

Women at Warp Episode 135: Goin' to the Chapel

intro music

GRACE:

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 Grace and thanks for tuning in! With us this week we have Jarrah.

JARRAH:

Hello.

GRACE:

We have Sue.

SUE:

Hi there.

GRACE:

We have the effervescent Andy.

ANDI:

Hi!

GRACE:

Effervescent, as ever. *Andi laughs* Before we get started with our main topic today we've got a little bit of housekeeping first. Our show is supported entirely 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 from thanks on social media up to silly watch along commentaries. Visit www.patreon.com/womenatwarp. You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. And we've actually got a lot of housekeeping this week don't we?

JARRAH:

Well, we have a book club episode coming up in about a month from today. And for our latest book club selection we picked *The Last Best Hope*, which is the first Picard tie-in novel and it's by Una McCormack. So if you're interested in contributing to that discussion you still have a little bit of time to read the book before the episode and you can jump over to our goodreads group. There's a link on our website at Womenatwarp.com down on the sidebar to join that discussion. Also if you're interested in writing for our blog you can go to Womenatwarp.com and click on contribute in the top menu bar. And we always like hearing from you and seeing some awesome ideas that you have to blog about. The one that I am currently just getting ready to prep, which

will be up by this time the episode drops, is on the top 10 similarities between Star Trek The Next Generation and Buffy the Vampire Slayer. So I hope you enjoy.

GRACE:

A lot of crossover appeal there.

SUE:

Yeah and we've mentioned the last few episodes about the Roddenberry Podcast Network Master feed. If you listen to multiple shows on the network or are interested in checking them out, that podcast feed is there and subscribe and you'll get every episode of every show on the network delivered right to whatever pod catcher you use. You should be able to find it in any pod catcher just by searching Roddenberry. And it should come right up. We also do want to mention we are all in North America of course and we are, as we record, in the midst of the Covid19 outbreak. A lot of conventions that we have mentioned before have been canceled or postponed. As of right now I think the next one that is on anybody's list is Star Trek Las Vegas. But most of all we just want to encourage everyone to take whatever measures you can to stay healthy and isolate or distance as much as possible. I think that that is all about that topic. However, in good news we have been able to choose our Picard poster giveaway winners but by the time this episode drops those two people will receive an email just be on the lookout for that and as soon as we get your mailing information back from you and assuming that post offices are open we will get those out to you A.S.A.P.

GRACE:

On to our main topic for today then?

JARRAH:

Yeah!

GRACE:

Our main topic for today is the character of nurse Christine Chapel. The character was originally played by Majel Barret created by Gene Roddenberry, while they were having an affair, after Number One was axed from the original pilot.

JARRAH:

Yeah. So we talked a little bit about Nurse Chapel in our episode on Majel, "The first lady of Star Trek", but wanted to return and look a little bit more at her background and moments and I think probably most importantly is what they could have done with the character that they maybe didn't do because there's a lot that they kind of didn't do.

ANDI:

How about anything? *crew laughs* I mean that's just my two cents. They could have done anything.

SUE:

I firmly believe that Number One gets more character development than Chapel does in three years.

GRACE:

That's unfortunate but pretty true. Yeah.

SUE:

You know the general like fan knowledge right, If you ask anybody, they say that audiences just weren't ready for Number one. But there is another explanation for why Number one was cut, which is that the producers didn't want the creator's mistress starring in the show.

ANDI:

Yeah. And Gene Roddenberry said "try and stop me suckas!" *crew laughs*

JARRAH:

Well and apparently there's a story that Majel showed up one day in a blonde wig and Gene didn't even realize it was her until he got really close to her and then she said basically if I can for you I can fool the networks. And so they made this character although in the original description she is described in the draft shooting script for The Naked Time, which is her first episode, as "Dark haired more starkly attractive than beautiful. A woman of startling vitality, superb efficiency."

GRACE:

How vital Do you have to be for it to be startling? *crew laughs* I just want a frame of reference here. Scale of you know, "asleep on the floor" to "*startled noise*". Where where where does startling vitality lie?

ANDI:

She's doing Jazzercise the whole time.

GRACE:

Holy crap that is *superbly* efficient.

SUE:

Somewhere around Lwaxana Troi.

GRACE:

That'll do it.

JARRAH:

And she was renamed. Originally, she was named Christine Baker and then Christine Dushow but was renamed apparently as a pun on the Sistine Chapel.

GRACE:

I hate that I never realized that. *crew laughs* Because that is so good. Aw man I feel like I've been out punned by people who aren't even in the room.

SUE:

From 54 years ago.

GRACE:

I am humbled. I feel humbled here.

ANDI:

They were playing the long game Grace.

GRACE:

They did. They were like "One of these days we're gonna make a pun and it's gonna humiliate the bejesus out of-

ANDI:

"-specifically Grace".

JARRAH:

They knew podcasts were gonna be a thing.

GRACE:

"Specifically this fan who's gonna hang out and talk to herself in her room a lot but record it and put it on the Internet. *crew laughs* Boy will her face be red!"

ANDI:

We've now had more fun talking about Christine Chapel than Majel Barrett had acting. *crew laughs* Am I wrong? Am I wrong?

