

Women at Warp Episode 80: Working Women at Warp

****INTRO MUSIC****

Andi: Hi and welcome to Women at Warp, a Roddenberry Star Trek podcast. Join us as our crew of four women Star Trek fans boldly go on our biweekly mission to explore a favorite franchise. My name is Andi and thanks for tuning in. Today we're actually going to be talking about sex work and Star Trek. We're very excited, very deep and interesting topic, before we get into that we do have a little bit of housekeeping. Our show is entirely supported by patrons on Patreon so if you are interested in giving us money, you can do so for as little as a dollar a month and get awesome rewards. We do thanks on social media, we do watch along commentaries, you get, sometimes you get a sneak peek on things before we air them, cool stuff. So, if you're interested in that we're at <https://www.patreon.com/womenatwarp> You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts, or wherever you get our podcast. And just a heads up that we are now on Spotify. So if Spotify is your podcast listening of choice we are there now. So, today I am joined with Jarrah.

Jarrah: Hello.

Andi: Hi. And we have two guests today. First up Caitlin would you like to give us a little head's up about yourself and your Star Trek fandom?

Caitlin: Hi this is Caitlin. I was actually just telling someone today that I've been watching Star Trek since well before I can really remember but my thing was I think really TNG franchise stuff and I remember falling asleep to TNG pretty much every day when I was a preteen and teen so pretty much anything TNG and beyond. I'm pretty well steeped in that.

Andi: That's cool I can just picture it, your TNG lullaby, dulcet tones of Picard just lulling you to sleep.

Caitlin: Pretty nice stuff.

Andi: And we also have Jane with us. Hello Jane.

Jane: Hi my name is Jane, Jane Way kind of fits the whole like people, it brings it around as you can probably tell, I'm a big Star Trek fan. I actually got a late start on Trek, I didn't start watching it until like maybe three years ago. Super sheltered Catholic childhood. Awesome. But, I have autism and Star Trek just became my like special interests so I was just talking with everyone earlier about how I watched TNG like through the entire series like twice in the last month. Gene Roddenberry's legacy of just like how he saw the best in us, even like the best in humanity even like at our worst was really inspiring for that kind of hope. And of course like Sci-Fi and all that stuff it was just, it really appealed to me and I couldn't look away as soon as I got into it.

Andi: Yeah, it kind of happens for me that way too. I am also a newer fan. Actually yesterday my mom and I were out to dinner and she asked me, like, "Does any of your Sci-Fi have like hope for the future?", and I was like "Mom, Star Trek! Star Trek has hope for the future!" And I was like telling her all the things like humanity has reached another place and we've made it. We actually dealt with our crap and made a better humanity. And yeah that's the great dream of Star Trek.

Jane: It really is.

Andi: So, we actually have a topic today that I have been wanting to do, and Jarrah can attest, I've been wanting to do this topic for literally years. We're going to be talking about how sex work is portrayed on Star Trek. Spoiler, not always very great.

Caitlin: Nope.

Andi: Sorry if I'm shocking everyone or disappointing them but sadly not so great. Actually when we reached out for comments the first Facebook comment we got within like 5 seconds was like one of the questions we asked was were there any episodes where you thought this topic was handled well or portrayed sensitively, and his response was just no.

Jane: Yeah, fortunately, fortunately you've got a seasoned hooker on the show to kind of give you a play by play. Spoilers... It's me.

****laughter****

Andi: Yeah, so, we're going to start out a little bit more generally and then we'll start getting into some of the episodes. I think it might be helpful to kind of hit on some of the terminology you were going to be using. So does anyone feel comfortable talking about like what we would define as sex work in general?

Jane: Sex work is people working consensually in the sex work industry. Escorts, prodommes, cam models, strippers, and everything in between. We do either, like direct or indirect sexual labor and emotional labor in exchange for money. It's not to be confused with sex trafficking, which is like unconsensual and abusive and not at all the same with sex work and a lot of people get that mixed up.

Andi: Yeah, we're definitely going to be talking about the differences between trafficking and sex work when we're going through some of these episodes I think.

Jane: Yeah, yeah it's stuff that definitely, especially in The Original Series, it's definitely like something that they don't do very well.

Andi: Does anyone have anything they want to add to that?

Caitlin: Jane, I think that's one of... one of the better definitions of sex work I've heard someone give, incredibly succinct and very comprehensive.

Jane: Thank you!

Andi: And I mean, it can encompass a lot of things but the biggest problem I see with how it gets portrayed in the media in general is this conflation of trafficking and sex work. We'll talk about that more. I also think that there's just a lot of general kind of tropes and problematic portrayals that you see a lot and not just in Star Trek but in general.

Jane: Yeah.

Caitlin: Yeah.

Andi: The first one I was thinking of is the idea of the disposable sex worker. Or sometimes you hear this called cringe worthily the dead hooker trope.

Jane: Yeah.

Andi: And, that's just one of the more upsetting ones where you just have sex workers that are just killed off.

Jane: It's very integral to our dehumanization. Like, if you even look at movies, um, what's that movie...

Caitlin: Oh the bachelorette party one?

