

Women at Warp episode 116: Homefront/Paradise Lost Transcript

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's Jarrah and thanks for tuning in. Today with us we have our *entire* crew starting with Andi.

ANDI:

Helloo! And Jerry cat.

JARRAH:

And Grace.

GRACE:

resigned I'm here by myself. I don't have a cat.

JARRAH:

And Sue.

SUE:

Hello! Oswins on the windowsill.

JARRAH:

Excellent. And Sandwiches is also here in my recording chambers. So we are all ready to get talking about two very political episodes of Deep Space Nine. But before we get into our main topic we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is entirely supported by our patrons on Patreon. And 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 watchalong commentaries. Visit www.patreon.com/womanatwarp. That's P-A-T-R-E-O-N dot com slash Women at Warp. And another way you can support our show is by leaving a rating or review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. It just helps more people find us and figure out if this is the type of show they want to listen to. The answer is "Yes they do." *crew laughs* And so thanks a lot for your support in those ways. A few more items of housekeeping. Sue you just returned from Connecti-con?

JARRAH:

Yes. Sorry it was not mentioned before I went, it was a bit of a last minute trip but hopefully if anybody was there I ran into you.

JARRAH:

Amazing. I want to go through a little bit of our convention news. Our next big con is of course Star Trek Las Vegas. *Grace does heavenly operatic vocalizing* Beginning of August, Sue Grace, and I will be there. And we can say *what* we're doing but we unfortunately don't have the schedule yet, that'll be out a bit closer to August, but we will be doing two panels. One with the rest of the Roddenberry podcast network about sort of, you know, if we want to get to a post scarcity utopia as we see in Star Trek what would we actually need to get there. And then the three of us will be doing a Women at Warp panel that will be *humorously* yet *respectfully* ranking some of the most memorable costumes for women in Star Trek.

GRACE:

You'll handle the respectful, and I'll handle the everything else.

JARRAH:

laughs Yeah. And Sue did you want to talk a little bit else about what people can expect?

SUE:

Yeah. Just like last year, if you remember, we were giving away some custom stickers. We're gonna have some more of those this year. I'm also very excited to say that at the Roddenberry booth that we will have pronoun pins available. So we'll have four options. She/her, he/him, they/them, and ask me about my pronouns. So stop by the booth and get a pronoun pin for yourself completely free of charge. We're very excited to have those this year and an extra special announcement is that we have enamel pins this year headed to Star Trek Las Vegas.

GRACE:

excited Yeah we do!

SUE:

They are-

JARRAH:

They have glitter!

SUE:

-blue and glittery They're super fun we're very excited about it. Those, just a heads up to everybody, we are going to be asking a suggested donation of five dollars for an enamel pan. It is basically our itunes logo and we are going to be contributing the funds we bring in from that to the heroic-the Pop Culture Hero Coalition's Heroic Fundraiser for Scott Palms Heroic Curriculum.

JARRAH:

So thanks in advance. If you are not coming to Star Trek Las Vegas but you still want to support the Heroic Coalition, we've been talking about this on the last few podcasts, it's being supported

by the Roddenberry podcast network. And you can go to their GoFundMe at [GoFundMe.com/Scott-palm, P-A-L-M, -heroic-fundraiser](https://www.gofundme.com/Scott-palm,-P-A-L-M,-heroic-fundraiser). Or just go to Twitter and look up Mission Log and see their pinned tweet. And this is fundraising to make an awesome curriculum that will reach kids for disabilities and their peers with valuable lessons on inclusion self-worth and resilience.

SUE:

And we will be donating through the gofundme which means that the Roddenberry foundation will be matching our donations, and any of yours, dollar for dollar all summer long.

JARRAH:

Fabulous. Well let's get right into it then. So I mentioned we're going to talk about a couple of Deep Space Nine episodes that happen in season four that just struck us as, you know, politically relevant. We had-we've previously done an episode on Past Tense, so this isn't *new* for Deep Space Nine, but the episodes we're gonna be talking about are Homefront and Paradise Lost. Is there anyone who wants to take a stab at a really quick summary?

ANDI:

Odo and Sisko go back to Earth and everyone on earth is freaking out about the changeling threat. But according to a certain Admiral, they're not freaking out *enough* and he would like to put together more security measures against Changelings. And the president is not as enthusiastic about *that*. And so he stages a terrorist attack, essentially, in order to take control-Marshall control of Earth and Sisko stops him.

