

Women at Warp Episode 134: Elementary, Dear Bebe Neuwirth

Opening music

JARRAH:

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 our favorite franchise. My name is Jarrah and thanks for tuning in! Today with us we have the whole crew starting with Andi.

ANDI:

Hello!

JARRAH:

and Grace.

GRACE:

Or am I?

JARRAH:

And Sue.

SUE:

Hi there.

JARRAH:

And before we get into our main topic we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. As usual I want to remind you that our show is entirely supported by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron. You can do so for as little as a dollar a month and get awesome rewards like thanks on social media to silly watch-along commentaries. And if you're at the spore jump level you will get episodes that are about non trek topics. The most recently recorded one was on the Good Place. So visit [Patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://patreon.com/womenatwarp) for more information and to pledge your support. That is P A T R E O N dot com slash Women at Warp. Now a couple of other pieces of housekeeping. First of all Sue do you want to talk about the RPN feed.

SUE:

Yes. So you've heard us for the last oh two years? If not more? Mention that we are a Roddenberry Star Trek podcast. Well the Roddenberry podcast network now has a master feed so you can subscribe to that master feed and get every show on the network in one place. That's Mission Log, Mission Log Live, Priority 1, Daily Star Trek news, the Trek Files, Shabam! And more to come. So you can find that master feed just by searching for Roddenberry in your favorite podcast catcher.

JARRAH:

Another announcement is that we have a book club episode coming up which means that we've selected a book that you can join us to discuss on goodreads the latest book that we've chosen is *The Last Best Hope* by Una McCormack. It's the first Picard tie-in novel and it's out already and you have until around March 22nd to finish reading it and to submit your comments in our goodreads discussion group. So just look up Women at Warp at goodreads dot com in the groups category and join us. And Grace you were going to Emerald City Comicon.

GRACE:

That's right. It's going from the 11th to the 15th. I will be paneling on March 13th that's on Friday at 11:00 a.m. on Star Trek. "Infinite diversity in Infinite Combinations."

JARRAH:

Awesome. And finally we want to remind you that we have a women at warp blog and are always seeking submissions from writers. So if you go to our website Womenatwarp.com and click the contribute tab you'll find all the information on what kinds of blog posts we're looking for and how to get in touch with us. And we always love to hear from you and explore your cool ideas of what you want to say about Star Trek. Finally you can also support us by leaving a rating or review on podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. All right. So our main topic today is we are going to gender flip, bend,slash swap the Next Generation.

GRACE:

Distort!

SUE:

Yes!

JARRAH:

Yes, warp. We are warping it. And if you listen to our show going way back we did an episode called *Does Lady Kirk Wear a Miniskirt?* where we did this with the original series. And I want to just introduce a few important caveats before we start. First of all totally acknowledge that the idea of gender swapping is something that's kind of debated because it can be reductive and imply that there are only two genders, what we're trying to do with that is not to be reductive and we're certainly not meaning to imply that there is a legitimate gender binary that is valid for all people. We're trying to use it in the subversive way that invites the audience to question why a particular gender was cast for a particular part and what could have been different had a different choice been made. So that's our goal. And then we're also trying to keep in mind the time that the show is created. So when we're looking at alternate actors for some of these parts we're looking at people who were prominent in the late 80s and early 90s. We're also looking at you know assuming the television landscape was roughly the same that the creators were from roughly similar backgrounds if not the same people, that this was going to be a cable show that was family friendly. So in *that* way we're probably not going to get super outside of the male or female identified actors and characters but we're super super excited that that's going to be a

part of our discussions more going forward as we get into a time in the TV landscape where, and our popular landscape, where this was more publicly acknowledged and discussed and to now where it is more embraced although there is still a long way to go.

ANDI:

Also I feel like if we're talking late 80s early to mid 90s I'm not aware of any non binary actors from that time. I'm sure that they were there and maybe not out, but I'm not aware of any whereas now we're starting to see more actors step forward and identify as non binary. So I feel like there's going to be a lot more to play with coming up.

JARRAH:

Mm hmm yeah. And we can also talk a little bit about like, you know, if we got to redo the whole thing then which characters would have been awesome to be non binary as more of just kind of an imaginative scenario. Because this whole thing is meant to be fun and imaginative. So let's dive right into it then and we'll start by talking about the center of the whole show: Captain Picard.

ANDI:

So the way that I did this overall is I took each character and I wrote down what I thought were important traits for each of them. And then I tried to think of an actor that embodied those things that was either around during that time or old enough that even if they weren't an established actor they could have been. And so for Picard I wrote "French/French adjacent" *crew laughs* because obviously the character is supposed to be French but uum. I love Patrick Stewart dearly. He is not French and he's very clearly not French and he's speaking French. So I wanted to go with a French actress, if possible, or someone who at least had I guess a european sensibility and then precise thoughtful and compassionate. And I landed on Kristen Scott Thomas who is kind of like both French and English like she stars in both cinematic worlds I guess. And I just find her to be very elegant and stately and I feel like she could handle this role.

JARRAH:

So I think that's a really cool choice. I'm curious how you think that this role would read differently if it was populated by a woman.

ANDI:

She would be considered more cold.

JARRAH:

laughs Especially the hating kids part. I don't think you saw a lot on TV until recently.

ANDI:

Yes definitely.

SUE:

I think we're already starting to jump into some of the things that that next gen *tells* us being opposite of what it *shows* us. Right? We're supposed to think of Picard as like this by the book like, rule following honor duty kind of leader. But like he's actually really lenient with this crew and he's really compassionate. And when he takes the time to know individual children he's very kind and warm with them. We find out later that he actually would really love to have children. Right? So what we're supposed to think and what we're actually shown are sort of at a disconnect.

JARRAH:

That's true. But certainly he also changes and a lot of those like more softer traits I guess emerge later on and at least like the uprightness and stiffness of the character, I would say definitely more season one traits and that would be kind of what would establish the character in the minds of the audience and I think would be more challenging. As we saw with Janeway and some of the feedback that Janeway got even though that was several years later

SUE:

One of the things we have for the next gen cast that we didn't really have when we did this with the original series is we have some of their original casting notices.