Jane: Yeah, the bachelorette party one where she was like our bodies are only acceptable and funny in this movie because we're dead. Mostly everyone consumes our labor whether you're watching porn, or the most common one is porn you're consuming our labor, and then you're pointing fingers and you.... you're like Donald Trump who's frickin like the whole Stormy Daniels thing and Jessica Drake thing. And then him and his red states are making pornography, like, declared dangerous. But, you're still consuming us, and consuming our labor. It's like... I always think of it as they're pointing with one finger but three fingers are pointing back at them. You consume our labor and condemn us in the same breath.

Andi: Yeah, and one of the bigger problems that happens with this trope is that it's often used as humor.

Jane: Yeah! It's because our deaths are funny. Like, it's tragic when anyone else dies, but our deaths are funny because... Why? And I urge people to unpack that. Why are our deaths funny? Why is it okay when we die? Why are our lives, why do our lives not matter?

Andi: Yeah. So, we are actually going to have to talk about this trope when we talk further in the episodes. That's unfortunate. Do you guys have any examples in that larger Sci-Fi universe of a good portrayal? Because I can't think of very many.

Jane: Well, I know and this is like I'll admit I'm not familiar with this one super well because I never really got into it, I know, sue me, but Firefly? I've been told has really good portrayal of sex workers? The thing I find with Sci-Fi, and why there's like not a lot of representation of sex work, is because a lot of the times that's non-sex workers creating their ideal perfect humanity, or some form of that, in people's minds and just in general sex work is a product of capitalism. So, when you get rid of all that stuff, there's no need to represent us which is problematic in itself. But, you're looking at non-sex workers portraying their ideal society, that's a society that does the least harm and they're viewing sex work as harmful. So, they're not representing us because in their ideal world we don't exist.

Andi: That's really interesting. I would agree with that, because one of the questions that I was thinking when we were thinking about this topic I was like in a post scarcity like non-capitalist society how would sex work even even work? Like would there be payment? How? You know what I mean? Will it be more like therapy?

Jane: Well, the thing is, is that sex work isn't just sex, it's emotional labor, it's companionship, it's healing by touch, it's healing, so like in an ideal society, in my ideal society like we'd still like maybe cash isn't there, maybe capitalism is dismantled, fingers crossed, knock on wood, but maybe it isn't, and sex workers get paid in social capital, sex workers get paid in something being transactional doesn't mean that it's just money involved. Like, there can be like trade and barter of services. I do it all the time, sometimes like hey like I'll trade a session for this. It doesn't have to be just money, like I'll trade like a session if you like fly me in your ship somewhere that I need to go. Like, the labor and the skills that come with sex work, like it's branding, it's marketing, it's like you're basically a CEO of your own company. There's customer service. There's writing ad copy, there's all these skills that are transferable, even if you're not fu... riding dick you'll still have skills that are really relevant regardless, of whether it's the 21st century or the 24th century. Like, there's so many other skills that people fail to realize that sex workers have, and that we'd absolutely exist in your ideal Sci-Fi society. People just don't like to think that, because they like to think we're victims, they like to think that we're excluded, and in a world free of exploitation we wouldn't exist. That's not true. We have always been here. We have been the pillars of many societies. And there's absolutely no friggin way that we don't exist in the 24th century and beyond.

Jarrah: Yeah, I mean in the book *Treconomics: The Economics of Star Trek* by Manu Saadia, he talks about how it's like Star Trek as a post scarcity society. So, one thing is that basically everyone has access to the replicator so no one's going to go hungry, or run out of clothes and as they say in Star Trek we work to better ourselves and society. So that's open to a lot of different paths and not all of it, like not everyone ends up in Starfleet and that's not a bad thing.

Jane: Yeah absolutely. Like, if you look at we're bettering society, what's like... I'd better society one person at a time, by creating relationships, and creating... like I'm your confidant, I'm your lover, I am your person to go to, then I make my client's worlds better, and I make my fan's worlds better and there's like... that totally aligns with that quote. It's not just about the money.

Jarrah: I just wanted to highlight something that you said actually, when you know you were talking about the example from the what was that movie called *The Slumber Party* or the hangover or...

Andi: It's "Rough Night".

Jarrah: Thank you, okay, so and this was the definition part, too, but just like to... that need to realize that sex work includes people of all genders even and like it's absolutely gendered but also the portrayal of it is really gendered too. And so that's why like we're talking about it on this podcast and in Star Trek we are so... one of our listeners asked like can you think of any examples of male sex workers in Star Trek and all of the examples were like I would say like debatably didn't really count. It was like people who ended up being seduced, or you know wouldn't really fall under our definitions. So that's just like an interesting point in and of itself that the representation is so different.

Andi: Yeah, the only one that I could think of off the top of my head that was just definitively definitely a sex worker was actually from the last Discovery episode. So, yeah I mean it's just really the idea of a sex worker is almost always considered to be a woman, even though that's not necessarily the case.

Jane: Yeah, which I am like, I'm gender fluid, like I'm a trans person, and there's so many trans.... Sex workers doesn't just mean like just woman, there's so many, like my community is so diverse. It's again, non-sex workers and their idea of sex work, and that ends up getting portrayed in movies and media, etc.

Andi: All right. So, let's start getting into some of these specific episodes. First up is "Wolf in the Fold" [TOS Season 2, Episode 7] from the Original Series which is affectionately known as, not by us, as the Jack the Ripper episode. We actually did an episode completely on this episode so if you're interested in like a deeper dive in that that's one of the first episodes we ever did actually.