GRACE:

Because Siskos a good guy like that.

ANDI:

Yeah! You can count on Sisko to, you know-

GRACE:

-stop martial law?

ANDI:

Fight the good fight?

JARRAH:

Siskos gonna Sisk?

ANDI:

Yeah, he's got to do what he's got to do.

GRACE:

He's also going to recommend some Cajun food.

ANDI:

As you do.

GRACE:

Like you do.

JARRAH:

So I admit that I totally knew better, yet in my head when I watched this episode I was like "Oh this is obviously a response to 9/11." Even though this episode came out in 1996. *laughs* But-

GRACE:

That proves how relevant it keeps being. *crew laughs* Unfortunately.

JARRAH:

Yeah. If I had taken a second to think about it I would have realized of course Enterprise was on in 2001. But yeah it's *very* relevant.

ANDI:

The timelessness is because the story is timeless. Like this has played out in history over and over again. And I think sometimes people always think that it'll be different for some reason? And yet the same playbook still works, kind of repeatedly. Either because of you know ignorance of the historical precedent or they just don't see it you know? It's a tale as old as time

GRACE:

Frightened people are not the smartest people.

ANDI:

Correct. And fear is a good organizing tool.

JARRAH:

Singing to the tune of Beauty and the Beast Tale as old as time...been trying to work on the lyrics of that song for a while now, but.

ANDI:

laughs I'm glad someone recognized my beauty and the Beast reference.

JARRAH:

Yeah I was just trying to think of a way to rhyme "Being a changeling is not a crime."

GRACE:

singing to the tune Don't let your anger stew, just go revert to goo. *crew laughs*

SUE:

Please don't sue us. Mr. Mouse.

ANDI:

Probably too busy consolidating their hold over the entertainment industry.

GRACE:

continuing tune We can't afford libel. *crew laughs*

JARRAH:

All right. So before we get into basically ninety eight percent of this episode which is serious stuff happening on Earth, there is a really random like pre episode comic relief where apparently Dax is breaking into Odo's quarters and moving all his furniture around? *Andi laughs*

GRACE:

Seems a *little* out of character for her in terms of just, you know, from being wisecracking and all that to just being like and *jerk voice* "I'm gonna mess around with Odo's brain! *crew laughs* Gaslight the hell out of him!"

ANDI:

The thing that I find the most funny is that Odo is like "Obviously Quark is gonna be the one that has my back in this situation." Because when I think of people who're gonna be like *offended voice* "How DARE you break into somebodys apartment and mess with them." I definitely think Quark is the one who's going to be massively offended by that.

GRACE:

Sometimes there's a kind of special connection that you only really have with your frenemies, and that is getting offended over things together sometimes.

ANDI:

I think Odo just forgot the "enemy" part of it and went straight to his best friend and was like *hurt noise**crew laughs*

GRACE:

bro voice "Dude, you're not gonna believe this."

SUE:

I feel like this is on-brand for what we know of *Curzon* Dax.

JARRAH:

Yeah, and I guess this is part of the whole “make Jadzia more fun-loving around season three and four” but it does seem a little bit random.

GRACE:

It seems a little frat house doesn't it?

JARRAH:

Well and also kind of over-invasive *crew makes noises of agreement*

GRACE:

It's not the nicest prank.

JARRAH:

I actually think that it'd be funnier if she was just moving stuff around in his office. Then it would be more like an *office* prank, instead of she's literally breaking into his quarters while he's regenerating, so it's not even while he's at work. He's like, in his quarters in a bucket *Andi laughs* and she's like “Oh good. He's goo. We're goo to go.” *crew laughs*

ANDI:

Can we also take a moment to respect the cosplay game that Bashir and O'Brien have?

GRACE:

I know! O'Brien looks so good in a fighter helmet. He really does.

SUE:

They *really* don't break character.

JARRAH:

I know. Its- that is very cute, and their like-the different accents they're putting on. That parts very adorable when they're like mourning their dead comrade. *Andi laughs*

GRACE:

as O'Brien To *Cloive*.