GRACE:

Ooooh!

SUE:

So I mean Picard is basically what you'd expect although the name is Julian Picard not Jean-Luc. Born in Paris. But the descriptors that that casting call gives are romantic and believes strongly in duty or in concepts like honor and duty. *crew hmms*

ANDI:

It's interesting that they used romantic.

GRACE:

Yeah. That's not a word I would use to describe him. Like I mean, it would be pretty far down the list in terms I would use to describe them.

ANDI:

I've always thought that he is kind of surprisingly sensual. I mean, we talked a little bit during our live recording when we watched the new episode of Picard where he is wearing normal pajamas and I'm sad about it. It's usually used in his extremely uuum

SUE:

Revealing? *crew laughs*

ANDI:

Revealing pajama's drinking wine. Like.... you know... like in ...real sensual! I would say the only one who could top him in this area is Troi.

SUE:

Well when I was thinking about casting I didn't, you know, lean really much on the softer qualities and I just went immediately to Bea Arthur. *crew laughs*

ANDI:

I mean let's be real Bea Arthur should be everyone. You know what, we're done! *Sue laughs* We're just going to put Bea Arthur and every single one of these categories and just go home.

SUE:

But I think, Jarrah you were talking about the idea of having a woman captain who expressly says in the first episode "I don't like children." I think that an actor like Bea Arthur, like an older woman who's a little bit more gruff, especially at that time in the late 80s, would be more likely to quote "get away" with that.

ANDI:

Also Bea Arthur is awesome at being, you said gruff, grumpy maybe, while still being charming which is really hard to pull off.

GRACE:

sophisticated voice Delightfully curmudgeonly.

ANDI:

Yes!

JARRAH:

I just wanted to say that I think when they're using the word romantic, at least if I'm extrapolating from the show or interpolating from the show, that it doesn't always have to mean like you're walking around with a rose in your teeth and you're super suave it can also mean that you're nostalgic for the classics and the past and his like archeology and Shakespeare and acting and like-

GRACE:

-Ships in bottles.

SUE:

Yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Like I think that can be a romantic sensibility without that you're going around like being more of like.. oh my God what's the word? Casanova!

ANDI:

I don't know. Have you seen those robes?

JARRAH:

But my choice is not as, I would say, outstanding as Sues. But I was like "Hey could we find someone who actually had a non embarrassing French accent?" and decided that maybe Catherine Deneuve could work.

GRACE:

Ooooh!

ANDI:

Oh yeah. I thought of her too!

JARRAH:

She's like a couple years younger than Patrick Stewart.

GRACE:

Speaking of sensual!

JARRAH:

Yeah! Also, I mean just personally, I think it would be rad if they also let the captain who is a woman be bald. Don't think that would actually happen without the actor being bald but just going to put a plug out there.

GRACE:

This is our fantasy. This is the story that we get to weave as we want it.

JARRAH: Yeah. Because I think like there's that statement that I think Gene Roddenberry said about how like you know after he got over the fact that he didn't want the captain to be bald made the statement about how like no one should really care about this in the 21st century. So agreed regardless of gender.

GRACE:

Well I decided that if the actual casting of the show chose to disregard the actual French-ness thing then so would I. And I went with an English actor one who made a really big name for herself as a Shakespearean actress who has incredible dramatic chops and then around in the 80s and 90s was making a name for herself doing British comedy shows. And I went with *foppish voice* the Dame Judi Dench because I love me some Judi Dench and I feel like she's able to command attention in a very captain-like way that I would love to see. And again, one of those things where if you're looking at Shakespearean acting skill it does.... I can't put my finger

on it ...but it's treated differently with male and female performers and I would like to see how she would do that take on the character. Because she can be very abrasive in her roles and I love that and I love that when we first meet at Picard he's pretty abrasive and I'd like to see the way she would do that and then have the character kind of warm to the other characters around her over time.

ANDI:

Judi Dench was one of the picks on our Facebook page as well.

GRACE:

singsong voice Great minds. great minds.

ANDI:

Some of the others was Helen Mirren.

GRACE:

She was one of mine too! But then I realized she'd be too young at the time.

ANDI:

And Glenn Close.

GRACE:

Oooh Glenn Close. Another actress who would be a good choice for any role.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean honestly I have a feeling the people we choose are, like I told all about the caliber of actors ya'll chose, but I mean I'm pretty sure they would bankrupt Star Trek The Next Generation.

SUE:

Oh yeah.

JARRAH:

That's why this is a fantasy.

GRACE:

I don't know. I felt like I could go big on the lead and then the rest of the time have a little more

ANDI:

Budget.

GRACE:

Moderation, yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah well and some of these people have the same background as Patrick Stewart or you know were not already, like you know, the people that would be really really hard to get were the people that were starring in other TV shows that were more successful or more mainstream like you know casting people from like Steinfeld or something.

GRACE:

How would be a really weird choice there Jarrah and I really want us to deep dive into that.

JARRAH:

Well I don't know Jason Alexander as like.... Worf's mom? But-

GRACE:

losing her mind oh my gosh..

JARRAH:

I feel like those are like the highest paid people show business at the time. So some of our people that had more of like, a stage career might still have been willing to make the choice of Patrick Stewart did and been like "I will trade this in for a paycheck."

GRACE:

As one has to sometimes.

JARRAH:

Cool. Well, shall we go on to Riker?

GRACE:

Let's do a number one!

JARRAH:

Sue what is the casting notice say about *Picard voice* number one?

SUE:

So I won't read the whole thing but he is a "30 the 35 year old Caucasian born in Alaska. He is a pleasant looking man with sex appeal of medium height very agile and strong. A natural psychologist.

ANDI:

Oh OK.

SUE:

Number one as he is usually called is second in command of the enterprise and has a strong solid relationship with the captain.”