JARRAH:

No. I mean it's true that she has said in the past that it was not her favorite character to play but she-

ANDI:

How diplomatic of you Jarrah. *crew laughs*

JARRAH:

She kind of felt but, you know, she didn't really have much to do other than moon over Spock and Roger Korby.

GRACE:

And that's accurate.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And she didn't really have the agency or the fun of a character like Lwaxana or the power of a character like Number one.

GRACE:

Or even the screen time of a character like Uhura.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Although in the animated series she gets a lot more lines. Because there were fewer voice actors. Another interesting part of the background is in David Gerrold's book, that I think kind of segues nicely into the discussion of the actual episodes that she's in. But in his book *The World of Star Trek* he said that he thought that Chapel was created really because Spock needed to be... it needed to be dramatized how aloof he was and said that that need quote "Requires that a woman fall in love with him and be continually rebuffed." Hence Nurse Chapel.

ANDI:

bitter laughing That's so depressing. I mean, her high point is when Spock throws soup at her.
crew sad laughs Its true though! That's the best part!

GRACE:

Do you think they bring that up at like her retirement party? Like they're like "Aw Christine you've done so much for us. Hey remember that time you tried to do a nice thing for Spock and he freakin threw soup at you?!"

SUE:

But what about when she teaches Uhura how to read again?

JARRAH:

All of these are important points. Should we start with the Spock situation since that starts from the first episode?

SUE:

Oh it *is* a situation.

JARRAH:

It's in the *Naked Time*. She comes on, and I rewatched this episode recently and I was struck by it's cool we get to see her like assisting in surgery and she's wearing gloves being all like medical and clearly very competent, before we get to see her become drunk with the whatever juice.

ANDI:
Ew.

GRACE:
We get to see her efficiency before we see her vitality.

JARRAH:
Yes we see her actions here before we see her need to be rebuffed by Spock. But then she's like *Chapel voice* "Oh Mr. Spock I'm so in love with you." Then he goes into the room and cries *crew laughs*

ANDI:
OK. This categorizes so many of their interactions, the number of times that Spock just like sits in his room and plays his ukulele *Grace laughs* and is like real freakin sad.

GRACE:
I'm sorry, but you've given me the mental image of Spock being a ukulele guy, like with a pork pie hat and he tries to perform at open mike night.

JARRAH:
And like Chapel is sitting outside his quarters listening and singing along *singing Jesus Christ Superstar "I don't know how to loove him"

ANDI:
And she puts one sad hand on the door. A longing look

JARRAH:
And then he opens it and throws soup at her. *crew laughs*

GRACE:
as Chapel "he loved my performance! He gave me fresh homemade soup that I made for him! But he gave it back because he loved it so much and he loved what I was doing. That's how it works.

SUE:
muttering Oh my gosh.

GRACE
-I assume."

ANDI:
I will say this, Majel Barrett does a good acting job in that she looks real sad.

GRACE:

it's true. She plays Moonstruck very well.

ANDI:

Her eyes get very big and they look very blue and she looks real sad, and I mean what else can you do with that but do that?

GRACE:

When that's what you've got to work with, you do it your best and she does it pretty well.

ANDI:

Props.

GRACE:

Props.

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean I think she's compelling on screen. I prefer the like blonde beehive to this sort of silvery blonde thing she's got going on at the beginning, but that's not about her skill.

GRACE:

It's about the hairdresser skill really.

JARRAH:

Should we revisit the "forced to kiss Spock" scene in Plato's Stepchildren.

ANDI:

That was real sad to me. The thing that has always struck me about that is it's like her greatest wish and it's tainted. And that has always made me feel real bad for her, and Plato's Stepchildren is such a weird episode anyway because on the one hand it's horrible on the other hand like there's some really interesting ideas in there. And one of them that I've always found interesting is the way that they play that she was like aware that this is nonconsensual and that it means nothing and it completely ruins everything for her, whereas they could have played that real different and made it a lot worse. But at the way it is actually played it's really heartbreaking actually.

JARRAH:

Yeah, it kind of reminds me of the way that they wrote Rand as like she is necessary for Kirk's character to function, that she doesn't necessarily need to have the character that's interesting on her own. And it seems like that was sort of the view with Chapel as well.

ANDI:

The other thing is when we see her later in that animated series Mudd episode.

JARRAH:
Mudd's Passion?

ANDI:
Yeah, it makes me sad that she apparently forgets this lesson. Because it's very uncomfortable to have her giving drugs to Spock to force him to fall in love with her.

JARRAH:
Yeah that's the love potion one that is really just a "what not to do" lesson in consent. it is really unpleasant.

ANDI:
He's also just openly getting on Kirk the whole time. Like if you take away all the consent issues is pretty dang funny.

SUE:
It makes me wonder if that was her choice or the direction in Plato's Stepchildren because in all of Majel's characters on Star Trek her acting ability is what gives those characters depth especially when it comes to Chapel because she got so little to do. But there are layers to everything she *does* do.

JARRAH:
So you mean you think like she chose to play it more conflicted?

SUE:
Well that's the question. Did she make that choice or was she directed to play it that way. Either way she has the ability to do it.

ANDI:
That director did not have control over them in that scene.

SUE:
Well *that is* true.

ANDI:
I mean William Shatner was directing himself in that scene. So I don't know how much direction she got, to be honest. It was probably wrangling Shatner away from Nichelle Nichols like "Nooo!"