JARRAH:

And then there's this thing about the wormhole opening and closing at random and there's another sort of random interchange about “belief systems”? Which, I feel like the beginning of the episode is just...really randomly tacked on. Like, the scenes are all fine, they just don't seem to fit with the rest of it. This whole thing about Kira being like “I kind of wish that the wormhole opening funny was the prophets. Cuz then they'd be talking to us” and then Worfs like “Klingons killed all our gods.” And then Kiras like “I'll never get Klingons” and O'Brien's like “No one gets Klingons. Lolz!” *crew laughs*

GRACE:

"They will be eternally other-ed in our culture!" *vocalizes punch-line music*

JARRAH:

So it's very-I mean I guess it's because they need us to remember the wormhole was opening and closing at random but that's the only reason for those scenes.

GRACE:

Yeah I'd like to think that the wormhole just had gas. *Sue snorts* Kind of a "Here it sits broken hearted" situation.

ANDI:

I don't know. There is something kind of on theme about Dax breaking into Odo's apartment and moving around his stuff and him not knowing what's going on.

GRACE:

In the terms of violation of personal space and civil liberties, sure. *laughs*

ANDI:

Yeah exactly! That's kind of where I'm going. It's just like this is "teehee" and later on it's like "But really, it's not funny."

GRACE:

The joke went too far huh?

JARRAH:

Right. So then they go to Earth, and Odo and Sisko- oh and they're taking Jake, and he has to stay at the grandpa's and Joseph's gonna make him work in the kitchen.

GRACE:

Brock Peterson.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And Brock Peterson is awesome. I'm sure we'll talk more about that. Then they meet Admiral toxic masculinity. *crew laughs*

GRACE:

Now is that his *given* name or did he choose that? Is it hyphenated?

SUE:

I believe it's "Latent" *crew laughs*

ANDI:

rimshot noise

JARRAH:

Yes, Admiral T. M. *Leyton*. And also what's her face Next Generation who's not from Next Generation anymore. Susan Gibney-

ANDI:

Leah Brahms.

JARRAH:

Yeah, Leah Brahms. Yes.

ANDI:

But it's Captain Benteen?

GRACE:

Erica Benteen

ANDI:

Yes, but she's not a captain yet at this point?

JARRAH:

No.

ANDI:

I do like how she just shows up and we're supposed to be like "Well we've never seen her before. She's brand new." That's fine with me. It really is. I'm fine with it.

GRACE:

How many times has that happened before in Star Trek though?

SUE:

Oh *all* of the times.

ANDI:

It's up there with the head transplants that we just never discuss. Like, Kirstie Alley. That I I'm always perfectly fine with being "Like yeah, totally. I've never seen this girl in my life."

JARRAH:

Her *hair* is much different. It is down. *crew laughs*

GRACE:

That's how we know it's a different person. Different look, different *fun* new attitude.

JARRAH:

So the Changelings have exploded people on Earth. This is why this i-

GRACE:

There was a terrorist attack that the Changelings were behind.

JARRAH:

Yes. And this was like, a legit thing that was actually caused by a changeling or at least never stated otherwise. And like several people died.

GRACE:

27 people died. The most people murdered on earth in almost 100 years.

ANDI:

Isn't that lovely?

JARRAH:

Yeah. That is so lovely.

ANDI:

I just-the first time I watched this episode I was like "I want to go to there."

GRACE:

It just makes me feel that the only way that's possible though is if we've kind of ended up in an Escape from a New York situation, and all of the super crime ridden cities just are... *not* any more?

ANDI:

This is a future in which violence on earth is not a thing anymore.

GRACE:

What a concept.

ANDI:

It's kind of unthinkable to us, especially as an American. The idea that you wouldn't just get randomly mowed down by horrible violence just doesn't seem right.

GRACE:

It just seems like such a foreign concept.

ANDI:

Yeah.

GRACE:

That and their depiction of New Orleans as being just so very quiet with the streets empty. Like do they not have their open drink laws anymore and this sci fi New Orleans?

ANDI:

He just found a quiet street, Grace.

GRACE:

Is that a thing in New Orleans?

ANDI:

I'm sure there are streets that are not party central.

JARRAH:

All the people on the *street* are in the restaurant.

ANDI:

Ah! There we go.

JARRAH:

It's a'bustlin.

SUE:

But in real life it's because they were having budgetary issues and had to cut back on the extras.

JARRAH:

Yeah there are not a lot of extras. Even like at Starfleet Academy there's barely anyone walking around.