ANDI:

So they biffed on medium height.

SUE:

Yeah.

ANDI:

But that's OK! I chose Sigourney Weaver *Grace ooohs for the millionth time*

SUE:

Same!

ANDI:

I just feel like this one's a no brainer. I wanted someone who is sexy right? And had that twinkle but was also bold and tough. And so I went with Sigourney Weaver.

GRACE:

I shot a little young on this one, I'll admit it, but she was doing acting in the 80s and the 90s so I went with Marissa Tomei.

SUE:

Oh interesting.

SPEAKER: F1

She's beautiful, she's charismatic. She's an excellent actress with range and she genuinely has a very strong likeability appeal that is kind of hard to find and kind of is the selling point for a character who's supposed to... be supposed to be a bit of a player the way Riker is.

ANDI:

I like it!

GRACE:

Yeah. And I like Marissa Tomei.

ANDI:

Who doesn't?

JARRAH:

I tried to go for some of the people that were guest stars and like, tried to elevate them into some of these roles. So I actually met with Elizabeth Dennehy who played Shelby because I think she could have been a pretty kick ass first officer. And she showed that in Best of Both

Worlds so why not? I don't know that she has quite the like sexy presence that Riker was oozing in season one *Sue laughs* but I think she probably could have pulled it out if she had more screen time.

SUE:

So I actually have a secondary pick. Which I expect her to come up for a different character in the future. But my secondary is Bebe Neuwirth. And here's the thing. She often in TV roles and she said this herself would get cast in like buttoned up very conservative roles for television.

ANDI:

Lilith!

SUE:

Yes. Like Lilith, but on stage she was like the sexpot in every Broadway show she ever did. So I think that she could certainly play a very different kind of Riker and it could be very interesting. But like what is a Riker oozing sexuality like in Season 1? How is that going to affect this character if a woman is cast?

GRACE:

How is that going to change how we see a woman character? Yeah.

JARRAH:

Like I remember when, this was several years later, when Ally McBeal started and it's sort of around you know Sex and the city and Ally McBeal where some of those shows that were like *really* starting to make headlines for like it's okay for women on TV to be promiscuous. But I don't think that was super...er.. It was like even at the time it was within a very specific mold and it was very much a show for women.

SUE:

And they were still seen as scandalous.

GRACE:

Yeah. When Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries came out that was the one main complaint I kept hearing people have about it they're like "Oh she's great but why does she have to sleep around so much?"

ANDI:

Also if you look at it, Troi. Troi has a sexual life right? And each of them they're not shown as like just sex. It's you know, she falls in love is the idea. Whereas Riker is like nudge nudge wink wink hey let's have some fun. And that's a totally different thing when we're talking about how people are perceiving them.

JARRAH:

Yeah we've definitely talked about that double standard before in the normal show, and the way that Troi kind of ends up paying for a lot of these decisions too and that Riker is able to just, you know, have some nice ethical consensual sex and move on and no one really mentions it again.

ANDI:

Unless he brings his random virus back to the Enterprise and it just destroys everything.

JARRAH:

Yeah, although people still though don't make him really pay for that though. No one at the end is like "Oh my god Riker. Why couldn't you keep it in your pants?"

GRACE:

bro voice "You biffed it man."

JARRAH:

But actually that reminds me of another good choice for Riker, who I think would be Michelle Forbes.

GRACE:

Oh yeah. I could really see that!

JARRAH:

While I'm swapping people around *Sue laughs* the same show and yeah I think she certainly could play the multiple sides of Riker and I don't know that it's super would have flown with the studios and the audience at the time but I think it would've been awesome.

ANDI:

And if you've seen True Blood you know she can do sexy.

JARRAH:

All right. So these characters other than like, I put Picard and Riker kind of in order, and then there's no real other order after this. So let's move on to probably we should alternate some genders in here. So let's move on to Crusher. Doctor. Dr. Crusher not Wesley Crusher.

ANDI:

I had so much trouble with this.

JARRAH:

I know right? Actually I had a really hard time with both the women.

SUE:

We've talked about before how the women on next gen are very gendered.

ANDI:

Oh definitely.

SUE:

Super given super feminine qualities. *laughing uncomfortably* I'm going to read you the sentence that has bugged me since I first saw it in the early 90s.

GRACE:

Join us and cringe with us.

SUE:

The first two sentences are fine. "Wesley's 35 year old mother. She serves as the chief medical officer on the starship." Here we go "If it were not for her intelligence, personality, beauty, and the fact that she has the natural walk of a striptease queen Captain Picard might not have agreed to her request that Wesley observed bridge activities."

ANDI:

No.

GRACE:

uncomfortable squawk Aaaah. Hmmm.

ANDI:

So this is going to make my choice even funnier.

GRACE:

Its going to make *every* choice pretty great I think.

ANDI:

OK. But I really. This was the *one* I came up with nothing and in the end I just was like Alan Alda. *all laugh like gibbons*

JARRAH:

You're like "He can play a doctor a caring person."

ANDI:

Yes!

GRACE:

Does he have the natural walk of a striptease queen?

ANDI:

I think he could do it! Yeah, I was like “Alan Alda is too old for this. Why am I picking Alan Alda?” In the end I was just like “You know what? I want Alan Alda. So screw you guys I'm putting it down.” and now like, no. Literally. *laughter continues* I wrote Alan Alda I crossed it out and I was like “Can't do Alan Alda. That doesn't fit at all.” And then I couldn't think of anything else. So I just rewrote Alan Alda.

JARRAH:

Just like, anyone who played a doctor. Just like, George Clooney. *all laugh* Neil Patrick Harris but older.

ANDI:

Neil Patrick Harris but *younger*.

JARRAH:

Well but this time he was really young.

GRACE:

That would make him having a kid really weird.

ANDI:

It's just fetus NPH and his teenage son. Anyways. Yes. Sorry. I *kind of* stand by it because it's Alan Alda and who doesn't love Alan Alda? but also no.

