very concept is racist.'

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: Yep.

GRACE: It is.

ANDI: And she's completely right, and it's just one of those subtle things in language that a lot of times people don't think about. And there are a lot of examples in our real world, with the fact that she calls out a micro-aggression in this; tiny little things that humans are not paying any attention to, and she's just like 'No, that's not going to fly with me.' I dig it so much.

JARRAH: Yeah, like even in in French today the more common term for human rights is like 'droits de l'hommes' - men's rights, essentially, even though that's supposed to mean human rights. But a lot of groups and people use 'droits de les personnes' - and apologies for the terrible pronunciation - which is actually human rights, but there are still modern languages today that have really gendered language. So it was kind of cool to be able to draw that parallel.

KENNEDY: I just enjoyed that particular moment where she checks them on, you know, the micro-aggression, because coming from a Klingon, you know everybody stopped and was like 'Oh, maybe I should think about this and correct myself going forward.' Whereas, you know, as human women, as we point out and attempt to correct micro-aggressions people are like 'Ok toots, have a seat' and if you stand up for yourself, or defend your point of view, then it's, you know, 'angry feminist' and they've checked out, instantly. So, yeah, you know, her standing up for that, and doing it without dropping her crown was so much more- or at least, it really resonated with me more so than, I think, a guy who would have watched that scene.

GRACE: She is definitely in a situation where she has a level of power and damn, she's going to use it; she's gonna school these humans as best she can.

ANDI: The other thing that's so powerful about it is that we're automatically meant to identify with the Enterprise crew, and one of the reasons why I love this movie so much in general is it makes us examine the Enterprise crew and examine their, you know, bias and their racism, and allowing her to do that in a way where the audience is like 'Yeah she's right, and they're wrong' and we're not usually set up to feel that way about our crew. And that could go pretty poorly - you have to walk that fine line of checking them without making them unlikable, and they did a good job with that.

KENNEDY: Yes.

ANDI: It was real good.

KENNEDY: It's also the best thing and the inherent responsibility about Star Trek in general. You know here's this whole universe of people, and genders, and religions, and cultures, and histories that...you know have all - for the most part, you know, Romulans not included - have figured out how to get along with each other, and if nothing else, co-exist. And as fans of this show and everything that comes along with it, you know, inherently... we are more susceptible, and definitely more perceptive, to, you know, how people should interact towards each other, like those little minor sensitivity things that people who don't watch the show don't know about. And I just feel like...if you're going to have a show that talks about all of these difficult things, then in order for you to talk about them properly you have to check people sometimes. So I love when there's episodes where our

favorite characters, or our favorite crews, you know, their prejudices or their discriminatory acts pop up and we have to see that and check them on it, regardless of how we feel towards them up until that point.

ANDI: Yeah. Well said

KENNEDY: Thanks, guys! Thanks!

(Laughter)

ANDI: And now we're going to get to the TNG era.

KENNEDY: YESSS!!

ANDI: I know, it is very exciting...there are some straight-up badass Klingon women in TNG, some of my favorites. I thought we'd start with K'Ehleyr.

KENNEDY: Ok ok ok guys. I have to- huh. All right.

ANDI: Ok; deep breaths, deep breaths!

KENNEDY: Bear with me.

GRACE: Bring it home.

KENNEDY: You talked about race, initially, with the Klingon species when we were talking about Mara and I did a panel up in New York for the 50th anniversary - the Star Trek: Mission New York last September - and one of the people in the panel brought this to my attention, and I wasn't even thinking about it... 'cause as far as I was concerned Klingons were Klingons, right? Obviously Worf and his brother were black, but beyond that there's different shades of Klingon...-dom...-ness whatever. But it didn't hit me until all the crap that was against Worf through the Duras sisters, through his complications with K'Ehleyr...they were all trying to keep him and the house of Mogh in general - oppressed, and out of history. And this dude, in this audience, who I'd never met before, he was like 'That's because the other Klingons were white and it was like, 'Nah dude, they were Kling-OH MY GOD!'

(Laughter)

GRACE: Holy crap.

KENNEDY: I didn't even think about it like...Martok, Gowron - all of these dudes were quote unquote 'white Klingons'. And here comes Worf, and his father, and his brother, and they were just like 'Nah dude, have a seat; dishonor. Dishonor on you, dishonor on your cow, dishonor on your book' and Worf just took that crap on the chin. And here you have K'Ehleyr who's like an opportunity to not only see a glimpse of where Worf came from, but also, hey - another badass Klingon woman. But K'Ehleyr was so anti establishment, which I was just like 'Yo, how are you an ambassador for a political body, a governing body, that you don't even rock with?'

(Giggling)

KENNEDY: So I was mad confused at first. I was like 'OK, is she our ambassador, or is she their ambassador?' Like 'Whut? Whut? I have no idea what's going on.' And just the fact that K'Ehleyr - first of all, heck yes, Suzie

Plakson! Like she can do just... girl, do everything. Why is she not in more stuff, why is she not in the Wonder Woman movie?

(General laughter)

KENNEDY: K'Ehleyr was so...just strength personified - but she had the nerve to be silly on top of it. K'Ehleyr has this goofy sense of humor that you could tell - I don't know how far back her and Worf went, but you could tell she would always poke with him, and he would look at her like 'Stop this is dishonorable.' She's like 'Whatever, boy, come see me.'