GRACE:

We get like one CGI like screenshot of Starfleet. They use it- I think they use the same one in both episodes and there's just little CGI dudes walking back and forth in the foreground

SUE:

Behr keep a post-it note in his office that read “Remember Paradise Lost” because he was so disappointed by all of the cuts they had to make because of the budgetary issues during this episode.

ANDI:

Well he still turned out a good episode. “Remember Paradise Lost. It’s awesome.” It was a good episode. Both these episodes are very good. And the one thing I like from the beginning is how tense it is. So I didn’t quite know where this was going, obviously, because you know I do this thing called first time Trekking so I didn’t know what to expect. And I was just really tense, especially I was really nervous for Odo. Like for me, it scared me to think of Odo being away from D.S.9, away from the crew that trusts him, just with Sisko surrounded by Starfleet people who hate and fear Changelings. Like, I was really nervous for a long time.

GRACE:

He is not just out of his comfort zone, he is out of his sphere of safety.

ANDI:

Yeah! And it just-like every time they had a conversation where they were talking about Changelings and he was in the room it just made me so uncomfortable. And it’s a tribute to Odo that he doesn’t show that. He is like pure confidence all the time. He’s just such a bad ass.

SUE:

He *did* decide not to leave Starfleet Headquarters.

ANDI:

Yeah I mean, it’s just impressive to me like if I were in Odo’s position I would not want to walk in there you know?

JARRAH:

Yeah. And I mean he even goes out of his way to like use his skills to demonstrate how his people can be dangerous which is risky. And there’s that awesome scene with him and Leyton where it’s Leyton’s actually a changeling but he doesn’t know that right away, and you don’t know that right away. So we don’t know Leyton well enough and he’s like basically sassing Odo being like “Well what are you doing playing around being a seagull? That seems to be kind of a giant waste of time. And also I guess it’s just because you’re not a good enough shape shifter that you can’t look like a human.” Then he’s just like “Oh you’re totally a changeling!” and catches him. Catches him in the act but then the guy flies away. *But* I kind of love that scene because like you just don’t know *what* to expect from *who* and whether the President or the Admiral or Benteen is going to be like really hostile and just push it a little bit too far and decide suddenly Odo is the enemy.

SUE:

It's designed to scare *us* as well. So that we become complicit in that fear.

GRACE:

Also we definitely get the idea that the changelings know exactly what they're doing and they're getting cocky about it. Just like "Oh we've got you guys so freaked out!" and we get to see that carry over in, I want to say in the second episode, when Sisko is talking to one of the shapeshifters pretending to be O'Brien and he's showing up he's just like "Oh my gosh! There's only like four of us on Earth and we have got you *so freaked out!*"

ANDI:

And this is what I think is so brilliant, about Homefront. Specifically Homefront, is that every action that they take seems right when they take it, right up until the end. That's exactly what it's like. People think that it's just like "Oh one minute we were good and the next minute everything fell apart." No no no no. It's called creeping facism for a reason. It's every time you make a decision you push yourself a little bit further. You push your skill at justifying what you're doing a little bit further and the next thing you know you look back and you can't pinpoint the moment that you lost control.

GRACE:

And you can justify a lot out of fear.

ANDI:

Yeah. And I think that's so brilliant, and it was important that the audience be on board with that for a long time. Otherwise that message is diluted. So like that's where, OK, so when I first saw this episode I was like "I'm really enjoying this stuff with Sisko and his dad a lot. But I don't understand why it's here." And obviously by the end I was like wow he really-that subplot definitely needed to be there because he was the one that's outside of a Starfleet structure. He's not in politics. He's just a dude who cooks food but he's also wise and canny. And he's such a good representation of like the every-man. But like a smart one, and seeing his shifts throughout the episode and then into the next one really do a good job of contrasting that. So like at first you see him and you're like "Why is he being so stubborn?" You know"

GRACE:

dismissive tone "Because he's an old man."

ANDI:

Yeah! "He's just a crotchety old man! Like they're doing this to keep people safe and blah blah blah." And it's important that the audience be at least somewhat understanding of the decisions that Starfleet is making at that point. And then when you get into Paradise Lost and suddenly he's not fighting it anymore that's like the light bulb for Sisko where he's like "Huh. So you've got this guy to play ball by scaring him." And I just think it's really well done.