GRACE:

My first pick for crusher was Chris Noth from again Sex and the City, and E.R., NYPD Blue, the Good Wife. I probably got a couple of those wrong actually *laughs* It's mostly I put him in there because I thought that there was an intrinsic connection between the characters of Beverly Crusher on TNG and Mr. Big on Sex and the City in that their love interests can't seem to commit to them not because of the actual character, but because the writers don't seem to want to commit to them having a main love interest.

JARRAH:

I've been trying to shoehorn as many law and order actors into this as possible.

GRACE:

Law and order! That's what I meant not NYPD Blue. Crud. Anyway, so I considered him just for that bond. But then I decided on another one that I think works even better with intelligence, personality, beauty, and natural walk of a striptease queen. And that would be Pierce Brosnan. Because let's face it. Anytime Pierce Brosnan is a love interest character he's absolutely freaking precious.

JARRAH:

That is great. So I actually picked someone from NYPD Blue who is Jimmy Smits. *crew makes approving noises* And sort of the rule that I was giving myself and this was that I can add people of color but I can't take away people of color or like change. Like I couldn't make Worf or La Forge white in this casting thing but I was totally cool adding more people of color so I think that Jimmy Smits certainly in history has shown the ability to carry both like a caring parent role as well as sort of kick-ass role like, yes I will heal these terrorists and will wield the phaser when necessary. And yes so I think I think that it would work.

ANDI:

I mean it's no Alan Alda.

GRACE:

But now we all have to take a minute here and collectively close our eyes and imagine our picks and *if* they have the natural walk of a striptease Queen.

ANDI:

I'm telling you Alan could do it.

SUE:

I think that my pick was probably a bit young.

JARRAH:

Was it Neil Patrick Harris?

SUE:

curtly It is not. *all laugh* I mean I tried to think about the-

JARRAH:

Was it Wil Wheaton?!

SUE:

offended No.

GRACE:

Because that would have been *real* weird.

SUE:

I tried to think of Crushers caring and nurturing sort of qualities somebody who would be a good single dad maybe. And I kept coming back to Matthew Broderick.

GRACE:

Oh that could be fun. Yeah.

ANDI:

You said single dad I was like Bob Saget. Please don't say Bob.

GRACE:

That would've been just very awkward wouldn't it?

JARRAH:

I think that's awesome.

ANDI:

So the difference is I feel like they would have given that single dad more parenting homework, than they gave Beverly.

GRACE:

Yeah probably.

SUE:

all those scenes with Picard and Riker could be between Crusher and his daughter now.

ANDI:

Sadly. Plus I feel like the whole like teenage daughter and single dad thing is a dynamic that Hollywood is comfortable with.

GRACE:

It can go wrong pretty easily though. It can get really cheesy real fast but it can also be done well.

ANDI:

But like think of even all the teenage daughter and pseudo dad relationships we get.

GRACE:

That's true. Yeah.

JARRAH:

Should we skip ahead to Wesley Crusher since that relationship is important? Since we're talking about this.

ANDI:

stoked Yes! Because I'm actually proud of my choice for Wesley. I mean I'm not ashamed of you Alan. Don't take that that way.

GRACE:

We're proud of you.

ANDI:

Danica McKellar! *crew oohs*

JARRAH:

That was totally my choice too.

ANDI:

WHAT?! See! The second I thought of her I was like "Well I don't have to do any more thinking about that." She's really really smart. She's got a degree in math from UCLA but she's also got like that, I don't know, ingenue quality like that young curious sweet thing that I feel like Wil Wheaton has with the big doe eyes you know?

SUE:

That's a great one. I feel like if we had this single dad and daughter relationship there would be, I would be afraid for Star Trek to fall into the trope of like "Dad when can I start dating?" "Not til you're 30." *crew makes noises of agreement* Like which you know, fortunately did not happen on next gen but I mean I'd like to think that they would have not rested on that. But I mean it still was the late 80s and early 90s.

ANDI:

Do you really think that Wesley Crusher as Lady Wesley Crusher would have saved the ship so many times?

GRACE:

We got to wonder.

SUE:

I mean the character was originally created as Leslie Crusher.

GRACE:

Yeah.

JARRAH:

But I agree that it may have been. I mean it's possible the actor would have gotten even more flak than Wil Wheaton like-

SUE:

Oh my gosh! Can you imagine?

JARRAH:

“The original Mary Sue” kind of stuff like that which would have been annoying. If it had been the exact dynamic of TNG then what it would have been like when that character wanted to start dating is that they would have been mentored by all the awesome women leading the ship. I'm just not really talked with her dad.

GRACE:

Man, the possibilities.

JARRAH:

Was there anyone any other suggestions?

GRACE:

I thought I went with a pretty obvious one and I picked Ashley Judd.

ANDI:

Oh yeah.

SUE:

Nice.

GRACE:

Cause you know she basically plays a girl foil to Wesley so I feel like she could slide into that role real easy.

ANDI:

Definitely.

SUE:

I can't really do better than Danica McKellar.

JARRAH:

I did also consider Alyssa Milano. She'd be my second choice if I couldn't get Danica McKellar.

ANDI:

Yeah I thought of her too.

SUE:

The one thing that stood out to me from the casting notice for Wesley, and this is one where it was for Wesley and not for Leslie, that “Wesley is more of an intense not cute teenager whose energy comes from an inquisitive nature.”

ANDI:

OK. But then they cast Will Wheaton. *crew laughs* Wil Wheaton at that time was basically Bambi.

GRACE:

Yeah. Bambi in a giant cable knit sweater.

ANDI:

Yeah. One hundred percent.

GRACE:

Do you think Wil Wheatons ever going to hear our show and hear that if you like “Screw you guys! I'm hardcore!”

ANDI:

I'm pretty sure he knows he was Bambi.

SUE:

I think he knows.

GRACE:

I would hope he does by this point.

ANDI:

I mean that was the whole like, Stand By Me was him being Bambi.