(Lots of laughter)

KENNEDY: And I just love the fact that here's a strong woman who...could be silly, who could be feminine, who could be tough; and all of that at once, and still held enough clout that people...you know...paid attention to her, and I just... the fact that K'Ehleyr and Worf never got married, and they didn't have their perfect nuclear Klingon family with Alexander - is just - I know we're talking about women here, but it's just another notch on my belt that Worf is the most tragic character in science fiction history. But I digress. I could get into that, that will be a whole other show; maybe you guys can be on the [Black] Tribbles then we'll talk about it then, who knows.

VARIOUS: Yeah..!

KENNEDY: I just- Yeah. Woo! Frickin' K'Ehleyr, man, like-

(Andi laughs)

KENNEDY: (expels long breath)

ANDI: Deep breaths!

KENNEDY: Ohhh...I'm not even looking at her picture yet. Hold on, let me pull this up, this is gonna be...

(More general laughter)

KENNEDY: (sotto voce) Oh god. (normal voice) So I... Did I miss anything? I don't know, I know that was like a stream of consciousness there, but just the fact that she- (pause) I love the dynamic of a woman who...has the attention of a man who is trying to act like he doesn't want her, but all their entire interaction K'Ehleyr's looking at Worf like 'Boy. Boy. You know you want this.' And Worf's just like 'I don't even know what you're talking about. I don't even know. I totally don't want everything about you right now. Or ever. I don't even know. I got this shift, I gotta be in engineering like right now. I got to go. So, I just- I need to- Bye.' And just to see Worf get rattled like that - Worf, of all people - to get rattled like that, shows how important and how impactful and how impressive K'Ehleyr was all the way around.

ANDI: Absolutely. He was so smitten. It was so cute.

GRACE: Yeah.

KENNEDY: She could have...farted, and he would've breathed it in.

(Much laughter)

KENNEDY: 'It's a wonderfully robust aroma you have today.'

ANDI: I mean - where's the lie, really. I think that's a that's an accurate summation of the relationship.

JARRAH: Yeah... Bummed that Dorn had her fridged, but he later regretted that himself, so...

KENNEDY: Wait! Wait a minute! Wait, wait. Wait. Hodor! Hodor! Hodor. You said what? That was his choice?

JARRAH: Yeah. He said that, you know, Worf needed more motivation, 'so let's bring K'Ehleyr back and kill her off to get Worf some more stories.

GRACE: Aaahhh, dude.

ANDI: This makes me sad because Worf did not need more motivation to stab Duras in the face. Duras's FACE was enough motivation to stab Duras in the face.

KENNEDY: Agreed. But you know what - and this this goes into my theory that he's the most tragic character in sci-fi - that is actually- that makes sense. Because if Worf had had the strength of K'Ehleyr with him going forward...then that would have considerably altered his path, I think. Like that whole tormented thing that he had is what propelled him to do the best that he could, especially when it came to raising this child that he didn't know he had. It might not have given him another reason to stab Duras in the face, because everybody wanted to stab Duras in the face. But it definitely made it lawful and justifiable as far as their rules are concerned. Because if he had just stabbed Duras just because...that would have been a, you know, inter-galactic incident; that would've been a problem, everybody would have to get involved then. He would have got stripped of rank, probably, like you know what I mean, that would have been a whole problem for Worf, but because it was justifiable, because Duras had killed his baby mom for all intents and purposes.. You know, none of the Klingons were going to be like 'Aahh!' - nobody was going to press charges.

ANDI: Yeah.

JARRAH:I think that you're theoretically correct, that that's how it should have worked... But then like later Worf got to just take leave to go lead a Klingon civil war and then come back as if nothing had happened even though he didn't have permission to take leave. So...I don't know that Starfleet was that harsh on him.

KENNEDY: But they also didn't know, really. As much as Klingons had gotten... as much as we'd gotten used to them, as much as we had been allied by them, and as much as Worf was a feather in the Federation cap... They really didn't know what the heck to do with Klingons. They were just like 'Listen, as long as we can eat at this table without anybody flipping it over, you guys can do whatever the heck you want. Just call us if you need anything. If we need anything, we'll call you. Please take your boots off. Matter of fact, no! Leave your boots on, please ...while you're in my house. I appreciate it.' So it doesn't surprise me that Worf had the leeway that he did to step off and fight a war and then come back. But - again - we're digressing, it's all about K'Ehleyr here. I just want to know everything about her; who were her parents, where did she come from, where was she raised? What school does she go to? What was her pet like? Did she have any other boyfriends? Did she have any siblings? How-the-freak did Worf and her meet - like, HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?

ANDI: Kennedy, I feel like you need to just sit down and write like a 10-book series just exploring every mundane detail of K'Ehleyr's backstory ever.

GRACE: Give us a K'Ehleyr treatise, if you will.

JARRAH: Yes.

KENNEDY: Don't tempt me because I will.

ANDI: I would read it.

GRACE: I really want to see the adventures of her being a single mom to Alexander. I really want to know how that went for her - and how she answered a lot of questions he probably had!