GRACE:

I also feel like there's a statement of some kind being made there with the casting of Brock Peters, who-what a frickin gift to have him involved in Star Trek outside of his Star Trek roles he's probably best known as Tom Robinson in To Kill A Mockingbird. And I think it's saying something when they've got your character who's like "No. I'm not having my civil liberties be impugned upon. I'm not accepting this!" when this is a guy who's you know most famous role is about racial tension.

SUE:

I think it's really interesting too, that scene where Sisko shows up when they want to blood test Joseph, and he's like "You're not going to let them do this." And Ben tells them "In fact I signed the order." So it shows how different your outlook can become based on your place in the system. But I also think it's a really, *struggling for words* I guess subtle-I'm not sure. I think it's a relatively subtle visual cue that throughout these episodes we see Sisko in a TNG style uniform. Right? So we see him out on Deep Space Nine most of the time with with the color blocking on top and he's you know, out on the edge of Federation space and where the rules don't always apply like the rules apply. And then he comes back to earth and he's back in that uniform and he is like *mired* in the red tape and the political dealings of the Federation. And we see that change him and that's reflected visually in the uniforms he's wearing while he's there.

GRACE:

Also the whole aspect of Sisko and Odo coming to earth and spreading their knowledge, that's part of what's making you root for them and making change. You're kind of like "Oh here come the prodigal sons! they're here to show you how we do it out on Deep Space Nine! Because you people on earth don't know what we've been up to and what we've had to deal with." And you want them to succeed, you want people to see how hard they work and that it is very different on Deep Space Nine than it is on Earth.

JARRAH:

I just thought that they had a lot of leftover TNG uniforms. *crew laughs* You know, saving the money.

GRACE:

laughing That's probably-

JARRAH:

But that is a good point. Also I mean, like Sue you said that about your outlook changing based on where you are in the system I think it also mirrors the way that your outlook sometimes changes based on generational experience. Cause, and we don't know this for sure about Joseph Sisko, but you know we observe in our own world that people, who can literally remember living in fascist regimes or in a time of fascist regimes, see that danger of that reoccurring is more real than those of us who haven't sometimes. And it's easier, not just with that as an example, but things like there's actually been studies about how serious we think

things like smallpox are, or like things like polio, things that we vaccinated away that people don't really have so much of a collective memory around. Measles actually being the best example. People are like "Oh measles or whatever it's a kid's disease not so serious."

GRACE:

Even the flu.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And like therefore, if you are swayed to make a decision on *that* basis that you shouldn't go get a vaccination, then you start to realize because people start getting sick that actually this was a really big deal. So like collective memory actually does play a strong role and I think that that mirrors some of the dynamics we see in our society.

ANDI:

Yeah, I mean it's hard for me to see this episode. I mean I'm like, you Jarrah were pretty much the same age. So much of my understanding of politics has been shaped by the fallout from 9/11 that like, I feel like this resonates really hard with me from that perspective just because I mean I was 17. I think? Something like that, in my late teens still in high school and I still remember that couple of days after 9/11 when it felt like everyone like lost perspective completely. And even as a teenager it was scary. I wasn't scared of terrorism but I was scared of *pauses* how afraid everyone was and how angry they were.

GRACE:

And then following that, people just feeling like they needed to show *intense* pride and patriotism. There was a whole feeling of "Well what's *next* now?"

ANDI:

Yeah I remember sitting in class and this guy I had been in school with for my whole life, I knew him really well, was just like "After this we're going to make sure that Afghanistan doesn't exist as a country anymore" And I was like *uncomfortably* "OK." Like, even as someone who at that point had not studied international politics the way that I did later I was like "this is this is dark shit here." You know like "This is a really dark and unsettling impulse that the human race has." And obviously I see it clearer looking back on it then, but I do clearly remember being really freaked out by it at the time as well. And I feel like this episode captures that.

SUE:

I think one of the most disturbing things about this episode is this underlying idea of your invisible enemy. Right? Or the enemy is among you and you might not be able to tell who it is so you have to be wary of literally everyone. And that resonates a lot with like, what I remember happening after 9/11. But it is happening *again* *uncomfortable laugh* in our current political structure. It has happened *before* and it just seems to be the tactic of these fear based platforms is making you afraid of everyone around you and continuing to create division and isolation. Right? So that you're wary of everything and aggressive towards everyone.

ANDI:

And also looking to someone who says they can protect you.

GRACE:

Or willing to accept sudden changes if you're told they're there to protect you.