SUE:

He knows he was a teen heartthrob.

ANDI:

Yeah yeah. His stories about him being in Teen Beat are so funny. *crew laugh*

JARRAH:

All right. Let's move on to Data.

SUE:

Oh my gosh. So this is where I feel that like next gen could have *really* been forward thinking. But it was the 80s. Right? This was on nobody's radar. But I think Data being a character who explores humanity is the perfect *pause* I don't want to say canvas, is the perfect character to play with gender and to play with expression and to play with pronouns and different names and because they're trying to learn everything they possibly can right? As we talked about in the opening there, I mean I don't know of any non binary actors from the late 80s. So how they would have cast this. I don't have a recommendation for that, but just think about if they had been able to introduce those kinds of ideas without making it a joke or without making it

transphobic. At that time like that could have opened the door for so many people and Star Trek has done that plenty of times where they don't even realize, the writers, that they have created an allegory for something that's not even on their radar.

JARRAH:

Yeah I think that you'd have to be really careful that you didn't have like the "Data needs to learn gender" storyline *crew makes noises of agreement* that it was more of, you know, something that expanded the minds of the crew around them vs. something that was a evidence of the lack of humanity. But I agree that there was a lot of potential there and I think we saw that a bit more in The Outcast with the whole thing where a Lal gets to pick their gender

SUE:

The Offspring.

JARRAH:

Sorry, The Offspring. Thank you. An "o" episode. *crew laughs* And so there was definitely some unexplored potential there whether they could have executed it well I'm not sure. The other thing I noticed in the casting notice it says "Data should have exotic features and can be any one of the following racial groups Asian, American Indian, East Indian, South American Indian, or similar racial group." *crew groans*

GRACE:

grossed out Oh wow.

JARRAH:

Yeah, which I feel like *again* could indicate open mindedness or it could indicate we want this person to look quote unquote like strange or-

GRACE:

-exotic.

JARRAH:

Exoticised.

SUE:

It does. It literally says "exotic features." He also should quote "appear very intelligent."

GRACE:

How do you appear intelligent?

JARRAH:

I think it's all about raising your eyebrows.

GRACE:

Ok that really sets the tone for my pick then. Which is great. And I'm a little sad because she already got mentioned for a different role earlier. But I also went with a Bebe Neuwirth pick. But she's my data.

JARRAH:

So did I.

SUE:

I knew it!

GRACE:

Because she's already super pale which is going to save them so much on makeup.

SUE:

I called it. I knew it.

GRACE:

She's got cheekbones for days so she doesn't look exactly exotic but she looks *striking* and she's very good at being kind of uncanny and unsettling. Which you know applies well if you're a robot.

SUE:

I would love to have, 'cause she's also very slight. Like, she's short and very thin and there are plenty of times in the show where you know Data's strength comes into play. And I would love to see you know, what five foot two Bebe Neuwirth like *Grace giggles in delight* lifting a car on the holodeck. You know?

GRACE:

whispering reverently That'd be amazing.

ANDI:

My choice was Glenn Close, I just think that she can be so intense and analytical and curious. Those are the qualities that I see for data. We did get an interesting comment on our Facebook about Data specifically, from Madeline who said "If the show was made today I would love to have a female Data. But given the time it was created I'm actually relieved they had a man in the part. Given the standards they had for women in the cast I can only imagine that kind of cringe-y scenes where people teach Data how to be *beautiful* and *feminine*." *crew makes noises of agreement* Which kind of goes along to some of your concerns Sue.

JARRAH:

Like having them teach how to perform gender.

ANDI

Yeah. Mm hmm.

JARRAH:

So next on the list I have La Forge.

SUE:

Oh man this casting call.

JARRAAH:

Oh God.

ANDI:

Oh no.

SUE:

I'll read everything I have so everyone can see how quickly it goes south. "Lieutenant Geordi La Forge: a 20 to 25 year old black man, blind from birth. With the help of a special prosthetic device he wears his vision far surpasses anything the human eye can see. Although he is young, he is quite mature and is best friends with Data. Please do not submit any street types as Geordi has perfect diction *uncomfortable noises from crew* and might even have a Jamaican accent. Should also do comedy well."

ANDI:

Oh no.

GRACE:

Ooooh wow.

ANDI:

Yeah. We don't have time to unpack all that. *uncomfortable laughter* That's disappointing. I mean-

GRACE:

Yeah.

ANDI:

I mean did they feel the need to on their Riker "Caucasian man from Alaska", which there are no Caucasus mountains in Alaska or whatever, did they feel the need to point out that he shouldn't be street and needs good diction? NOPE.

GRACE:

No no. Good Lord.

ANDI:

Okay so we're just gonna ignore that.

GRACE:

Also there is the scuttlebutt that at one point one of the people in talks for the role of Geordi was Wesley Snipes.

JARRAH:

Yeah that is true.

GRACE:

So that's making me think and wonder things.

JARRAH:

Well does anyone have any thoughts on like, how this character would change or how it would be received differently if it was a woman? I think it actually would probably, other than probably hopefully wouldn't have had so many Geordi creeps on random dudes storylines?

GRACE:

I Mean god willing.

SUE:

But if this Geordi had the same types of romantic trouble I'd be afraid of like "Well you just need to like take your glasses off and do your hair."

GRACE:

She can't! She needs those to see! *crew laughs*

SUE:

No, but like I think they're going to like Princess Diaries her right?

GRACE:

Awww no. No.

SUE:

But Geordi is like, in my opinion anyway, Geordi is like the eyes of the audience; he's the most casual of the crew in the show that we have. He uses a lot of plain english and colloquialisms and I think it's sort of like a bridge from the audience watching to the 24th century and is very chill and I think, even of our male characters I think Geordi is the least gendered role. So I don't think that there should be a lot of pushback from having a woman in that role. And the one I wrote down is Gina Torres *ooohs*

ANDI:

I was singing about Gina Torres for a couple of roles. She's just so statuesque.

JARRAH:

What was she doing around this time?