ANDI: I also want to see what it was like for her growing up...being both Klingon and human because this is one of the areas where I think K'Ehleyr has a lot of strength - I mean, similar to Spock, similar to B'Elanna - exploring, you know, having two backgrounds and the conflicts that come from that...and also the strengths that come from that, and I thought she was a really cool character for that. So I would have loved to see how she 'cause- by the time we see her in TNG, she has very strong opinions about the Klingons, and about humans, and what about Klingon culture she wants to own and what she wants to reject. I would love to see her journey towards getting there...

KENNEDY: Right.

ANDI: ...towards those opinions, because that I think would be super super interesting.

KENNEDY: 'Cause we already covered the fact that - I mean, she mentioned that her mother was human and her father was Klingon, right? So, if she's so anti-establishment, as it were, how does she end up their ambassador to us? - like, was her mom not Starfleet, was her dad some type of house council member...like, if she's not about this life, why is she in this life? How did this happen? Was it Worf that she met someday, randomly, when he was in his academy days with his awkward-ass high-and-tight haircut? She was like...

(General laughter)

KENNEDY: She was like 'Damn, babe, I like them ridges, though' and he's like 'I-must-do-pushups' and she's like 'I could sit here and watch that, too.'

(More laughter)

ANDI: I'm telling you Kennedy, you need to write this. Write this down. I will pay so much latinum to get this in my hands right now, OK?

KENNEDY: Interesting.

ANDI: We probably should head towards Lursa and B'Etor territory, though.

KENNEDY: Yes! These two!

ANDI: And I know you're all so excited about the Duras sisters and I want to say that one of the things that definitely came out of one of our earlier W@W discussions that people still associate with us is our love for the Klingon boob window.

GRACE: (Laughs)

JARRAH: Yes.

KENNEDY: It's a distraction tactic.

GRACE: I always thought of it as like a pocket thing - like you can just be 'Errp, I got some snacks in here I can pull out.'

ANDI: The first time I saw I was like 'Why're you going to leave your armor open to your heart' but - ok. I mean it looks good; they look good.

KENNEDY: (Dramatic Klingon voice) Because the strength of a female warrior's heart cannot can be pierced by blade alone!

(Laughter)

GRACE: Ooohhh. Ohhh.

ANDI: (sigh) So, Lursa and B'Etor - some of our most recurring and enduring villains. I was sad when they finally killed them off; I loved that they would just pop up out of nowhere all the time and just be like 'We're back!'

GRACE: Heyy-yy

ANDI: I loved that. Heyyy, heyyy..

KENNEDY: They were pretty..Like 'Haha! Oh what, you forgot? You forgot we was here? You forgot about us, didn't you?'

ANDI: They're good at lurking in the background of all these plots, and then popping out and be like 'It was us!'

KENNEDY: Right.

GRACE: I was really hoping they'd pop out at the end of the Dominion arc in DS9 and be like 'Heyyyy!'

ANDI: 'Hey girl, heyyyy!'

KENNEDY: I...initially... coming up on this series was like 'Screw these heifers, they ain't shit!' But - once I got more into it and - you know - your notes alluded to this; Klingon women are unable to hold positions of power - politically, in the military, scientifically...they are always depicted as these strong and ferocious women...but can't own a house, can't sit on the council, can't do anything that their male counterparts can do. So the whole reason that the Duras sisters were being such jerks, essentially, is because...one, they're Duras, and Duras are just assholes because Duras was the one that that somehow - somehow! - managed to convince the entire Klingon empire that the House of Mogh was the bad guy here. I still don't know how that happened, but whatever.

GRACE: More like Douche-ras.

KENNEDY: Yeah, right. Right?! Douche-ras sisters. So we already know that the Duras House is not to be trusted, but when it comes to the women, all they wanted to do was to obtain a seat of power. Right, and this is how a Klingon woman has to navigate that the atmosphere in order for her to do so. It was harder for us as an audience to empathize with them because we are team Starfleet, or team Federation, usually. So it was kind of

hard to - at least for me anyway - to sit there and just be like 'Okay, yeah, wooh, girl power! Oh, you guys keep popping up. Now you're f--ckin' with Geordi's visor, though? No! No, that's too much.

GRACE: Not OK.

KENNEDY: That's too much - too much. You gotta fall back, you can't mess with Geordi, that's not cool.

ANDI: I feel like they would have been more effective if they could have done things like Klingon men do them - because they weren't super good at plotting. Like they did...have a handful of moments, like Geordi's visor is actually a pretty good example of them outwitting Starfleet. But, to be fair, Starfleet should have seen that coming.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

ANDI: So, the problem I've always had with them is how incompetent they're portrayed. But at the same time it's like I don't feel like them and their plots and schemes is really what they were strong at - I feel like they would have been much better if they could just stab people in the face, you know?

KENNEDY: Right, but I feel like they learned early on that that's... And plus it's not like these were this house of random people that had these two women all of a sudden out of nowhere that were trying to gain footing; everybody knew who Duras was, everyone was familiar with that house. So everybody had an eye out for them so they couldn't just walk up someone and be like 'Ah hah, stabby, stabby! Guess what, this seat is mine now!' So yeah - I feel like they had to navigate that atmosphere the best way they could. I'm not saying they're best at it.