SUE:
I don't mean to continue to bring up Number one as we are talking about Chapel but-

GRACE:

it's hard not to! *Sue laughs*

SUE:

I always, when I think about the way she can put so much into two a few seconds, I think about the scene where Pike says you know "I don't like women on the bridge. Oh, you don't count Number one." And then the camera lingers on her for like five seconds.

JARRAH:

Looking, like, disappointed.

SUE:

Well her face changes from like "Oh I'm accepted as one of the crew" like, "he doesn't think of me as less-than" because it is still the 60s to "but that also means he'll never think of me romantically." because we learned in that episode how she has a thing for Pike and you can see in just the tiniest changes, to what she's doing, all of these emotions filter through her and she does that in Chapel as well but gets a lot less screen time to do it in.

ANDI:

And her dialogues pretty bad.

GRACE:

Her dialogue is mostly, well just about all, based around being moony over Spock.

ANDI:

Shall we talk about her episode with the clones? Clone robots?

GRACE:

Clone-bots? What are Little Girls made of?

ANDI:

Yeeeeeah. Yeah yeah that one!

SUE:

Which gives her a somewhat surprising background seeing as she's so moony for Spock?

JARRAH:

Yeah we definitely should talk about this. This is like, probably the episode which gives her the most scenes. What are Little Girls Made of?

SUE:

answering Androids.

JARRAH:

So she was a student in Dr. Roger Korby's class and they were engaged. Soooo-

GRACE

It already raises a couple of red flags right there that they met when she was you know his student he was her teacher.

ANDI:

This is something that's gonna end on our relationships for sure.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

GRACE:

Absolutely.

JARRAH:

And then he disappeared and she abandoned her career in bio research for a position in Starfleet to hopefully find him one day.

ANDI:

OK.

SUE:

Hmmm.

JARRAH:

Yeah. It's more that like, she made a choice based on the fact that she needed to find her professor fiancee than the fact that she made *that* choice is not necessarily a bad choice. But I don't think we're supposed to see it as like she took a step down.

GRACE:

Yeah we're supposed to see that as more of her startling vitality *crew giggles* but it doesn't read as very efficient to me.

ANDI:

Well apparently it worked.

GRACE:

I guess!

ANDI:

They stumbled over him in the vast reaches of space. They managed to find this one planet where they make androids or something by putting papier mâché on a merry go round make it spin real fast. They found that planet.

SUE:

I mean I think that the explanation of “Well, she stopped studying” and like “she's just a nurse now” because she needed to get out in Starfleet-

GRACE:

-like being a nurse is so easy?

SUE:

Right! I think it *is* giving the idea that nursing is *less than*.

GRACE:

When it's a very challenging position.

JARRAH:

We need to have a conversation about that. For sure, because we got a lot a lot a lot of comments on this and actually it was the most commonly occurring theme in our comments was around whether it was a good thing that she should be made a doctor in Star Trek The Motion Picture. So, sorry. We'll come back to androids and android clones later. So Dillon via Facebook said “I had this headcanon that in movies 2 through 6 she's head of Starfleet Medical.” Well, I don't know that we know if you can be a Nurse head of Starfleet Medical. In which case like, that is not necessarily a comment about being a doctor.

GRACE:

Maybe she became a nurse practitioner?

JARRAH:

Yeah. Well, and then there was a comment from Philip who said “There is a tendency in fiction that nurses should get promoted to doctor but there are several levels to nurses even in the military. There are Army colonels who are nurses and ran combat hospitals” when he was deployed. So there's that comment and then we had another comment from Leanna who said “I dislike that she went from being a nurse to being a doctor, which felt like they wanted to quote level her up into a more prestigious role instead of acknowledging the value of being a nurse.” And then there was an acknowledgment though that like we also should consider what nursing was at the time versus what it is today. So there's *all that* and we should discuss.

SUE:

Right. So there's this, I think, this idea that still exists at least in my experience that like, nursing is like doctoring Junior. And that is not correct. They're not the same thing; they are different jobs that have different tasks and require different knowledge bases

ANDI:

And skills.

SUE:

And skills. Absolutely.

GRACE:

And from the sound of it are both incredibly intense in their own way.

ANDI:

Except for we just devalue nurses and don't pay them enough.

GRACE:

Because we consider them Doctor Junior.

ANDI:

Well and also because nursing is an overwhelmingly woman dominated field. Yeah.

SUE:

More on Chapel **bitter laugh**. I think it gets complicated because we're dealing with this character over a long span of time both in the universe and out of universe in real life. But taking it just like the canon side, we know this character gave up her pursuit of her doctoring to join Starfleet. And personally I am happy to see that she went back to it. And like fulfilled at least her professional dream even if like, the search for her fiancée didn't work out the way she wanted to. Does that make sense?

JARRAH:

Yeah and I do think that there's two sides to the argument around time. And different from our normal conversations about like a show made in the 60s. But, just in terms of where nursing was at. I agree that in the past 15 years certainly that nursing has become a lot more...uh there's a lot more specialized areas of nursing like validation of nurse practitioners that has all been continuing in the more recent past and wasn't necessarily as big of a thing in the 60s. I do also think that they did see it as like you know "leveling her up" and didn't really value the contributions of nurses equally to doctors especially you get that like grumpy McCoy doesn't want to deal with her now that she's a doctor and she's going to argue with him.