[\[http://www.womenatwarp.com/episode-4-wolf-in-the-fold/\]](http://www.womenatwarp.com/episode-4-wolf-in-the-fold/)

Jarrah: Yeah I think it's around episode 5 [Transcribers note: it's episode 4, see link above]

Andi: Yeah, and it's also the genesis of Sue's science corner so a little bit of Women at Warp history there. Yeah, so this is the so called Jack the Ripper episode, we have Scotty being taken basically for to be like cheered up, I guess you could call it or like I don't know make him calmer.

Caitlin: It's about him getting over his hatred of women!

Jane: Yeah, let's make him not hate women.

Caitlin: Let's make sex workers make him not hate women anymore. Let's make them responsible for getting him over misogyny somehow.

Jane: Yeah, as if it's on sex workers to fix shitty men.

Caitlin: That's basically what this episode was.

Jane: Yeah, I'm like okay, and that's like, and that came with the Louis C.K. stuff, and that came as so many times all these devious shitty men, they come out, and they're like... and people are like "Why didn't she just hire a hooker? You would have saved all of us "normal" people from having to deal with this, if you just like hired a sex worker." I'm like wow thanks it's not the onus on sex workers to like fix your hating women if Scotty hates women, he's going to hate women. It's like, it's not our parking problem.

Jarrah: Yeah, and if you can't trust him to treat a woman co-worker humanely is really like fair or ethical to basically yeah send him on a date with a sex worker?

Jane: It's not! Because, you know, because you are recognizing that he would treat a non-sex worker crappy, so, you put him with a sex worker specifically on that fact. Like it's just like.... *groans frustratedly*

Andi: I love how there's not actually any words, just like wordless angry noises...

Jane: Yeah! And gesturing vaguely at things! People need to stop thinking that it's sex workers responsibility to be an outlet for shitty men who hate people, who hate women and femme's. It's not my job to correct that. It's not my job to take that violence so you don't have to. It's not more acceptable for me to get put in danger because like you see it is like I'm supposed to be that outlet. That's so not cool.

Andi: The other problem we have is that she, the character, immediately gets murdered.

Jane: Yeah.

Andi: Like, right off the bat.

Jarrah: Well, and then Scotty's standing there with a knife in his hand and everyone's reaction was like, "Oh no. How do we prove Scotty's innocent?"

Jane: Yeah! What the frick is that crap?

Jarrah: I just watched that episode earlier today and I was just like, uh-hh.

Andi: Yeah that was one of the episodes when I was starting to watch TOS that I was like, what is this episode? I was so disturbed by it. The whole episode, the priority they have is not to find justice for women that have been murdered, their priority is to get Scotty off the hook for murders that they actually are a little bit nervous that maybe he did.

Jarrah: Yeah!

Andi: Like, they don't want to think he did it but maybe he did it. But like what's really important is that we get him away.

Jane: They admit to putting him with the sex worker because he hates women. And then the sex worker gets murdered. They're like, "oh maybe he's innocent. Maybe he like, didn't do it."

Andi: And yet, there was a Jack the Ripper ghost alien.

Jane: Yeah.

Andi: So, he actually turned out to be innocent. But the thing is they don't know that. That's the key thing is they don't know that and they're still willing to prioritize his freedom and his ability to get away with it, essentially.

Jane: There was no way to predict that there's going to be a random Jack the Ripper ghost alien. The one thing I did like though, is that the father of the one that got murdered was only angry about his daughter who a sex worker getting murdered. He wasn't angry, he was actually very supportive of his daughter dancing in the club that they were at. That was the only redeemable part of that episode was that the father wasn't mad that his daughter was in the industry, just that she got murdered, he wanted justice for her. That I appreciated.

Andi: It seems like this planet is like kind of like pre-Risa in that it seems like that is the point of the planet, not necessarily just sex work but like pleasure is their highest ideal which would obviously include sex. So, I got the sense that they as a planet did not have an issue with it, and it was more that the Enterprise dudes were kind of bringing some of their issues in with it.

Caitlin: Yeah, they kept talking about how Scotty has this huge resentment of women and we're going to use sex workers to cure him of this resentment of women. And, they keep talking amongst themselves about all this resentment he holds towards women. And you know like five minutes later they find him in this alley with a woman who's been stabbed 12 times this sex worker that they sent him away with to like cure him of his resentment, he's holding a knife, she's dead of 12 stab wounds. But, we're going to make sure that Scotty's innocent, obviously. And then they bring in another woman to like prove his innocence, and they turn their backs, and she's dead like a million stab wounds and Scotty again, is holding a knife. But again, they're going to try and like make sure Scotty's fine. This man who's resentful of women.

Andi: It also comes out of nowhere. So, it's super like... it's kind of like the episode "The Outcast" [TNG Season 5, Episode 17] in TNG where they suddenly decide Worf had huge problems with women, was super sexist. It's like today Scotty is a misogynist, and it's like.... Okay...

****Laughter****

Caitlin: There was a lot in the Original Series that hinted at it all over the place. What was shocking about this one was that they came right out and said it. It made more sense for it to be there, than for it to not be there at all.

Jane: Yeah, that's like the thing with the Original Series. It doesn't just jump out at you out of nowhere like it didn't age well, the undertones of like misogyny and whore-phobia are just like blatant throughout, even the one episode in TOS with the andriod, where she's basically her creator's sex slave and she's like he's Captain Kirk slap Captain Kirk, no emotions. And like all of this stuff where it's just it's not out of nowhere for this episode. It's like very prevalent. Like, there are so many things that were ahead of its time with TOS, but it's treatment of women and femmes were not one of them.