ANDI: (chuckles)

KENNEDY: You know, I feel like had they used a lot of these sexy tactics with Klingon men [it] probably would have worked a little bit better.

GRACE: Yeah.

KENNEDY: Because humans are just come like 'You are a whole lot right now, miss. I don't even know... I don't even know if I should make eye contact, or look at the window, I don't know what's going on.' So..I have such mixed feelings about them; I hate Lursa and B'Etor because they kept popping up. Frickin' Duras, not to be trusted, screw you guys. Anytime a Klingon can not only pair up with Ferengi, but Romulans as well, like yo, I can't even...like get out, get out, get out of my house.

GRACE: We don't know what they're about, if they're just willing to do that.

KENNEDY: Yeah - like, where are your scruples and where is your honor? There is no honor in that, and what is Klingon without their honor. But on the other hand, these chicks was just like 'Eyyyy' - they put it on everybody. B'Etor was all in Picard's face she was like 'Hey Boo.' She was like 'I like yer bald forehead.... That feels like smoothh...I wonder where it can go?'

(Much laughter)

KENNEDY: And Lursa never once was like 'Chick, sit down!' She was like 'Yeah, go get that. Go get 'im.' I was like - 'Fuck's goin' on here?'

ANDI: I think at the very least we can say that they were entertaining.

KENNEDY: Yeah.

GRACE: Yah.

ANDI: ...And they were fun to watch, so as much as I would have liked to see a little bit more competency in the scheming, I was never sad to see them. Y'know, like in DS9, when they showed up for that brief moment in DS9 and they were just like 'Get your hands away from my weapons!' I was like 'Yaayyyyy!' (claps) I was always excited to see them.

JARRAH: Yeah. Like, Barbara March also said that she felt like that the men in Klingon society got cooler and more tough and badass roles, and she was disappointed in that and also just- actually it was Soran who engineers LaForge's visor. So they just kind of watch through it, and make fun comments. But yeah, it was kind of disappointing that they just kept like hooking themselves up with like Seela and Soran who were kind of like, I would say, B-grade villains. Maybe Soran was a bit better, but... (sighs) Yeah. But they're definitely entertaining, and the actresses were doing the Klingon scenery-chewing - it was great.

GRACE: They had this whole Goneril and Regan thing going on, though, where they had a real ambition, and you kind of wanted to see where they would go with that if they got a step ahead. It was really intriguing, it was one of those things where it's like 'I don't know - what would they do if they win? I kind of want to see this play out.'

ANDI: What would the world be like with the Duras sisters in charge? I wouldn't mind knowing about that.

GRACE: IDW, are you listening?

(Laughter)

KENNEDY: I just I feel like if they weren't from House Duras I'd be all about them. But I am still so butt-hurt about what happened to Worf, that I can't even... Oh it's so torn. The woman side of me is like 'Hell yes.' The Klingon side of me is like 'Mmmmmnn...you heifers ain't shitttttttt.'

ANDI: So this Duras storyline kicks off with "Sins of the Father", which we also get Kahlest in. Who is...so awesome.

JARRAH: Awesome.

ANDI: OK; so I rewatched this episode the other day, and one of the things that I remembered is that I hate Duras with my whole heart.

KENNEDY: I mean just- ooh! Ooohh!

ANDI: Just the whole time I was like 'I want you to die - like now, and like terribly.' But the other thing is, Kahlest is awesome! So, she is Worf's nanny, and she survives Khitomer and then she kinda retires to have like, a chill life. I have a feeling - she doesn't get a whole lot of screen time, so there's a lot of stuff that you have to infer from her - but I kind of got the feeling that she was staying out of the way on purpose; that she knew that things could go bad for her if people started remembering her. So I felt like she was kind of chillin' out, just trying to make it through. She saves Picard's life - with stabbing...and everybody who listens to the show knows how much I love a good woman with a big knife. Mmmn. So she stabs a guy which is always endearing...



GRACE: Hot.

ANDI: ...and she gives the most legendary read of all time to K'impec.

KENNEDY: Yes. Calls him 'fat' to his face.

ANDI: Yeah. Oh my god, it's so good. Just a flick of the eyes and just the disdain. I hadn't watched this episode for years. Last time I watched this episode was in 2013. And years later, you know I'm saying 'I'm going to watch Klingon women' and somebody was like 'You have to watch Kahlest, because remember how-' And I was like 'I have never forgotten.' Years have gone by, and that read is still with me.

GRACE: It lives in your heart. It sticks with you.

ANDI: And the look on his face; he feels so small in that moment. It's amazing. She's just like 'No. You're not worthy of me.'

GRACE: 'Don't let the door to Sto'Vo'Kor hit you on the way out.'

KENNEDY: She read him. She dragged him like that old auntie who's not really your auntie, but she lives on your block, and she's everybody's auntie.

GRACE: You know those are the most vicious women that you don't want to cross.

KENNEDY: Right. She was there on the block when everybody else who moved in, and knew your dad when he was still shittin' his pants and here you go tryin' to talk smack to her, and she turns round looks at you like 'Boy, if you don't get out my face...'

(Laughter)

KENNEDY: Because what can you really say to that? What you gonna do, smack her? This is an old woman.

ANDI: So these are the kind of reads that I like the most, because if you're just there to mock somebody for their weight for no reason? No.