SUE:

Now he has to listen.

GRACE:

Oh now she's gotten all big in her britches.

JARRAH:

Yeah. But then the other argument is there are also inequalities in the profession and in both doctoring and nursing that persists today partly because of the stereotypes that were occurring in series like this that casts nursing as a woman dominated profession but also as like nursing as sexualized. And that's part of the reason we have like massive amounts of sexual harassment of nurses today still and that there's stigma against men nursing like it's all packed up in all of these gender role pieces that I think are interesting to look at.

SUE:

A friend of mine who is a cis guy and a nurse says he regularly gets comments like "So what, did you not pass the test to be a doctor?" Like in the hospital at work. Its BS.

JARRAH:

Yeah. There's even, like you know, sitcoms references to like *male* nurse. Like it's fundamentally different. But yeah I agree. I don't actually have a problem with the fact they made her a doctor just as like a canon character moment. But I think it probably wasn't necessarily that they were trying to do right by the character returning to her roots. That's a nice interpretation.

SUE:

Oh I'm sure that was not.

GRACE:

Yeah. Let's just stick with that for the time being and I'll feel happier thinking that.

SUE:

That's just how it happened in my head.

GRACE:

Yeah. I mean, more power to her. More power to her.

pause

ANDI:

Shall we go back to the dick rock episode? *crew laughs*

GRACE:

Let's do it. This episode is very very bizarre. But again it's the one where we get to see the most of Chapel so there's a lot to dig into there. There's a lot of papier mâché rubble to sift through.

ANDI:

Yeah but she did get overshadowed by a girl wearing like, a scarf pantsuit.

GRACE:

Yeah. That would definitely end up as part of the post on our relationships.

JARRAH:

In the script. It describes Chapel as “She is a strong calm woman very much in control of herself, which emphasizes only more for us the flickers of emotion that do occasionally show through.”

ANDI:

She like, hurls herself at him. *crew laughs*

GRACE:

It’s a flicker! Just a flicker!

JARRAH:

Is that what strong and controlled means?

GRACE:

I think that’s just the idea of “how woman work” in a lot of 60s TV.

ANDI:

You know how when women are on screen in their original series they do that thing with the lighting and everything gets all soft and everything?

GRACE:

The Vaseline on the lens?

ANDI:

Yeah yeah like, everything with her in it in that episode is like... I feel like she should put her hand on her forehead and just swoon. That’s the vibe.

GRACE:

Eighty percent of her direction is “swoon”.

ANDI:

To be fair to her I too would be super psyched if I lost my fiancée and then came upon him unexpectedly in space which was my plan and I wasn’t expecting it to work but it actually did. I would be excited. I too would throw myself at that man.

GRACE:

Would you swoon though?

ANDI:

I would! I would swoon.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean, what are the odds?

ANDI:

Exactly! Odds.. just ...statistically.

GRACE:

I'm just saying of all the reactions that I would relate to something that statistically unlikely happening, swooning is probably not the reaction I'd go for personally.

ANDI:

I mean yeah I'd probably swear a lot.

JARRAH:

Also if I was clinging that strongly to that possibility of finding him and things all working out fine, it *is* possible I would resist somewhat realizing he is a huge creep.

GRACE:

Yeah. That's unfortunate. It's an unfortunate side effect of finding your missing fiancée on a planet after not seeing him for years there's a good chance he's become creepy.

ANDI:

Making a sex-bot.

GRACE:

Making a couple I think.

SUE:

What if he were always creepy and she just put up with it? That's what's the most upsetting thing to me.

JARRAH:

Because he was her professor and he was picking her up. So by definition he was a little creepy at least? Yeah.

GRACE:

Yeah. What if her time on the Enterprise taught her to value herself more than she did when she first met Korby.

JARRAH:

Well we also had a commentor who was like "It's an interesting question about how she supposedly is on this mission sort of to find Korby, but then she's in love with Spock." So like what do we all think of that?

GRACE:

We're all allowed to be complicated.

ANDI:

Spock's hot. I mean what do you want me to say?

JARRAH:

Also I do get the sense that she didn't really think she was actually going to find him necessarily.

ANDI:

Statistically, Jarrah, It's just so unlikely.

JARRAH:

And also you know from a 60s perspective maybe not as cool, but like you know they didn't have any... It wasn't like before he disappeared she was like *girly voice* "I'll wait for you forever forever."

GRACE:

Isn't that kind of the what the fiancée thing is? I mean in theory?

JARRAH:

Weeeeell I mean even after a while they wil...well you know like, someone can be declared dead after a while.

GRACE:

Maybe that's why she's doing it. She's like "Okay I got put in a certain amount of searching for dead fiance time, then I'm good to go!"

SUE:

"I just gotta stick this out a few more months and then I can get that Vulcan lovin"

GRACE:

"Got to collect the life insurance, gotta put it in my socially mandated grieving time, aaaand I'm good."

ANDI:

OK. But we make fun, but this episode is pretty great. I mean, it's so funny that you've got space Lurch. You've got the dick rock. You've got that really inexplicable pant suit made of scarves that I think *totally* works.

GRACE:

You've got sexy robot lady.

JARRAH:

You've got the rotating Kirk table.

ANDI:

I mean the android making merry go round? This is all gold.

GRACE:

In terms of sci-fi shenanigans this episode is probably in the top ten of TOS.