Caitlin: And they were like laughing about it. I mean in the club they were just laughing like oh ha ha ha he's resentful towards women ha ha ha, funny. I think what bothered me, actually what bothered me about this

episode was that with it they tried to blame this on his head injury as if it wasn't part of like an ongoing pattern of a misogyny. They were like oh the only reason like he doesn't like women is because he got hit in the head.

****laughter****

Jarrah: I didn't know that was a thing!

Andi: Let's hope it's not.

Jarrah: Wait, can we just like hit a whole bunch of people in the head and reverse it?

Jane: I don't know, do we try? Sorry, is that my job, should i be hitting people in the head for all of you "regular people"?

Andi: So, let's talk about "Mudd's Women" [TOS Season 1, Episode 3] though, because, so "Mudd's Women" in case people do not remember is the one where Mudd our favorite character (that's sarcasm) shows up on the Enterprise with three women that he's going to basically sell to miners.

Jarrah: The type that excavate rock not the type that are underage.

****laughter****

Jarrah: For anyone listening that might need that clarification.

Andi: So, basically they're going to get sold to a bunch of dudes on a mining planet that don't know how to wash their pots.

Jarrah: Yes.

Andi: So, thoughts about this is episode?

Jarrah: Yeah, we did an episode on Mudd [<http://www.womenatwarp.com/episode-11-his-name-is-mudd/>]and looked more into the background of this character and in the descriptions he was basically described as a "space pimp" and in the *Captains' Logs: The Unauthorized Complete Trek Voyages* for Mark Daniels who is one of the regular directors on the series, he said that this episode was designed to talk about "Basically prostitution at large which was in the papers every day. We were not promoting it or coming out against it. All we're saying is that it happens here and it happens in outer space and the censors let it go."

Jane: But that's the thing is specifically this episode this isn't sex work. This isn't prostitution this is sex trafficking.

Caitlin: Thank you.

Jane: So, it's not like, it's not even relevant, like prostitution being prevalent... That makes no sense. He's not the girls, and like he wants to say he's not promoting or bashing, but what you're really doing sex work a disservice, you're doing prostitution a disservice, by conflating it with human trafficking and it's just... Oh no.

Andi: The push back that you hear is that they wanted it, that they wanted to go and get their husbands or whatever.

Jane: It doesn't matter if they like eventually we're okay with it. It's like there's still that power dynamic where they couldn't leave if they wanted to. It's like maybe they're lucky that they wanted that life, that still doesn't make it prostitution, because that power dynamic still exists where he has power over them and he's going to sell them. And, the fact that like if they didn't want to go down that path they had no choice but to. It doesn't matter if they like oh like miraculously my choices align with the oppression that I am experiencing. It's still the fact that it exists because you can't if you wanted to make others choices you couldn't. You don't have that freedom.

Jarrah: Yeah, and it's not like Kirk is offering them really other choices.

Jane: Which is another fricking thing! Dude, hello! Maybe help the trafficked girls get away or something. That's the nice thing to do. Although don't get me started on Kirk and his fricking, Kirk is just like, not consent. He's not good at that.

Andi: Yeah, we did talk about this episode a little bit more. So y'all can check it out if you want us to make fun of the drugs that make them beautiful because that's also hilarious. Otherwise we can start talking about Star Trek V [The Final Frontier] which is the infamous three-breasted cat-woman, stripper, dancer person, and Kirk murders her, or maybe murders her? We don't know. It's not even important enough to make it clear.

Jane: Honestly, are you shocked? Would you be shocked? I'd be shocked if he didn't.

Andi: Yeah, I mean but the thing that makes it so annoying though is like it's not clear, but the fact that they didn't even bother to make it clear like they didn't care enough to make it explicit whether or not she survived that is something gross on...

Jane: It's just the fact that like it's once again representing that like our lives really don't matter. Like, who cares like we serve a plot device, and then outside of that we just don't matter. That's like a very common way that sex workers are represented in media, such as Star Trek, and everything that's likely just to serve your point, and then like ultimately our humanity and our lives don't matter.

Jarrah: You know, and that also spills over into the real world when you have the police investigating deaths of sex workers and in many cases really not taking it seriously or disappearances. The case in Vancouver where I'm from, of the missing or murdered women in the downtowny side is a really classic example where the police for years and years and years denied what people on the ground were saying that there is a serial killer loose because they're like "oh they're a sex worker and they probably just like left, they probably just ran away and didn't tell anyone" and it was pretty awful and of course intersected in that case with race quite strongly. But, like these portrayals matter and when you treat sex workers as disposable in media it does not help the situation of them being treated as disposable in real life.

Jane: Exactly, and that's the same with missing folk from the guy village in Toronto. MacArthur, who was caught while facing his sixth murder. The police are... and like with the Laura Wells, like Maggie's in Toronto and like the sex work community were out looking for her, we were out looking for her and the police refused to look for her because she might have just run away. Turns out the bar her body was in the morgue all these months, they just didn't give a shit to identify her and that's just, it just speaks to these media representations of how sex workers are disposable relates right back into like how the public and how the police treat us like, they just didn't bother to identify her body. This is what happens when you don't give a shit about sex workers.