KENNEDY: Right.

ANDI: She reads who needs to get read. That's the difference.

GRACE: 'She reads who needs.' Can that be our slogan?

ANDI: (laughing) Yes...basically. So, I mean I love that she has, what? maybe five minutes? It's very short. And yet her presence is just like - ahh - years later and I'm still laughing about that, and I rewatched it, and it was just as glorious the second time around, and I was just like yes! Drag him!

KENNEDY: Old Klingon women not to be effed with.

ANDI: Absolutely.

JARRAH: Ah, Kennedy, did you want to talk about Ba'el?

KENNEDY: Worf finds this colony of Klingons and Romulans who have settled...you know, the descendants of the people who survived Khitomer, and the Romulans, because they're jerks, have pretty much established themselves as the governing body over this colony. But it's been so long since they landed there, that everybody's intermarried and had children and built the society. But because they're Romulans, they're still being like this jerky police state...thing, and they literally oppressed these Klingons to the point where they have no idea who they are culturally - they have no idea what their heritage is. And, you know, that goes to show how thorough oppression can be, when the people - the oppressed - have no idea what they're what they're being excluded from; it's being kept from them. Worf gets down there and he's like 'What? Klingons!? What?? Romulans!? Oh no, we got to go!' And gets caught. And comes to find out that there are still elements of Klingon culture being practiced amongst these people, but it's done the wrong way, like hunting tools are used as toys, battle songs are being sung as lullabies...And he's just like, 'Hold the phone! Give the phone to me! Let's talk about this!' - and pretty much just shakes it up completely, and falls in love with this girl...and I love when when Worf - aka Michael Dorn, aka my baby daddy - falls in love with people onscreen because the way he looks at women I'm just like 'Oh my god!!'

GRACE: You want *anyone* to look at you that way - god...

KENNEDY: I just...you know...I don't need these panties, anymore. Thanks.

(Much laughter)

KENNEDY: Not my...not my favorite. Anyway...so he falls in love with this PYT [Pretty Young Thing] ...'cause you could tell she was much too young for him. And he goes to pull her hair back, and she's got Romulan ears, and he's like 'Eurrhhh!' and recoils in horror, and she's like 'What's the problem? That's my daddy, that's my mom, what's up?' He was like 'Ohmygod I can't believe I was gonna... Eugh!' It forces Worf to come to terms with some of his own prejudices and discriminations, and it served to - I think - knock Worf off a couple of pegs, 'cause at that point in the Trek arc, you know, I think he had been promoted, he had long hair, so he had the whole Samson thing going on... And now, you know, he had to come to terms with ugly parts of himself that he had to move past, and truly be a progressive Starfleet officer. And I think leads this cultural rebellion. I can't remember if they leave, per se - I think they all stay put. I don't think anyone leaves the colony, but I think he shakes things up in terms of what access they have to what parts of their heritage...And Ba'el was just this quintessential caught-between-two-worlds character - you know, she loves her parents, this was the only life she knew. And...learning about a part of yourself that has been there all the time, but you never had access to...I can imagine this is an incredible experience for anybody, you know? So for her to realize that these two people who raised her and, you know, love her come from two groups who hate each other, and are hated by so many other people...like, I'm sure she had to deal with that and the actress had such an air of innocence to her performance that didn't lend to naivete, you know, there's a fine line between being unaware and ignorant...or oblivious. And she was very much a Klingon woman in the sense that 'Well, first of all you're not going to talk to me like that; I don't know where you come from, but where I come from you're not going to talk to me like that.' But then she was also very wide-eyed and ambitious- not ambitious, just open; she wanted to know, she wanted to learn. She was a sponge. She wanted to find out all these things about her. And I feel like they could have done so much with a character like that - even if, you know, it wasn't meant to be a recurring character on the terms of K'Ehleyr, or Lursa and B'Etor. But aesthetically I was fascinated by her - just to see, you know, that Romulan forehead underneath Klingon ridges, to me, was in of itself... And plus her hair - oh my god, those tracks! Let me tell you about this wig, though! Her hair was all the way down her back in copper ringlets. (whispering) I said 'Where did they get this wig...?'

(Laughter)

KENNEDY: (still whispering) I want it.

ANDI: I do think that's an interesting episode though, because one of the easiest ways to control a population is to force them to assimilate, and force them to get rid of their culture. And I always found that to be a very interesting episode even though it is funny to me that Worf is so angry that they're farming, like 'How dare you farm?!' Always made me kind of laugh. But that's an interesting episode, and she's interesting in it.

KENNEDY: Yeah, I think it served to show some of his own prejudices.

ANDI: Which you know we love!

GRACE: Yeah!

KENNEDY: Right. He's always been very culturally proud, which is great. But when the source of that pride and the reasoning behind that pride gets called into question, that's always interesting, to see how a character will react to that.

ANDI: Absolutely.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: So, moving on to DS9 we've got Grilka, and "House of Quark", which is one of my favorite episodes. Such a great episode, and she is great in it.

KENNEDY: Yes. Quark was like 'Hey boo.' And she was like 'What?? If you don't get outta my face...' And I love the fact that Grilka had like...a court.

(Chorus of agreement)

KENNEDY: She had like an entourage of people with her. She wasn't just out there.