ANDI:

Trying to break?

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean that's I think a great choice. I actually picked Penny Johnson, now Penny Johnson Gerald because I'm stealing people from other Star Trek series now. And the Orville. But she would have been a couple of years younger than LeVar Burton but still in that 20 to 25 bracket and I think could have played the more kind of dorky engineering side of things more than we saw in like, the role of Cassidy. But I think had the ability to take on that role and also be just, you know, the Fun Data's BFF. Like Bebe Neuwirth and Penny Johnson? Yeah I'd watch it.

ANDI:

I chose Regina King.

GRACE:

gasping That'd be awesome!

ANDI:

I mean I just feel like Regina King can do anything so she can do *anything*. And I want her in everything. She's amazing. And then also I would just I just really want Regina King in Star Trek.

GRACE:

dreamily Yeah.

ANDI:

And more sci fi in general because she crushed it in Watchmen. And ..yeah so I chose Regina King.

GRACE:

Excellent.

JARRAH:

She's so good.

GRACE:

I went for someone who was on TV at the time. I went for Lisa Bonet *oohs* A. because she's fabulous. B I feel like a lot of the roles she's known for specifically on The Cosby Show and in A

Different World she's kind of a character as a "Look, this is something that black people can do! Black people live in nice houses and have parents who are doctors. Black people also go to college. Stuff like that. So I feel like that would be cool to see her also be as an extension like, "Yeah, not only are black people in space there are black *disabled* people in space. How freaking cool is that?"

JARRAH:

That is cool. I definitely considered her but I had a bit of a qualm because she's made some like anti-vax statements?

GRACE:

Yeah.

JARRAH:

More recently. But at the time we would not have known that.

GRACE:

Also there's probably something to dig into in terms of talking about respectability and black acting roles in the ones she's known for with the Cosby Show and A Different World and talking about how "please do not submit any street types." There is something we can dig into there but I do not feel qualified to dig into that.

ANDI:

Colorism as well.

GRACE:

Yes that is definitely as well. But we also know she can do comedy well?

ANDI:

Yes she can!

SUE:

Yes.

JARRAH:

No she would totally nail that role. OK is that it for La Forge?

ANDI:

MmmHmm.

GRACE:

I think that's La-done it.

JARRAH:

Let's take it away with Troi, who according to her character casting is "probably foreign. Looks and accent to match."

ANDI:

Oh no.

JARRAH:

We all know the thing about how they had to like Marina audition for Yar and Denise audition for Troi, we won't like recap that. But they don't necessarily have, the person, doesn't have to look like Greek.

ANDI:

I also struggled with Troi and in the end I went with Stellan Skarsgard.

GRACE:

Oh! OK.

ANDI:

He's very teddy bear-ish. I feel like he would be very empathetic. I feel like he would listen to your problems and like *feel* about them.

SUE:

Are you ready?

ANDI:

Yes.

SUE:

Tom Selleck. *noises of approval from crew*

Andi:

Now, is he wearing Hawaiian shirts?

SUE:

I mean he doesn't have to wear the uniform so why not?

GRACE:

He's wearing Troi's like, unitard but with the pattern of a Hawaiian shirt.

ANDI:

OK. So we're going back in time and fixing this right? And it's Tom Selleck, *now* we're coming to future discourse and people are discussing about how happy they are that he finally started

wearing a uniform and how more professional he seems as soon as he started wearing a uniform instead of his colorful Hawaiian shirt. *crew snorts*

SUE:
Perfect.

JARRAH:
I would totally go with The Rock. *crew cackles*

GRACE:
Explain yourself! I am curious.

JARRAH:
I mean have you looked into the Rocks eyes and felt like he felt everything you were feeling?

ANDI:
That's true. I mean touche.

JARRAH:
That was really all I was going on. Also that he could definitely pull off the deep decloutage.

GRACE:
He does up the cleavage.

JARRAH:
Also I really couldn't think of anyone. So I was like "Why not?"

GRACE:
I went very far away choice from that. I went with Kyle McLaughlin.

ANDI:
Oh OK. You really like the Sex and the City actors.

GRACE:
That was completely unintentional actually. Well, Kyle McLaughlan also is very pretty like Troi. He also is very good at doing the "I have deep knowledge the likes of which you can't understand Maud'Dib" shtick which I feel like would translate over to Troi pretty well. And now I'm thinking of....I'm thinking of Kyle McLaughlin paired with any of our Troi picks *editors note she totally meant Riker picks* and I'm just going to go linger on that for a minute in my mind.
Yeah

ANDI:
Yeah.

GRACE:

Yeah.

SUE:

Mm hmm.

GRACE:

Also just just put Kyle McLaughlin back in space!

ANDI:

Yeah totally. Yeah. Poor Troi.

GRACE:

Poor Troi.

ANDI:

They really didn't give her much to work with in that casting notice.

GRACE:

They really didn't. Will say this about a commonality between Kyle McLaughlin and counselor Deanna Troi: I have a weird innate desire to protect both of them. *Andi laughs*

JARRAH:

You know I feel like they would have had to, or they would have felt they had to play up the alien-ness more to get away with having a man who is so emotional.

GRACE:

He's also played a bunch of aliens so there's... at least two. At least two aliens.

ANDI:

I mean for Hollywood that is a bunch of aliens.

GRACE:

Yeah and he's very good at it too.

SUE:

There's also the fact that so many of Troi's storylines are about violation about essentially psychic rape.

GRACE:

Yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

SUE:

And how if they kept those storylines how would they have dealt with a male victim.

ANDI:

The child would be even worse.

GRACE:

Knowing what we know about TV in the 90s and the landscape of the discussion of rape culture they probably wouldn't have done that with a male character.

Sue:

No.

ANDI:

No.

JARRAH:

I think that they would have probably leaned into queer coding

GRACE:

Definitely.