Andi: So, moving on to TNG you have an episode "The Perfect Mate" [TNG Season 5, Episode 21] which is kind of an interesting episode in that I'm not sure how you would define her role. I mean I think you could make a case for her being trafficked. I think you could make a case for her for having more agency, but it's not clear

cut I don't think. So "The Perfect Mate" for people who do not remember is the one where Picard has Famke Janssen because she's a fav girl she's so beautiful, she comes and is going to be like a diplomatic gift. And she is supposed to be the perfect woman and she's going to imprint on her husband and be the perfect mate and Picard actually kind of falls in love with her. They have a romance that she ends up imprinting on Picard instead.

Caitlin: And this felt more like forced marriage to me instead of instead of sex work although the trafficking bit, I can see that playing in, but this definitely felt like... I know Picard in it, talks about arranged marriage, I'm like arranged marriage, fuck you, no. This is forced marriage. Because there was no way for her to say no at all. There was no way.

Jane: But that's the thing about bringing back to my earlier point about work not just being about money. Like, if you look back in history, like, companionship and sex have always been in one form or another transactional, so like, yeah, forced marriage or trafficking, those aren't the same as sex work, but when you look at trading companionship for diplomatic relations, for property, like just Google what a dowry is like, these are things that have existed. If it had been a consensual like imprint, these are things that overlap into like broadening people's perspective on like what's the value of sex and companionship outside of the monetary value, there are so many other applications for the skill set that we have. But, again not conflating them with like a non-consensual like trafficking or like arranged marriage or like forcing people into situations like that. It was definitely like again this episode is just like dehumanizing like victims and sex workers just more because like we just exist as like a tool to or a plot device.

Andi: One thing that's interesting is the fact that Picard and Kamala have so much chemistry that it makes it kind of confusing because they have like such an intense connection. The thing that really disturbed me about this episode forgetting everything else is that she was like groomed since she was a child. That to me is like the line I cannot get past. A lot of this episode is very much a team Crusher versus team Picard like they see it very differently and they have this conflict over what exactly is this and is it moral. The part that I can't get over is that she was groomed since she was a child. And does she really have the ability to consent in the agency to consent when she was brought up to do this.

Jane: No and that's the thing with also, like when you look at when a trauma happens, like when something un-consensual happens it stuns our emotional growth like can you really grow and flourish and develop yourself as an adult if you've been groomed into abuse. And like it's just, again, like she's just a tool, she's just a tool to them, and it doesn't matter if you make the best of that situation, it's still a bad situation. Right? Like it's still not good.

Caitlin: I just found like there was one line from Riker in this episode that just made my stomach turn. And I don't know if you guys remember it, but he said about it being a policy of his, or like a rule of his to never open another man's gift.

Andi: Oh gosh...

Caitlin: He said that to Kamala, and I was like "oh my god".

Jane: That's like a theme with Riker. It's not just like it's just specific to that episode. He's is a very much, and that's even in Enterprise, Tucker, like even when the doctor is like, "oh yeah you should totally fuck my wife" and he's like "No, I don't fuck other dude's wives." Even though they're like a totally poly species, and very fine with that, that's just like a prevalent theme throughout all of the ladies man type characters in Trek through all the series is that they don't fuck with another man's woman and it's just a very fucked up thing.

Caitlin: It's like a property thing like you are someone's property.

Jane: Yeah, and that's just... And I find that interesting that it's like Kirk, Riker, and Tripp...

Jarrah: Paris too, with Kes.

Jane: Yeah, they'll all ladies mans, but they all have this fucked up view of women as property.

Andi: I do want to talk about Risa, because I think Rise is interesting.

Jane: Basically, Risa is this climate controlled resort island paradise where like the entire culture the entire native species is revolved around keeping visitors and giving them a good time. So, it's basically a brothel of a planet.

Andi: Yeah, and I love that there's the very efficient statue.

Jarrah: For jamaharon.

****laughter****

Andi: Yeah, that's always been something, and it's such a cheesy looking statue and it just makes me laugh.

Jane: I know, I just love that episode where Riker doesn't tell Picard what it means, and he's like pick me one up from the gift shop. The episode with the Ferengi and the disk, and I can't remember the name of it.
[Transcriber's note: "Captain's Holiday, TNG, Season 3, Episode 19] But he's like, just I love that like look, that Picard gives when he finally realized what Riker did to him.

Andi: That's something that might be not a good thing to do to your boss, just saying.

Jane: No, it's bad consent. It's just another display of like the ladies man characters through the Trek universe, which is some terrible consent.

Jarrah: Yeah, I feel like displaying a statue is like a pretty ambiguous way to give consent. Like what are you giving consent to. How do you revoke consent do you have to hide the statue mid act?

Jane: But even not telling Picard what the statue meant, just like Picard lost consent. And then it's opening Picard up to sexual harassment. Poor Picard's getting harassed by all these women and they're not on the same page because they haven't communicated consent properly, and Riker just thinks it's a joke and it's like one of those things where how could men possibly get sexually harassed and Riker thinks it's a joke for Picard to get harassed, like that double standard, right, where it's funny for him to not let Picard consent to have him be sexually harassed by all these women only wants to do is just read and chill out.

Andi: We actually had a comment from one of our listeners Oren that said I think the Risians are the closest I can think of to a positive portrayal of sex work, they aren't being trafficked or forced into it.