ANDI:

It's just so enjoyable.

GRACE:

It's just so "What the hell is going to happen next?!?"

ANDI:

And every time there's a shot of Kirk cradling the dick rock...

GRACE:

You say that like the dick rock is a central part of the episode.

ANDI:

It IS Grace

JARRAH:

If you look at what the internet thinks about this episode it is.

GRACE:

Fair. That's fair.

ANDI:

When I was First Time Trekking this episode I was like "Oh God I really want to say something about how this rock looks totally like a dick, but I'm going to be classy. I'm not going to say anything" and like two tweets in people were like "Are you just going to ignore that dick rock? How dare you!" So I was like "OK I see how this is." I mean this was pretty early on my First Time Trekking journey and I just hadn't realized what my audience was like and I was like "Oh OK I should just talk repeatedly about the dick rock." So I did.

GRACE:

I was watching it and my roommate, who's never watched Star Trek, just walked into the room and was like "Oh is this the one for dick rock?"

ANDI:

See! So I definitely feel like it's the standout moment of this episode.

JARRAH:

I feel like technically it's a dick stalactite. *crew loses it laughing*

GRACE:

THAT'S where you're drawing the line?!??

ANDI:

Wait which is it, stalactite or stalagmite? Which-

JARRAH:

I actually don't know.

GRACE:

if it's a *stalactite* it won't fit in your butt. But if its a *stalagmite*...

ANDI:

It *might* fit in your butt.

SUE:

A stalactite is the top and a stalagmite is the bottom.

GRACE:

Yeah I think I got it there.

ANDI:

So is Kirk the top or the bottom?

GRACE:

Only Spock can tell us for sure. *crew laughs*

ANDI:

We got to put it "not safe for work" on this episode and I'm totally fine with it. So now that we've talked in depth about Chapel and not the dick rock *crew snickers failing to suppress laughter*

JARRAH:

I did want to just make a note of the part where she tells Kirk that she really doesn't want to be given an order to betray Korby even after she finds out that he's super sketch and says that she'd rather have Kirk *girly voice* "Push me off the same precipice where Matthews died."

GRACE:

Mmokay, a tad little dramatic there Christine.

JARRAH:

Yeah but also very calm and very in control of herself.

GRACE:

You know for someone who's officially turned into a Wuthering Heights character-

SUE:

That's calm and controlled for a woman in the 60s.

GRACE:

What would it look like if she wasn't in control, man?

ANDI:

They might as well have shot this episode on a windswept moore.

GRACE:

Yeah! Exactly. But you know in a cave full of phallic rocks.*Andi laughs*

ANDI:

And sexy androids.

GRACE:

Yeah.

ANDI:

What a great episode.

GRACE:

Love in a time of carousels that make robots.

JARRAH:

So most of the rest of the highlights and lowlights are very very short. So like this will be more like a strobe light. So lowlights:Feeding kids ice cream in And the Children Shall Lead.

ANDI:

You know, people have a lot of thoughts about what the worst episode of TOS is. I really feel it's this one.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

GRACE:

You know I feel like that's a fair assessment.

ANDI:

I mean the only good thing about this episode is how happy McCoy is when they start to cry. *crew laughs* He's like "Aw yeah. Success! Look at the crying children! Muahaha!"

GRACE:

He pulls out a shot glass and is like "OK. Aim it into here. Aim it into here. MMM Children tears. I love it."

ANDI:

It's so funny. But the rest of the episodes horrible.

JARRAH:

And it definitely seems like, why is it the nurses job to be serving? Like they're also the waitress for children?

SUE:

Because woman.

GRACE:

It's almost as if nurses are seen as a servile position. Let us all join together in a moment of "Hmmm"

ANDI:

A fun fact about And the Children Shall Lead is somebody once asked me what my favorite outside references to Star Trek are. And mostly it's Dean Winchester being a huge Trekkie. Also I really find it hilarious when in Zodiac, in the middle of this tense serial killer thriller, they do a whole television program. And Brian Cox plays Melvin Belli who is the guy who is like this lawyer that was like a side character in this episode and they have a whole conversation about this episode and they're like "it was really good." And I was like "But it wasn't though!" *Grace laughs intensely* It was very bad.

JARRAH:

They probably all told Melvin Belli it was really good.

ANDI:

And I just love that that movie must be a solid two hours long. And they were like "This."

JARRAH:

"*This* needs to stay"

GRACE:

"This is *important*. We're talking about one of the most notorious uncaught serial killers of all time, but we got to Stan. We've got to Stan for some dreck here."

ANDI:

And I appreciate it. It's one of my favorites. Like that movie is flawless.

GRACE:

David Fincher came to the set. Day One said "We. always. Stan. Trek. in. this. house. ALWAYS."

ANDI:

He probably had it written on the wall. Sorry. That also is not about Christine chapel. But can you blame me? There's not much to say about Christine Chapel. All right let's keep it going.

GRACE:

Do you think every David Fincher movie has a Star Trek reference that got cut out of it?

ANDI:

I hope so.

GRACE:

Like Se7en? *Sue laughs* Like Benjamin Button? *crew laughs* The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo? *laughter continues* Is there a Trekkie cut of the entire works of David Fincher?

ANDI:

I hope so. In my heart there is.

GRACE:

Release the Trekkie cut!