JARRAH:

Which would have been super problematic. I think, I mean Troi is a problematic character but I think almost anything that they could have done realistically given the influences in their time would have made it probably more problematic. I think casting an actor who is seen as like *really* masculine could have offset it a little bit and made it maybe cooler that there's "Hey there's a man who has feelings."

GRACE:

I would tell you how I'm feeling to Kyle McLaughlin.

ANDI:

Me too. Yeah I like your pick.

GRACE:

Thank you. *laughing* I like it too.

JARRAH:

So let's move on to Worf, who is someone I had a really really hard time with. I don't know if anyone had any good good Worf picks.

ANDI:
Angela Bassett!

GRACE:
gasping That was one of mine! *whisper* Angela Basset!

SUE:
All of mine are young, *too* young. But I was thinking. Tracee Ellis Ross *oohs*

ANDI:
Oh yeah.

SUE:
And also Lark Voorhees, who was Lisa Turtle in Saved By The Bell.

ANDI:
Oh *I know* who Lark Voorhees is.

GRACE:
laughing Lisa Turtle *singing* with A BAT'LETH!

ANDI:
That'd be pretty great.

SUE:
Yeah Worf is one of the characters we don't, or at least I couldn't find a casting summary for. But I mean we know "First Klingon in Starfleet", "Kind of literal." You know, "Looking for a fight."

ANDI:
Let's see, what did I put down for a Worf. I said "Strong and rigid." I feel like his rigidity is part of his arc like he has to learn to soften. For Angela Bassett, this is again we went back to a lot of these actors that we've chosen our like top actors and like you really could give them anything. Angela Bassett is one of those actors but I really feel like she could add some warmth and emotion to this like really tough journey that Worf goes on. And I would love to see that. And I feel like we kind of do you know how Trek would have handled a lady Worf because we kind of got it in B'Lanna.

GRACE:
A little bit, yeah.

SUE:

A couple of years later, but yeah I think that the alien-ness of the character would sort of protect her from *some* gender criticisms. If that makes sense?

ANDI:

Yeah I mean I've always found it interesting the way they handle women Klingons anyway. They kinda don't know if they want to make them really like aggressive and scary or like "Oh but they can't have political power." Okay, I can't think of a single Klingon woman that we've seen that would like, be cool with the fact that they don't have political power and yet we're supposed to believe that like their entire race that has how it's been like forever. *disbelieving* OK. Anyways.

JARRAH:

Also pretty much all the ones that were coming to my mind when I was thinking through who played Klingon women were all white, which is not necessarily... you know, I mean clearly Star Trek has cast actors of various races as Klingons and has you know, back in the day like brown-faced them which was not cool.

GRACE:

The only woman of color I can think of is Gabrielle Union who played kind of a background Klingon in one episode.

JARRAH:

Yeah, and she I don't think would be old enough at this point to be Worf. And yeah, so it's challenging if you want to maintain some diversity among the cast members even though I think there are different ways to read Klingon-ness connected to human races and what was being inscribed on the characters.

ANDI:

I definitely think that they're coded black in a lot of ways. But in the very early TOS times they were also coded a little bit Asian. So it kind of gets *pause* and then Worf being the kind of face of Klingons in a lot of ways and him being a black man I think changed how people view them. But it's an interesting kind of wrinkle when it comes to sci-fi casting of actors of color or white actors playing different alien races that are coded in a certain way.

JARRAH:

Yeah for sure. So the only other main character we have is Yar. Even though she was only a main character for part of a season, I felt like we should pick one for her and then we're going to just throw it open for if anyone has any nominees for recurring guest characters like Pulaski, Q, Guinan, Ro, Barklay, et cetera. But let's get through Yar first.

SUE:

"Lieutenant Tanya Hernandez." Yeah that's when this is from. "26 year old woman of Ukrainian descent who serves as the starship security chief." She is described as "having a new quality of

conditioned body beauty. A fire in her eyes and a muscularly well developed and very female body but keeping in mind that much of her strength comes from attitude.”

ANDI:

OK. Who wrote these?

GRACE:

I do remember reading about how at one point their idea behind the character who would be Tasha Yar was initially pretty much Vasquez from Aliens who, unfortunately, is not actually Hispanic, the actress. The role is great but she is not in fact Hispanic. She is in brown-face essentially. So that's the background on *that* which is fun knowledge you can't unlearn. *crew laughs*

JARRAH:

What about Frakes? Frakes as Yar.

GRACE;

OK but what do we describe him as having the new quality of a conditioned body beauty? *crew laughs*

JARRAH:

Yes. Did you see Angel 1?

GRACE:

OK. Yeah.

SUE:

It's just that all of these descriptions are like “Don't forget they're hot. Remember the ladies have to be hot. You gotta be hot.”

ANDI:

“She's muscular *but* she's hot.”

JARRAH:

And this character would change like very few expectations because it was the most gender nonconforming character of TNG. So I don't think that it would change anything really for it to be a guy.

GRACE:

They're describing her like a gym bunny.

ANDI:

So I chose Dolph Lundgren.

GRACE:

unearthly howl of approval YES. Oh my God. That would mean we have to go back and make Grace Jones Worf!

ANDI:

I was thinking that literally thinking that as was like, hearing that description. I was like they should have just cast Grace Jones. Except for the fact that I don't really love the way that black actors, women actors, face this like masculine-izing kind of influence. But yes Dolph Lundgren and Grace Jones together in Star Trek. Hell yeah.

SUE:

How about Doug Jones?

GRACE:

I can see it.

ANDI:

That was like Billy Butcherson time. I like that era.

GRACE:

I went with one that I think actually works pretty well, is the "beautiful but with a fire in her eyes" thing and I went with young George Clooney.

JARRAH:

Nice.

ANDI:

I'm cool with it.

GRACE:

Yeah I think it could work!

JARRAH:

All right. Recurring guest stars. Who wants to start?