Jane: Yeah, I've been in sex work longer than I've been a Trek fan, so when I got introduced to Risa, it was very much like, I'm like okay this is totally a brothel. And, like for some workers brothels work, and agencies work and like some people can't afford to not be a part of a brothel because they deliver clientele, they can give you if you don't have a reputation in sex work that can give you that head start on having from a client standpoint reliability things like that. Brothel's and agencies work for some people, but at the same time they can be super problematic in the fact that like if you... I wish they had explored a Risian native not wanting to be

in that world, would they be granted asylum on Enterprise like how would they navigate that, because I think that would be the true teller of... because it's a very ambiguous representation of a brothel, and I would have liked to see more development in that and like in that area, the little sex worker is me is like, please!

Jarrah: Yeah, even if you had seen Risians as part of normal Starfleet crews, and like maybe some of the other aliens working on Risa in the capacity we see Risians, instead of like... because you can't even know what the societal pressure would be and you know to what degree people would be able to not consent to participate.

Jane: Exactly, I would like to see maybe a Ferengi woman, or maybe like a Trill because like in Deep Space 9, the Trill are very, like they explore the sexuality and like mating habits of the Trill, like other alien species choosing to be on Risa, because that's the way they'd want to live, and like you said, see other Risians doing something else with their lives, too, but they kind of just like, it's very one dimensional view of this potential to great character development, they just kind of make it one dimensional.

Jarrah: Yeah, so Andi, you haven't seen the episode yet, have you in DS0 where they all go to Risa and Worf hooks up with the fun police?

Andi: Oh, no I haven't.

Jarrah: Okay, so close your ears for a second.

Andi: Okay.

Jarrah: I kind of enjoy some aspects of that episode even though it's a pretty terrible episode overall. But having Vanessa Williams as Arandis who's Jadzia's lover from having been Kirzan's lover. I like sort of fluid sexuality that that shows and we also get to see the people who work at the resort are skilled in multiple ways because you get to see like they do pottery class and they have massages and things and they have really good food so you can kind of I guess extrapolate like rounded society where people might be able to perform different roles.

Andi: And speaking of DS9 one thing I think is important that we should probably discuss is the Dabo girls.

Jane: Oh yeah.

Caitlin: Definitely.

Andi: And Quark in general, and the way he treats them.

Jane: Quark is definitely like, he's the epitome of like, I would spit on his grave.

****laughter****

Andi: I remember an episode where we find out he actually wrote sex into this woman's contract and she didn't want it there.

Jane: Yep.

Jarrah: Yep.

Andi: And he tried to force her into it and they were doing this cold open, and I was like Sisko, put this dude in jail. I do not understand this dude belongs in jail.

Jane: I know, it's just... again, like giving... like we saw with Scotty, giving the benefit of the doubt to these people that don't treat sex workers right. Just because they're more important to the plot than we are.

Andi: There's also that episode, well I think it's more than one, although she doesn't stick around very long. But Jake at one point dates a Dabo girl, which I actually think ended up being pretty sweet.

Jane: Yeah, I like that it gave us, it gave sex workers, it gave us more dimensions, a lot of the time sex workers are viewed as like we can't be in relationships, or if like we're daing somebody then we should quit the job and stuff like that. But again Jake has a girlfriend and she keeps her job and it's the balance between that, and I thought that was pretty chill.

Andi: Yeah we had a comment from Lydia, she said that she always liked that Sisko's perceptions of Jake's girlfriend Marta shifted when he stopped for a moment and got to know her. She's revealed to be a bright intelligent and talented student of Keiko's with ambitions of being an entomologist. So, like overall I think that's a pretty good example although with the Dabo girls it's not like they definitely are like sex worker adjacent but it's probably entirely possible that she didn't engage in that aspect.

Jane: Well the thing is that with the dabo girls like she wasn't like maybe engaging with sex for money but she was still like using her sexuality on the job. That's an important thing to note, but it's also look at Sisko, and his judgments that are influenced by stigma on sex work that he... like not all sex workers are educated, not all sex workers want to do "something more" with their lives, and that Sisko only changed his opinion of Jake's girlfriend just because she was intelligent and had all these aspirations outside of being a Dabo girl is really fucked up in itself because like it's okay for a sex worker to like just be doing it for survival, it's okay for a sex worker to just want to be a sex worker, and loving us shouldn't be conditional on being acceptable outside of our work.

Caitlin: Sex work shouldn't have to be a stepping stone to something else.

Jarrah: I would say that Leetah is actually a fairly I think okay example of that, where she actually resists people who pressure her to quit her job because she values the independence and the income that she gets from it.

Jane: Yeah absolutely, and that's great. Sex work representation, that's fantastic, I can see that in my own life, sex work has given me, like I'm disabled physically and mentally and sex work gives me the opportunity to take care of myself and take care of my loved ones, and like I wouldn't do something that's like detrimental to my health, I wouldn't go work a 9-5 just because it's more acceptable to people. There's a lot of stigma to tell sex workers that we need to do more to be acceptable and that what we're doing is not enough. It's great to show a character that's just like, "nah, fuck you man, I'm chill. I'm doing what I like. That benefits me in this way I'm doing sex work because it benefits me I'm not going to let your morality talk me out of it."