JARRAH:

Amazing. OK. So let's let's go back to teaching Uhura to read.

GRACE:

Which is adorable.

SUE:

Yeah. I mean I'm not sure there's much else to say about that scene. *Andi laughs*

GRACE:

She taught Uhura to re-read.

JARRAH:

I guess, the only thing we heard in comments was "This showed the potential of potentially a very cool Chapel Uhura friendship that should have been explored further."

ANDI:

Is this the only time they talk together? Because I feel like it's the only time they talk together.

JARRAH:

It is. Well, at least the only notable time.

ANDI:

They're like, *adjacent* in Plato's Stepchildren and like, they stood next to each other while looking flawless.

SUE:

So in a *pause* sorry brain.

GRACE:

Gotta brain.

SUE:

Yes.

ANDI:

deadpan Brain and brain.

GRACE:

trying to do a Kara from Spocks Brain voice Brain and brain! What is brain?

SUE:

So in Inside Star Trek it noted that like, Roddenberry had initially hoped or intended for Chapel to become a recurring character like on par with Uhura, like around as much as she was and doing as much as she did. *But* supposedly Majel said "Well NBC fired me once, so they can't really expand the role."

GRACE:

Also we've got in one of our background notes this idea that Lucille Ball apparently wanted to fire her at one point after learning about the affair between her and Gene. Yeah because this would have been after Lucille's divorce from Desi under similar circumstances as I understand?

SUE:

There was a lot of controversy.

GRACE:

Gosh, what a dramatic show to be a part of.

SUE:

We're not there yet but there is *more*.

GRACE:

There's *more?!!*

SUE:

When they did the animated series.

GRACE:

aghast Oh my goooosh.

JARRAH:

I mean I will say like, when she does get to do medicine I have zero complaints with those scenes. Like The Tholian Web. She also has a nice moment in For the World is Hollow and I Have Touched the Sky where she says "I am a nurse first Dr. McCoy, and a member of the crew of the enterprise second." And I think that's almost like Dr. Crusher-y? Like, "I'm going to put my patients first" kind of thing. So I think that there is like moments of some really nice potential for that character to be like a more fleshed out admirable figure. And I guess a little less **pauses** needy?

ANDI:

You're *so* diplomatic.

GRACE:

You really are being just absurdly kind.

SUE:

One of us has to be.

ANDI:

So the animated series?

GRACE:

The animated series!

SUE:

Yes, so the animated series. When that one came about Majel Barret was initially expected slash intended to not only voice Chapel and a bunch of the extra women on the show but Uhura as well.

ANDI:

Noooo.

GRACE:

That's a bad idea.

SUE:

Similarly, Jimmy Doohan was going to be Scotty and Sulu. *universal hissing and no's* People who know this story have heard it, Leonard Nimoy was really the one who intervened and said "No, this the cast that started together should all be on the show." And it's because of him that they hired on Nichelle and George Takei to voice their own characters. He was not successful getting Walter Koenig back, but he joined the cast in season two and you know that's a big discussion you can ask Aaron Harvey about all of that.

GRACE:

Aaron Harvey? Didn't he write a book?

SUE:

He *did* write a book all about the animated series. But yeah. Can you imagine if she was also Uhura?

GRACE:

That would be dicey.

JARRAH:

In addition to being like, it's obviously excluding the people of color is offensive on a different level, but you also want to just hear how bad that would sound listen to the storybook records of the original series where they have like two men voicing all of the male roles and one woman voicing everything else and she makes like Uhura have this southern drawl. It's very very very bad. Voice acting: a real job.

GRACE:

Voice acting: a complicated job.

ANDI:

Leonard Nimoy: great guy.

GRACE:

The more you know.

JARRAH:

But Chapel.. maybe like, Mudd's Passion not such a great Chapel episode. But she does get to be the acting chief medical officer in the Lorelai Signal.

GRACE:

That's something.

JARRAH:

She also shrinks with some other crew members in the Terratin Incident.

SUE:

Doesn't she show up in red in The Lorelei Signal as well?

JARRAH:

It's possible because there's like the scene where they're all on the planet and everyone's in red, which makes me think they just had a lot of red dresses hanging around.

GRACE:

It was a Wizard of Oz situation, where like "Oh no. You show up *here*, you wear *red*."

JARRAH:

Yes. So I don't know. I mean there was also them like, you know copying animation cells for use in other pieces. So it's possible it was just also way cheaper?

GRACE:

Maybe red paint was cheaper? I dunno.

JARRAH:

I don't know. Aaron would know.

ANDI:

Ooor buy his book. *murmurs of agreement*

JARRAH:

Yes, very cool. Should we look at the movies a little bit? There also is not a lot there but I think it's worth stating because I had a question on the Facebook post about like "Where is this photo

even from?" of her in the monster maroon from the Star Trek Four. Because yeah, that was such a quick thing that most people didn't even notice it.

ANDI:

Isn't there a scene with her and Sarek too? That was cut?

JARRAH:

Yes. They were going to have her kind of like meeting Sarek when he arrived at Starfleet Headquarters and talking to him about you know, how things were going and how he was feeling about the crew of the Enterprise. Or I guess the Bounty.

GRACE:

That would've been funny and awkward to have her be like **creepy voice** "So how's your son that I still kind of have a crush on?"