GRACE: She had that whole royalty going for her.

ANDI: My favorite part of that episode is when Quark is trying to convince Gowron to rule in his favor, and Gowron's just got like this calculator-type thing, and he's trying to do accounting and he's just like 'What is this? I hate this. This is the worst thing that's ever happened to me,' and it's so funny. And I just love that kind of clash between Ferengi and Klingon that's like encapsulated in the scene where Quark's like 'And if you look at this, you can see that the profit here...' and Gowron's about ready to throw that calculator in his face. It's amazing.

JARRAH: And there's also just that awesome part where Grilka is like basically thanking Quark and it's like 'And because of that, I will allow you to remove your hand from my thigh.'

(Laughter)

JARRAH: Like, break every bone in your body, and he's just like 'Ha ha ha ha ha...'

KENNEDY: 'I'm in love.'

ANDI: Yeah I just saw "Family Business", and I feel like I understand Quark's attraction to strong women so much better now.

GRACE: Yeah.

ANDI: Because he's always like 'Here are my Dabo girls; I totally like FE-males to be submissive.' No you don't! Lies! The lies you tell. OK.

GRACE: You wanna be pushed around, and Grilka (whispers) wants to push you around.

ANDI: Look at all of Quark's like- he hits on Dax, who...Dax is like 'I will stab you, for sure.' And then he is totally into Grilka, and actually by the end of this episode I was like 'Yeah, I can see it. I can see it.' I just I think it's so funny that what he says and then what he does, and who he's obviously attracted to is like sooo...miles different - and he's all about the 'subjugation of FE-males', but he loves a strong woman.

KENNEDY: Yeah. I mean that's typical of a lot of men in general, though. I mean Moogie was never, you know...his mother was strong. And he always knew his mother was strong. So he had a good example, and he probably was outwardly saying 'I like submissive women' because that's what Ferengi men have been conditioned to believe.

GRACE: Yes.

ANDI: He also is pretty interested in dating lots of different races - he hits on everybody. He's almost as bad as Bashir.

JARRAH: Yeah, except for he likes strong women whereas Bashir...maybe not so much. He likes Dax, but he wishes Dax were more submissive.

ANDI: Sex kitten Dax!

JARRAH: Yeah. But Mary Kay Adams, who played Grilka, said that playing Grilka was like Christmas for her, because 'so many times in Hollywood, or in show business in general, women are not really allowed to be strong; we are tempered, our power is taken away. Playing the Klingon woman was such a joy because throughout my entire career I've had directors say to me "OK Mary Kay, just pull back a little bit." This is the first time I was ever told "OK, we need you to be stronger.'" And she says 'if you're a strong woman you're labeled a bitch, or threatening or difficult, or temperamental - or a whole lot of other things.' So - yeah! So that was kind of cool. Also if it makes you feel better, Kennedy, Grilka marries Worf in Star Trek Online. Not canon, but...

KENNEDY: Yeah, I remember reading that; (mutters) I guess it's fine...

(Much laughter)

GRACE: Better than nothing...?

KENNEDY: Hmmm...in my brain, Worf is married to me.

(Laughter)

GRACE: That's fair. That's fair.

KENNEDY: Yeah, Grilka was always...just that piercing gaze that Klingon women are expected to have...Sometimes, with some of the background actors, you know, a lot of them kind of you could tell were 'This is my strong face - EURRR!' And then there were women like Grilka and like Sirella to go forward, who didn't have to say things.

GRACE: Their piercing face was their resting face.

KENNEDY: Yes.

ANDI: Well I mean Kahlest basically didn't have to say anything, like her words were the cherry on top of that look. So... All the best Klingon women pull that off.

KENNEDY: Good stuff.

GRACE: That said, shall we talk about Sirella?

KENNEDY: Yesss.

GRACE: Yes, please...

KENNEDY: The closest thing to Lukara we will ever [see]... So, Lukara was the wife of Kahless...in lore - and we never see Lukara; we hear about her. We saw Kahless 'cause they cloned him and brought him back, and all his imagery and stuff...but we never heard about Lukara, and I cosplayed as a Klingon in September; I was trying to be Lukara because we'd never seen her, I thought that would give me more range to do whatever I wanted, but I was like 'I still need a point of reference; who is out there that I can look at in an attempt to build on this fandom?' And I used Sirella primarily, as a base, because she was so different from the other Klingon women that we've seen in the sense that they all had some type of applied warrior thing. Like they were - Grilka notwithstanding - everybody was in the mix somehow. Either they served on a ship, or they were members of a house, like the Duras sisters, or something like that, whereas Sirella was just like 'I'm going to sit here on my throne. I'm going to make sure all my royal ducks are in their royal order. And if you have a problem with that, you can come see me and my royal bat'leth.'

(Laughter)

KENNEDY: ...And did not get rattled. You know, that just that reflection of partnership as well; Martok spoke so highly of Sirella before we saw her; you would think that Sirella would have descended on high on like beams of light with - I don't know - whatever kind of adornment; flowers, jewels...dismembered ears - whatever Klingon is fine to decorate with...

GRACE: Wait, are you saying she didn't??