Caitlin: I think I would agree with everything, that even if you're not engaging in direct sexual contact, you're providing companionship and you're like using your sexuality in providing companionship, that's sex work even if it's not direct sexual contact or sexual intercourse or anything like that. But, Quark, I'm pretty sure I remember a scene in at least a couple of different episodes also ran holo-suites, didn't he? That offered sexual services?

Jane: Yeah, but that's what Quark was taking like holo profiles of people without their consent. To sell non-consensual sexual experiences on the holodeck to the highest bidder.

Andi: Put that dude in jail!

Jarrah: A lot of our listeners actually brought this up as a question of whether it's sex work if holograms are doing it and particularly just jumping ahead to Voyager for a second when you get to the very strong argument that holograms if not sentient should have their sentience fostered, then does that mean that you're interacting with an object or are you interacting with a being and your thoughts on that?

Caitlin: Well, I had a question just about... do you guys remember the episode in TNG with the binars? The "11001001" [TNG Season 1, Episode 15] episode? And Minuet? Who was actually a self-aware program, because she seemed very escort-like in that episode, and as a self-aware hologram, who was very much escort-like, I would consider her on the sex work spectrum, and so if we're going to be talking about holograms and sex work, I would definitely throw her into that category when we get to the Voyager's hologram.

Andi: Whenever you get into the holosuite or hologram stuff, it always gets super gray and murky because it's like some of the hologram, like the doctor is, I would say a person, a sentient person, but like where's that line? And it can get interesting.

Jarrah: Yeah, I mean I don't particularly have a problem with it when they're not stealing people's profiles and we've talked about this in some of our past episodes like stealing the profiles of real individuals without their consent.

Jane: It's like using the holograms as catalysts for a lot of sexual deviancy, although one of the things I really appreciate about Janeway, my namesake, are her ethics and her morals throughout the Voyager series of knowing that they're probably going to be stuck for generations on this ship they never know if they're going to get home but still respecting the power dynamic that she has over the crew. So, using like the holodeck and holograms to be a sexual multifaceted woman without creating relationships that would potentially be unethical with her being the highest ranking officer on the ship, like the ramifications of having a sexual or romantic relationship with somebody under her command. With that in mind, most, especially in Deep Space 9, I think it's definitely exploitative because we're using holograms and un-consensual holo-profiles of people as a catalyst for sexual deviancy which very much relates to how people view sex workers, and how we're supposed to be there to deal with all the crap that's deemed too crappy, too shitty for "regular people" to deal with. So, the holograms have to deal with all of that murky gross stuff which is like it's definitely a reflection of how people view sex workers.

Jarrah: I think one of the most significant episodes and one of the ones that generated a lot of feedback on our page is the DS9 episode "Wrongs Darker Than Death or Night" [DS9, Season 6, Episode 17], and Andi hasn't seen it yet, so she's just going to cover her ears when we talk about it. But, this is the one where Kira goes back in time and we learn that her mother didn't actually die in the occupation but was actually a comfort woman for Gul Dukat. Thoughts on this episode?

laughter

Jane: *takes a deep breath* Centering... centering my whore powers for this one. Yeah, so that's fucked up. So, it's a really fucked up episode. So, you're basically looking at the Cardassians who are fascist dictators who take over this planet and then as soon as they have control they take women of the species that they've enslaved and are taking them out of impoverished war torn communities that the Cardassians themselves have made these conditions for these people, and say well maybe treat them like human beings if they sexually and romantically satisfy the people who have enslaved them. Like how fucked up is that?

Jarrah: Yeah, of course it draws from real world historical examples of war time and it's pretty awful. We had a comment from Ali who said while I think "Wrongs Darker Than Death or Night" is definitely portrayal of trafficking as I feel the "choices" that Kira's mother is forced to make are as a result of coercion rather than for her own free will. I think there is a good moment where a background character essentially explains how abuse works to Kira. He points out that Dukat's technique is to appear kind and charming to the women he wants to abuse so they feel grateful towards him and are therefore more likely to do what he wants. This moment really stuck with me. The fact that abusers are so successful because they don't outwardly appear to be monsters.

Jane: Yup I 100 percent agree with that.

Jarrah: Uhh, Gul Dukat's so squicky...

Jane: We should throw him in jail too.

Jarrah: I think that what, yeah I mean he heals the scar that she has on her face that she's always been self-conscious of, and he is providing for her family back on Bajor.

Caitlin: He's grooming her.

Jane: He's grooming her, it's fucked up.

Jarrah: Yeah, and I guess what I think is quite controversial is this at the end basically Kira sort of decides well my mother chose it, like this made my mother a collaborator, and she can't 100 percent forgive her even though she saves her life, and you know Nana Visitor said that actually the writers originally had Kira feeling much more sympathetic but at the time it was hard to deal with the fact that she hadn't killed her. In the end it's her mother and Kira believes that the prophets were guiding her. So I imagine she believes not killing her mother was just in response to the prophets telling her it was wrong. So like Kira still believes that her mother had a choice.

Jane: Nah, her mother didn't. Her mother didn't have a choice. And I think that like Kira is a very black and white character, I think she grows a little bit throughout the series, but she can't see the multifaceted, she can't see the grey area. She's very much just like one or the other, and it's fucked up, but everyone has like when it comes to like our parents and our family and ourselves, it's sometimes hard to, especially with parents, especially with parents it's hard to see them as like, because we grow up thinking that they're perfect and then our like adolescence is realizing that our parents are people too. It's hard for her having these thoughts of her mother and then finding out otherwise. But when you look at it objectively her mother was a victim. And she can't see that and it's really sad and upsetting, especially to me as a viewer. It's just like... and it even in the Voyager episode where Seven of Nine is assaulted, it's just like Star Trek doesn't have the greatest track record of believing victims.