JARRAH:

Yeah definitely. So I feel like this is a good kind of segue into part two. And it is interesting Andi, as you were saying that like, by the end of episode one you were like "Yeah this makes sense why they're doing this." And Sue mentioned like that was the intention. We have a quote from Rene Echevarria who described the episode as "An attempt to make the audience complicit in believing the threat is imminent and that by any means necessary it must be dealt with. We go out of part one saying there's going to be a big battle and we've got to stop them. Martial law. Yes clamp down on rights. Yes blood tests. Yes no civil rights. Yes. And then in part two we find out that the real point of the story is how dangerous this feeling is." And basically that Robert Hewitt Wolfe says "Yes this was a total misdirection." So in part two, as we've sort of alluded to, we start to find out that there's some people who for, mostly they think they're doing the right thing, but are using fear to manipulate people and do some shady things to try to get control and power so that they think that this will enable them to strengthen Earth's defenses better Strengthen the federation and that the Federation isn't strong enough to withstand these threats. Yes. So, thoughts on part two, particularly where this story starts to go?

ANDI:

Well, I did want to say a little bit about that quote, which I think is perfect. Like, they did a really good job on that. I would say that I was not onboard at the end of the first episode. I just might be sensitive to this stuff. But like also the really big red flag for me was the admiral Leyton's contempt for the civilian government. Was really freaking me out. So when I went into episode two, which I watched this morning so I can tell you very clearly, when I went into episode two my impression was this was a plan the changelings had to turn the Federation against each other. I had *not* figured out that the Federation itself did this, or rather elements within it. But I had definitely figured out that the chaos was the point I guess. And the big red flag for me was when your military starts deciding to take these decisions into their own hands over the civilian government or like finding ways to sideline the civilian government. That's when the big warning bells start to ring. So I didn't just want to say that, but overall I think that that's a really cool quote that I think they should be proud of their execution there. Their intent and then the execution.

GRACE:

Absolutely. I love how also this episode turns out to be kind of a larger scale version of The Monsters are Due on Maple Street. Just the idea that "Oh yeah, an outside force can absolutely make you destroy yourself from the inside if it just sews a few seeds of paranoia, and then you will just do the work for them."

SUE:

I remember all of the talk about like, the Patriot Act and we're allowing the government to spy on us. But it's OK if it catches a bad guy.

JARRAH:

Yeah. "You don't have anything to worry, if you're not doing anything wrong."

SUE:

Yes. And to a lesser degree and we still have it, the increased screening at the airport. Right? Or in a more general term "Security Theater." Right? So because none of that, I should say rarely does, that increase screening ever catch anybody intending to do harm at an airport or on a plane but it is there to make the public feel better and feel like there is a security presence around this mode of transportation.

ANDI:

And that the government is doing something.

JARRAH:

And sorry, just because I think we didn't actually mention it, so in this episode there was the part that we're talking about that was about the Federation was behind-or not the whole federation but Admiral Leighton and his people. Spoilers *laughs* is there was an attack on Earth's power grid which basically left Earth defenseless and that was what gave them a little leverage to convince the president to let them declare martial law and give them like Starfleet officers with phaser rifles in the streets of all the cities of Earth doing random blood screenings all the time.

SUE:

How prophetic is DS9?

ANDI:

Its ludicrous.

JARRAH:

Yes I know.

GRACE:

Uncomfortable.

JARRAH:

I didn't watch this episode until after 9/11 and so I don't think I ever really fell into that first trap because I remember so much that discussion about like "Well what was the whole point of- basically like if you want to stand up against fear and division and hatred then don't give away your rights." And yeah, just those discussions were very like the speech Brock Peters makes in the first episode. I mean if they spent their whole budget on *him* and *that speech* it was worth it.

SUE:

But just the fact that one of the big concerns right now is a tax on our power grid. They nailed it. They nailed it!

JARRAH:

Yeah. And then there's also you know, I remember also tightening like transit security with like you know people being able to randomly check people's bags on the subway and stuff like that and of course all of these disproportionately affect people of color. And yeah it's just like very very prophetic.

GRACE:

That said how on point is it for the fact that for our ending of the first episode and start of the second one the image we get is of Jake and Sisko's dad just kind of waking up looking out the window and then seeing "Oh shit there's armed police in the streets now."

JARRAH:

"Oh. Time for our blood tests!" and they just go along with it. Like they're like a little reluctant, but he's basically now accepted this is a necessity.