KENNEDY: She stepped off of a craft. She stepped off a ship and onto Deep Space 9, and nodded 'Wassup?' to Sisko and kept it pushing like you would. I thought that there would have been fanfare, and all types of trumpets, and satyrs and whatever the way Martok was talking about her. As she stepped off her ship she was 'Hey Boo.' She looked at Sisko like 'What's up, hu-mon?' And left. And I was like 'Yo! That was the most G-shit ever...' (drowned by laughter)

KENNEDY: Oh, she was so, so G. And Sisko turned and looked at Martok like 'Yo, that's your girl, though?'

(Much laughter)

KENNEDY: And Martok was like 'Yeah, dawg; she bad, ain't she? I know it, yeah, let me tell you about...'. And then they kinda walked off and did their thing. So...like we were saying before, about Worf would've been that much stronger had he had K'Ehleyr by his side. Martok is - I mean, Martok was always pretty formidable, anyway, there's no one that could say that Martok wasn't anything - but to see that this was his wife, this was the one that ran that house, it's like 'Yup, that makes all the sense. Of course you have a dragon-wife. Of course you do.'

GRACE: There's the power couple we've been waiting for.

KENNEDY: Of course you have a dragon wife. So to see her - you know - just kind of casually look at Worf...she looked down her nose at all the men on that ship. 'Where is Jadzia? Where is this one trying to get into my house? Where is she at, though?'

(Laughter)

KENNEDY: And Jadzia knew she said 'Pffff - I know Klingons. Come on, I know Kling-. Listen, listen, listen. I know what I'm doing.' Worf was like 'Babe, I don't know.' She said. 'Trust me, I got this. Go do whatever; go sit in your sauna cave full of swords...'

(Laughter)

KENNEDY: '...for three days. All right, let me let me talk family history with this lady.' Worf's like 'Ok.'

GRACE: 'Go play with your pain sticks, dear.'

KENNEDY: Right. 'Go ahead, hun, have fun. You guys enjoy your bachelor party, I guess.' And Sirella read her to filth. She's like 'Oh I love how you think it's cute, you're just gonna come in my family. Look at these fake behind candles, are they real candles? They not real candles. Next you going to do this shit make that shit real. I'll come back tomorrow.' And Dax was just like 'Well, damn.' And...just seeing that...cause a lot of actors, I feel like, when they have that opportunity to play a strong woman, can get a little extra, like 'I'm strong face!' Like I said before: 'Look at me, this is my strength!' - whereas she was just like 'I don't even want to be here. I was supposed to be on another planet getting a pedicure, now you got me on some dumb shit...this raggedy behind station. Who this just s'posed to be married into my family, where she at?' And I was just like 'Yo, everything about her was...ev-er-ything! The best part about Sirella was the fact that she was not too big for her own britches. Once Dax stepped to her and was like 'Listen! I don't give a shit about your family or your heritage, I'm marrying this big lug right here, whether you like it or not.' And Sirella had nothing to do but respect that. And she gave that respect for her when they got married, she was like 'Hey, I was wrong, too. It's cool, it's whatever.' And I was like 'Wow, what exemplary behavior from a position of power.'

GRACE: God, I love this episode so much.

KENNEDY: I know, I was just like... Oh, it was just beautiful. Everything about that episode, even to Dax's bachelorette party-

GRACE: Dax has the BEST bachelorette party.

KENNEDY: That giant Polynesian dude, was just like tits out, he's like 'Babe...!'

GRACE: Oh god, yes...

JARRAH: The Ferengi dance is my favorite...

GRACE: Oh my godddd....

JARRAH: Let's all just grab our ear lobes and jump in a circle.

(Laughter)

GRACE: Would the human equivalent be like 'Just grab your junk, thrust it out..?'

KENNEDY: I guess. I guess. But yes, Sirella was...everything Beyoncé hopes she can be. I said it. I said it! I don't know how many of the Beyhive actually listens to the show, but...

ANDI: Well, we did it once decide to name one of the Starfleet ships after Beyoncé - the USS Beyoncé.

GRACE: The shuttlecraft is the Solange - I'm callin' that.

ANDI: Dang, shade.

KENNEDY: That is shade. See, I'm shady enough or I would call it the USS Solange...and have the runabout be the Beyoncé or something.

(Exclamations)

KENNEDY: I'm mean, though. I'm petty.

ANDI: (Laughs) We were going to talk about B'Elanna, but I do not think we have time to do her justice, so...I think at this point we're going to have to do a separate episode on B'Elanna...and she deserves it, let's face it; she deserves a whole episode.

JARRAH: Yeah, I think you might be right.

ANDI: We forgot to mention that the animated series does have a Klingon woman in "The Time Trap" and...the only thing I really remember about her is she is rocking an amazing afro, and I love it. And that's a good episode, so you should check that out. Does anybody want to talk about this woman from Enterprise, which I have not seen?

JARRAH: Sure - I just watched the episode, so I will, just super quickly. Basically, Enterprise has almost no significant Klingon women; I would say Laneth is the only one. She is this lieutenant and warrior who's infected with the augment virus, and she's involved in the battle against the Enterprise and the Columbia, and she only has a couple of scenes, but she's another person who just really owns those scenes, and you remember her because almost her first lines is she comes in to tell K'Vagh - the general or whatever - that his son died in the battle, and she's just so unapologetic about it, she's just like 'Yeah, your son died. He had no honor. Suck it up.'