Jarrah: Yeah absolutely and I mean this is clearly I mean the comfort women historically and in this episode are clearly not sex workers.

Jane: Yeah, they're victims.

Jarrah: Yeah absolutely. So yeah it's a tough episode and interesting. I still don't know whether I would like concretely say it's 100 percent good or bad. I think that there's some parts about it that illuminates some of the nature of abuse but it's definitely difficult to see. Kira kind of condemning her mother like that.

Jane: Yeah absolutely.

Jarrah: Well I just wanted to make one point on Enterprise which I think it really exemplifies this problem that Star Trek has in portraying any type of non-romantic sexual activity is that you are either a villain or a victim. And we see this in Enterprise in "Bound" [ENT Season 4, Episode 17] when they decide that they're going to really explain how Orions work and that the Orion slave girls actually were never slaves all along but in fact instead of being agents who have a say in their destiny they are villains who are out to manipulate and kill men.

Jane: Yeah.

Jarrah: Yeaaaa. And there's also the episode Rajiin [ENT Season 3, Episode 4] about the girl who is being sold at the slave market that ends up following Archer, and it seems like she is like a very young sex slave. But again also tries to take over the ship because she's working for the Xindi.

Jane: We can't win. We really can't win. We can't win.

Jarrah: Yeah. So it's just like frustrating that's what is left out of this debate is really like the work of sex work. And the right to be respected as a worker in a workplace and to negotiate the conditions of your work et cetera. It's just like always you're either a victim that's a problem for the crew, or you're a villain that's out to get the crew.

Jane: Yeah like whatever happened... like I'm just going to march on a ship and be like "yo, who wants some titty?" And maybe I won't take over this ship. Like it's going to be great. That's my ideal world.

Jarrah: It probably would work on Enterprise.

Jane: And I did it on my own free will. Shocker.

Jarrah: It would totally work on Enterprise. It probably wouldn't work on Picard. He's too stoic.

Jane: Okay, Picard's like my dream. I have a thing for Picard type men. Like my ex, Hi if you're listening, like my ex is just stoic, logical, it's my thing. I'd fall hard for Picard, I'd be like "Picard touch my titty for free, please." I also have a thing for men with accents, so, if I was on Enterprise, I would totally go for Picard. Hopefully Picard's down, because you know...

****laughter****

Andi: The latest example that we have is actually from Star Trek Discovery. So, if you have not seen Discovery you're going to want to check out, we have some pretty big spoilers, but essentially we had an episode in which the mirror emperor who is a woman during one of their... like their final mission actually takes the time to pick up both a man and a woman sex worker, it looked like they were Orion and had a threesome with them. I don't actually have a huge problem with this, like it seemed pretty straightforward like she wanted sex and she bought some, that's fine with me. My bigger problem is actually how they portrayed her queerness I guess.

Jarrah: Well, and the fact that being a mirror universe leader and that is equated you know mirror equals evil, and then mirror equals bisexuality.

Andi: Yep exactly.

Jarrah: Or mirror equals sex work. So yeah that's not perceptually great.

Andi: It's less of a problem with what she did and more of a problem of the context of how they portray her morality because of it. So yeah. So that is the latest episode in this long list of episodes in which they portrayed sex work. And we kind of side eye it. Congrats Star Trek, like they said Discovery wasn't real Star Trek. I proved them wrong. Alright, so, is there anything anybody wants to add, just in general about any of the shows, anything you forgot that you just want to make sure we get out there before we wrap up?

Jane: Give your money to sex workers!

Andi: So, wow, we covered a lot I think. Thank you very much, both of you for coming. This was this was an episode I was really excited to do and I'm really happy with how much we were able to discuss so thank you both for coming.

Jane: Yeah, me too. Thanks for having me! I really appreciate it.

Caitlin: Definitely thanks, this has been great.

Andi: So, Caitlin, if people want to reach out to you outside on the Internet where's the best place to find you?

Caitlin: Definitely on the Twitters at https://twitter.com/orchid_grey And I will send you a link to hips to be a good place for workers and money to help sex workers in the D.C. area. <http://www.hips.org/>

Andi: Sounds perfect. And Jane where's the best place to get a hold of you?

Jane: You can find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/janewayxyz> you can go to my website and book me at <http://janeway.xyz/> I'm releasing a movie, my first feature showcase film "Filthy Fucking Luxury" and you can find updates on my website as well.

Andi: Alright, great, and Jarrah, where's the best place to find you?

Jarrah: You can find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jarrahpenguin>

Andi: And I'm Andi. You can find me on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/FirstTimeTrek> where I live tweet through my first time through Star Trek. And if you want to reach out to our show in general you can email us at crew@womenatwarp.com you can check us on twitter at <https://twitter.com/WomenAtWarp> you can check us out on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/womenatwarp/>

Jarrah: Oh we're now also on Instagram, guess what we're at... <https://www.instagram.com/womenatwarp/>

Andi: Thanks so much for listening, have a wonderful day guys.

OUTRO MUSIC

[Transcription happily provided by: <https://twitter.com/carolinalady>]