ANDI:

Well in one of the wide shots, when I think somebody is talking to all the admirals and the board of shadowy figures, in the background you can still see her standing at the back of the room.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And she's supposed to be talking with Rand in one of the scenes earlier.

ANDI:

Man I really wish we got to see the women and talk together more.

GRACE:

Yeah. It's almost like it's a thing that they feel like we only need a *little bit* of. But we should have a *lot* of.

JARRAH:

I think they saw it as like a nice gesture. Like "We didn't *have* to do this." **crew snorts**

GRACE:

jerk voice "Enjoy your table scraps kids!"

JARRAH:

It was like fanservice right? But like not obvious enough. The Motion Picture novelization by Gene Roddenberry, which is super bizarre and we should definitely do for a book club one day, it said that she was going to be the Chief Medical Officer before disco McCoy came back but she was very pleased that she didn't have to be to.

ANDI:

Who? Chapel or Majel?

JARRAH:

Chapel. It's in the novelization. So sorry, we skipped, I'm going back to Star Trek The Motion Picture where she is now a doctor and McCoy says to Kirk like "I'm going to need a top nurse, not a doctor who'll argue every little diagnosis with me." and this is not what the difference between doctoring and nursing is but it's implied by this statement is like "I need someone who isn't as educated and won't get all uppity."

GRACE:

Jesus.

SUE:

"I need someone who will do what I say!"

GRACE:

Not a good look.

JARRAH:

Yeah. "Women should stay in their place!" *starts singing stayin alive*

ANDI:

I do love disco McCoy though..

GRACE:

What's not to love?

ANDI:

..and his coke binge aesthetic. *Grace laughs*

JARRAH:

But she does get the rank of commander in Star Trek Four and she's supposed to be in charge of the relief efforts.

GRACE:

OK. That's something.

ANDI:

I feel like the biggest problem we have with her is everything cool about her is implied and not onscreen.

JARRAH:

Yeah exactly. It's just in the script and we're like "Look we're what we're doing for Chapel! We've given her a rank."

ANDI:

It's like Disney's gay representation.

GRACE:

Ooooooh. Not inaccurate.

JARRAH:

Yeah exactly. And then there's like a whole lack of background about why Nurse Chapel was not but maybe was going to be in the JJ verse? And it was established in dialogue in 2009 because McCoy calls for a nurse chapel. But you never see her. So implied again.

GRACE:

Oh my God. She is "Nurse Not Appearing in This Film." *Andi laughs*

JARRAH:

There is a blonde female medic with a 1960s style beehive who is seen in the end of Star Trek 2009. And a lot of people are like "Maybe it's Nurse Chapel?"

ANDI:

We really are fighting for scraps. *noises of agreement*

JARRAH:

And then there was a lot of expectation that maybe Alice Eve's character was going to be Nurse Chapel.

ANDI

I do remember that.

GRACE:

We were hoping.

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean I was also just hoping if she was Carol Marcus, she would be better? Because I liked Carol Marcus. But yeah. But she does say she's friends with Chapel and then Kirk says he doesn't remember her which was used to show Kirk's attitudes towards women as we had talked about in our JJ verse episode.

SUE:

sarcastic Yay.

JARRAH:

Kirk became more of an asshole.

GRACE:

radical 90's voice It was bogus kids! We've actually got a quote here from Alex Kurtzman about the original drafting plan with Nurse Chapel in Star Trek 2009 "In our original *original* draft we wrote some scenes with Nurse Chapel but ended up losing them. Even in our first draft it's not included. We originally had a flirtation between her and Spock. Nurse Chapel was clearly really obsessed with him and he was not giving her the time of day which we thought was funny. But then we came into the Spock and Uhura connection established in the film and that's why nurse Chapel ended up on the wayside." So that feels a little telling on a lot of levels in terms of they thought "Oh yeah this character that people really like and have you know developed this rich sort of backstory around and all that. She's there first to hit on Spock and fail. That's what she's there for."

ANDI:

To be fair to him he was remaining true to the character.

GRACE:

Unfortunately. Yeah.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I'm kind of glad they cut it. If that was the only thing they were gonna do.

GRACE:

Yeah definitely.

JARRAH:

Well, and we may never know the potential of Chapel in the JJ-verse.

GRACE:

There's something to be said about, you know, putting so much work into updating something and making it you know hip and sexy but staying true to your source material by sticking to some really unfortunate arbitrary rules put in place by the original work you are working with....man.

JARRAH:

Should we finish off with looking at some of the ideas people had for what they would have liked to see with Chapel?

GRACE:

It'd be great. We got some good ones too.

ANDI:

Again I pitch "anything." *crew laughs* Yes. That sounds awesome let's hear em.

JARRAH:

Well Maria on Facebook said "I wish she could have been a little matron-izing to her patients. Like, how are we feeling today Captain? There's my brave little Soldier." *crew laughs*

GRACE:

patronizing voice Have you eaten all your oatmeal yet? You're not going to get better till you eat all your oatmeal. How can you have your pudding if you don't eat your meat?

JARRAH:

Whispering Take your vitamins.

GRACE:

And then we've got one from Aaron via Facebook that I was wondering if I could share "I always wanted Voyager to somehow encounter Dr. Chapel" which would have been cool to see: a ship that's led by a female science officer meeting up with this nurse who is one of the few, you know, women science representations we had on the main crew in the original series.