ANDI: That does sound pretty Klingon-y .

JARRAH: Yeah, it is pretty great; like the guy's kind of upset, and she's just like 'He was killed by a human! Pshhh!' So...

GRACE: Weak.

JARRAH: Yeah. Then a little bit later she's really upset because, you know, the virus makes them lose their forehead ridges, and she's talking about how her children will, you know, face stigma and they'll never be accepted again on the Klingon homeworld. And she would rather die than live like that...but eventually, you know, decides like the rest of them to just take the cure. But, they had this dream of being super Klingons, and she's clearly pretty upset by that, and I guess would not be wrong about trying to fit in looking radically different...and I think that's something that we can use the Klingons to talk about in our society. When you look especially back at like K'Ehleyr and...I know we're not going to talk about B'Elanna but the same issue of being like visibly racialized as like a biracial person. Or just visibly different. That...it matters, because you can compare K'Ehleyr and Troi, and how Troi's all like super positive about being biracial but as Robin Roberts points out in her book *Sexual Generations* that's because...you know, most people don't even realize she *is*, and she's never experienced any real prejudice because of that.

(General agreement)

KENNEDY: Plus both of Deanna's parents were white, whereas B'Elanna is half Latinx. There's a whole other cultural background there that influences how people interact with each other from other cultures.

JARRAH: Yeah - and we know that B'Elanna was bullied by her human relatives for looking part Klingon. But then she never really could feel like she fit in in Klingon society because she looked too human, and therefore would be considered probably weaker.

KENNEDY: Right. With a lot of - I don't wanna say marginalized, or even minorities - but a lot of people of color in their communities, there's such a thing as cultural gatekeeping. It's the act of trying to preserve the nuances of one's culture...you know, against assimilation through the dominant, or at least the more populous environment. So, a lot of things that are inherited or are indicative to these specific cultures won't get discussed openly with people outside of that group. I understand that, being a person of color there's definitely times where I feel compelled to gatekeep when it comes about things, you know, in my culture that I don't wanna talk about... but then, there are things that need to get discussed in order for there no longer to be stigmas; in order for these problems to go away, certain conversations have to be had. And I think in B'Elanna's case, you know, that's definitely true there. It totally makes sense to me that growing up with, you know, half of your family being Latino or Hispanic not wanting to talk about certain things with people that fall under that 'other' category. And as far as they were concerned, even though B'Elanna was blood-related to them, she was definitely an other. So I'm sure there were some things - nuances - that they didn't discuss with her...intentionally and unintentionally. Which is definitely not something that B'Elanna needed.

GRACE: Especially not when she was a kid, to have to deal with it...

KENNEDY: Yeah. Yeah. Like 'C'mon, Dad, what you doin'? So I feel like...if nothing else - because we really don't have time to get into B'Elanna - but if nothing else, B'Elanna serves as an example to... let people live. You know...you can't expect a person to possess certain attributes, or exhibit certain behaviors because they come from such and such and so-and-so. At the end of the day, you know, what matters is what their contributions are, how they interact with people, and what, you know, their moral code is - which is inherently Star Trek, anyway. Nobody cares - at least, no one should care - where you come from, what you look like, who you worship, as long as you're not kicking puppies or pushing old ladies into traffic. Like - you know - do you. And I think if B'Elanna had more people in her life growing up telling her to just live her best life, then she would not be so...consumed with defining herself as human, or as Klingon, or as neither, or both. But then again, you know, we also wouldn't have had badass Maquis B'Elanna, so...



GRACE: Yeah. We lose the agro-ness, we lose her excellence.

KENNEDY: That's true.

ANDI: Well I think this has been a really fascinating discussion. Thank you so much for coming, Kennedy, that was a blast.

KENNEDY: Thank you for having me. I'm just... all day, everyday.

ANDI: Absolutely. Did anybody have anything else they wanted to add before we wrap things up?

KENNEDY: Yeah, if I may...you can find Black Tribbles on iTunes, Soundcloud, Stitcher radio, blacktribbles.com. We stream live Thursdays 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on phillycam.org/radio/listen. If you are in the Philadelphia area, or locally, we can be found on your FM dial WPPM 106.5 LP. We are on all of the social medias: the Facebooks, the Instagrams, the Tumblrs - the inter-webs. So check us out, we'd love to hear from you. And you guys in particular, we're in the middle of our #misogyNO campaign. My guys...I can't even take credit for it, it's not my idea. My guys put together a campaign to talk about misogyny in geek culture. So...

ANDI: That's awesome.

GRACE: Fabulous!

KENNEDY: Yeah, they rock. I can't even... I'm just like 'Ohh - look at my boys!' So check us out for sure. And...it was just great. Thank you so much for having me.

ANDI: Absolutely. And Grace, where can people find you elsewhere on the Internet?

GRACE: You can find me on Twitter at @bonecrusherjenk

ANDI: And Jarrah?

JARRAH: You can find me on tumblr at trekkiefeminist.tumblr.com.

ANDI: And the easiest place to find me is on Twitter at @firstimetrek where I'm live-tweeting through my first time through Star Trek. Thanks so much for listening, everyone.