GRACE:

excited OK so this one got pulled up already in another one but I thought, Q. A character who is ageless but whose judgment we are submitted to, and not just screamed Bea Arthur to me. *crew laughs* And I thought it was pretty perfect. So that was one that I will fight on the mountaintop for. Another one I had that I really liked was for Guinan I had Keith David who, I think, is amazing and has incredible gravitas when he wants to in a performance but also already kind of has a name for himself in the world of sci-fi and the dude does a good mentor character *intensely* so well. And the other one that I really wanted to make sure I got in was for

Barclay I had Beth Grant who is definitely one of the underappreciated character actors of our time and I'm not just saying that because now we know her daughter Mary.

JARRAH:

Who is Beth Grant? What was she-

GRACE:

listing voice Donnie Darko-

ANDI:

at the same time Speed!

GRACE:

Speed, Little Miss Sunshine.

JARRAH:

Ok, names are not my strong suit.

ANDI:

I love her in Speed. She's so good.

GRACE:

Look her up and you will recognize a million "Oh it's her!" roles that you love her for. And I think she could do a really good Barclay and I would love to see that.

JARRAH:

For Guinan I had, and you know I said nothing about Law and Order and then I haven't said any Law and Order people, so I had Richard Brooks who was one of the DAs in the first couple seasons of Law and Order and I think has a strong kind of sensitivity in his acting that I think could have worked pretty well for Guinan.

SUE:

So I think Pulaski is where you put Alan Alda.

ANDI:

Yeah I also have Alan Alda for Pulaski. *crew laughter* Clearly I just really want Alan Alda to be a Star Trek doctor.

SUE:

My Guinan is Ben Vereen.

ANDI:

Oh yeah.

SUE:

My Q might be a little out of left field :Chita Rivera. *noises of approval*

JARRAH:

That's awesome.

SUE:

And I don't have a casting for Barclay but I do just want to say that I would have loved to see an anxious woman character on next gen, although again would they have played that like they played Hoshi who was just like afraid and needs to get over it? Yeah. So. Mmm.

JARRAH:

I mean Pulaski I'm like "Why do you not just have Deforest Kelly?"

GRACE:

I think I just had a brilliant Pulaski idea though. Richard Belzer. *crew laughs*

JARRAH:

Yes. I was going to say Dennis Farina. *ohs* pulling more from the crime shows. But also my Q was Joan Collins.

GRACE:

Oh I love that!

JARRAH:

You'd have to forget she was Edith Keeler but like Pulaski you had to forget she was also two other characters already so I feel like we're allowed. And I think by this time she would have had the sass. The Q sass for sure. I didn't have anyone for Ro but-

ANDI:

Jonathan Frakes.

JARRAH:

Oh. Well yeah, sure.

GRACE:

Frakes is our just "go-to" plug-in dude now isn't he?

SUE

Ted Danson.

GRACE:

Yes!

JARRAH:

I was like “Not David Duchovney, not Scott Bakula.”

GRACE:

Scott Bakula maybe. Maybe Bakula. I could back Bakula.

JARRAH:

I was thinking maybe, I don't know. What about, like this is maybe a terrible choice but like what about Julianna Margulies for Barclay.

GRACE:

I don't know.

JARRAH:

No? Like I'm not seeing that she's ever played anything like that.

ANDI:

She probably has the range but yeah like I don't think she's had a similar character.

JARRAH:

Yeah it would definitely be a stretch. So it is not anything that would be, but that would I think maybe make it less of like a Hoshi kind of like afraid of everything character if you had someone that had a little bit more gravitas. Well anyway, there's some random choices. If you had Suzie Plakson as Barclay she could definitely do it it just might come across as more humorous. Although Barclay's supposed to be a funny character. I'm just trying to think again like, are there any other changes that changing the gender would mean for those characters. I think Guinan would be challenging because it is like a very gendered kind of trope-heavy character of like sort of an you know a wise mother figure and mystical black woman figure. But with the right actor maybe?

ANDI:

I want to point out that one of our Facebook commoners Tricia said Oded Fehr as Troi which is better than anything I came up with for Troi.

GRACE:

That's *really* good.

ANDI:

I know, I was jealous! I was like “Dang you, how did you think of that before I thought of that?”

GRACE:

Okay. So did anyone else go through the problem of going through the character list and then just mentally go through which roles we could cast Jeffrey Combs in? Because I definitely thought about that.

SUE:

We also had a facebook commenter who mentioned the idea of a gender fluid Riker which I think would be super interesting especially like all those early seasons traits that we discussed with Riker. But like again not something on anyone's radar in Hollywood in 1987 unfortunately.

JARRAH:

I mean given what happened with the Outcast and that they wouldn't even cast a same sex actor for that role shows like they weren't really open minded enough for that at the time. But I think I agree that would be a really great character to change to a gender fluid character

GRACE:

That said I do also stand by the concept of pansexual Riker. *mmhmms of agreement* One Of us! *chanting* One of us! One of us! I just knocked something off my desk pounding on it.

JARRAH:

All right well thanks everyone for your input in our discussion on Facebook. And if you want to get a really big head start on the next one we'll do which will I assume to be Deep Space 9 at some point then shoot us a message. You can get in touch with us at Crew@womenatwarp.com or you can visit Womenatwarp.com, our website or find us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram @womenatwarp. And yeah, so let's wrap up then. Andi where can people find you on the Internet?

ANDI:

Easiest place to find me is Twitter @firsttimetrek.

JARRAH:

And Sue?

SUE:

You can find me on Twitter as Spaltor. S-P-A-L-T-O-R.

JARRAH:

And Grace?

GRACE:

You can find me on Twitter @Bonecrusherjenk and constantly refreshing IMDB to make sure I got actors names right.

JARRAH:

And I'm Jarrah. You can find me on Twitter @J-A-R-R-A-Hpenguin and still trying to figure out the perfect role for Jeffrey Combs other than the many he has already-

GRACE:

yelling What if he was Ro?!? *expletive deleted*

JARRAH:

Gonna bleep that. And for more from the Roddenberry podcast network visit podcast.Roddenberry.com. Thanks so much for listening.

closing music

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