SUE:

She'd have been very old by then.

GRACE:

So old.

JARRAH:

Or she could have been a hologram? That the doctor... I mean to be played by Majel probably at the time would be the challenge unless before she passed away so it had been had to be very early in the series but she could have been playing like elder statesmen Doctor Chapel kind of thing.

SUE:

Or some kind of time loop or something.

GRACE:

If they could find Scotty just hanging out in a transporter on TNG then they could definitely run into Chapel on Voyager.

SUE:

They've done it before.

JARRAH:

Actually yeah. I mean there's the whole like you know, back in time Romulan ship. Like, there's a lot of science fiction shenanigans they have to encounter different people of different ages and areas of space.

GRACE:

If you say you can't do it you're not trying very hard.

SUE:

Hey I'm still waiting on our medical fleet that I was promised in All Good Things.

JARRAH:

Or I guess she could have been like a colleague of Barclay and Zimmerman or something.

GRACE:

Or, concept: They stumble upon a planet that Dr. Korby was hanging out on, and they find a creepy proto robot that was just his attempt at making a robot Chapel for company.

ANDI:

If they had done that Grace, we would have already covered this on our show and ripped it to pieces.

JARRAH:

And Paris is like "Oh cool! vintage robot!" *crew laughs*

SUE:

Wow. All right.

GRACE:

Doesn't that sound like a horrible thing that could have happened?

SUE:

It does, but I want to talk about this comment from Lauren on Twitter who says "Unfortunately Chapel was defined by her relationship to men. Romantic with Korby or Spock, Professional with McCoy. I would have liked to know why she joined Starfleet" *sarcastic* because of men. "what drew her to medicine and how she developed interests outside of pursuing a relationship." *noises of agreement* I would *really* love to know what drew her to medicine. I mean bioresearch? That's awesome.

GRACE:

Cool. I want to know how she got into that also.

JARRAH:

And what interests she would have outside of medicine and men.*pause* I mean cooking.

SUE:

Soup, specifically.

GRACE:

Teaching. Teaching grown ups how to read *Sue groans*

JARRAH:

Maybe she was interested in literature?

GRACE:

Shes a big hairdo enthusiast. We know that.

JARRAH:

There was a lot of things they could have done that could have been really neat.

GRACE:

There was a lot of potential.

ANDI:

I'm just glad that Majel Barret finally got the character she deserved with Luxwana.

GRACE:

Yeah it took a while but she got there.

JARRAH:

And then you know, Number one has been you know sort of, at least in the fandom and and I mean I would argue on Discovery, but she's been like given more of her due as a character. Even you know, regardless of your thoughts on the newest incarnation I think it's good to see that like that character has it's time

GRACE:

It is good to see. Maybe we'll see Chapel have her time sometime.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And maybe we could also see nurses that have, I think there aren't other nurses in Star Trek that I don't think are kind of treated or you know maybe disempowered the way that chapel is, but I also don't know that they're really treated as doing something more than just assisting the doctors so maybe it would be neat to have a little bit more empowered nurse character.

SUE:

Yeah I think of Nurse Ogawa, is the first one that comes to mind but then there's also Kes and even Paris. But they are very much, I mean Kes I think even calls herself the doctor's assistant. And that is very much the role that nurses on Star Trek play, is the doctor's assistant.

ANDI:

And nurse Ogawa eventually becomes Dr. Ogawa as well.

JARRAH:

So still some potential work to do.

GRACE:

I was about say it's been a long road getting from there to here but you know what? We haven't come thaaat far in terms of nurse representation. Do we have any final thoughts then on this character of Nurse Chapel and what we would like our listeners to take away about the character today?

JARRAH:

singing goin to the chapel Goin to the chapel and we're going to get rejected

GRACE:

continuing song gonna get rejected by a pointy swarthy alien man.

SPEAKER: F18

OK so wait is chapel TOSs Geordi? *Andi barks with laughter*

GRACE:

stoic Yes.

ANDI:

To be fair she's only really rejected by two dudes.

JARRAH:

Yeah. She's uuh..it's not that she like lacks social skills.

GRACE:

Two rejections does not a Geordie make.

ANDI:

You need at least 10 rejections to get to Geordi status.

SUE:

Poor Geordi.

GRACE:

Then you get a punch card.

SUE:

One free holodeck date.

ANDI:
Oh God.

GRACE:
Any other final thoughts on this character?

ANDI:
She deserved better.

GRACE:
She deserved better.

SUE:
A running theme with TOS.

GRACE:
Shocking. Truly.

ANDI:
That really should be the subtitle of our whole podcast. "Women at Warp: She deserved better."

GRACE:
All right. Jarrah, where can people find you online if they want to hear more from you?

JARRAH:
You can find me at Jarrahpenguin on Twitter. That's J-A-R-R-A-H penguin.

GRACE:
And what about you Sue?

SUE:
You can find me on Twitter @Spaltor. That's S-P-A-L-T-O-R.

GRACE:
And what are you Andi?

ANDI:
I am also on Twitter and you can find me @firsttimetrek.

GRACE:
And again I'm Grace, and you can find me on Twitter @Bonecrusherjenk and also hanging out day drinking on the patio. Because there's nowhere to really go right now. To learn more about our show or to contact us visit Womenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook Twitter or Instagram

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