GRACE:

I meant more like the visual image of two black men just having to look out and be like "Armed police in the street" and that's your "Oh crap" moment at the end of the episode.

ANDI:

Kind of off-topic a little bit, but can I just- we should probably make a note that one of the things that DS9 does best is strong father son relationships. And in this one we get generational strong father relationships and it's just beautiful to see. That's why when I-before I even realize how important he would be to the theme of this episode I was so absolutely loving the like character dynamics between these three men and like these three generations of awesome dudes and their open communication and their love for each other and it's just lovely. But I do want to say something about the guns in the street because I remember when I lived in Egypt for a while and one of the scariest things about living in Egypt, mostly it was wonderful, was that there are literally checkpoints or there were. This was like 2006 maybe. Literally like military style police checkpoints all over Cairo with men and with huge guns and like riot gear just pretty much everywhere. And it was kind of amazing how the first time I saw that I was really taken aback. And then you know a couple of weeks in I would pass them without blinking while going to the bakery. You know like, that is-the thing that I think people don't understand is a lot of times under oppressive governments your everyday life might not change that much.

GRACE:

And it's scary how much you can adjust to those changes.

ANDI:

Exactly, like it's not going to be horrible all the time. That's not what it's going to be like. A lot of the time you're just going to be living your life and getting up and going to work and going to the bakery the same as you ever did. So I think that that scene is really interesting because as Grace says it's like one night they go to bed and there's no guys with guns in the street. And the next day they wake up and they are there and that's just something that happens.

GRACE:

It's literally overnight.

JARRAH:

Yeah it's a little bit harder too- I'm just thinking about a comparison to there's an episode of Enterprise where, I think it's actually the episode Home, where Phlox is on Earth after the Xindi attack and he gets beat up for being an alien. And it's a little bit hard in this episode because there's no like *visible* difference. Although like obviously there's no visible difference between the "good guys" and "bad guys" in real life either. But you do kind of miss that because you know there's like only four possible people. and that-I think I didn't know there was maybe an opportunity that they could have used to have like someone mistake someone for a changeling. I mean I guess they mistake Sisko for a changeling or they deliberately frame him as a changeling. But other than Odo we don't see-like we still are in a universe where Odo's the only good Changeling.

GRACE:

Yeah and there's definitely something to be said about the politics of having "other-ed" characters where one of them, who is you know helping the ones we know and recognize, and is being considered one of the "good ones" as it were.

JARRAH:

He also never has an issue with anything they do. Like he even at the very end it's like still kind of one of the more bullish people.

ANDI:

I think that is kind of in-character though, because he's just kind of ruthlessly practical to a fault generally. But I did think it was interesting how quickly the admiral was like "well if you're not going to do what I want, I'm just gonna tell everybody that you're a changeling and then they'll let me do whatever I want to you."

GRACE:

How very McCarthy-ist.

ANDI:

Yeah. It's kind of interesting, like as soon as you're not in this protected class of people which is basically everyone *but* the changelings-as soon as you're the enemy then I'm going to be able to do whatever I want to you and no one will care or stop me. We can blow up a ship full of changelings without blinking. We can imprison you without apparently any sort of trial or rights or lawyer all those sorts of things. It's like his rights disappear the second he is a changeling in their eyes.

JARRAH:

Well, yeah. So this is also-its linked to like part of the reason he brought Sisko there wasn't just because Sisko is an expert on changelings, because he's on Deep Space 9 and works with Odo, but Sisko used to be his first officer. And there is this big speech about the chain of command that Leyton gives about how, you know, "Do you remember this time and I ordered you to do something and you objected but I was totally right and this like the chain of command is more important than ever now and if we don't have that we don't have anything." And it's really fascinating because he, like Leyton, has this whole cadre of people that are loyal to him and then he uses the chain of command as sort of additional leverage to get them to overlook some maybe like ethical qualms. But you *are* in this, in Starfleet, as an institution that is so heavily dependent on the chain of command and like other institutions in our world reproduces some crappy power systems because crappy people get to the top, bring up other crappy people with them-

GRACE:

The cream rises and it sours.

JARRAH:

-and discourage people from thinking critically and from speaking back. And it's not just-it was interesting to me because you have this whole thing with Red Squad too, that was kind of funny.

GRACE:

Yes, I was really hoping we'd address that. Because we've got this thing we establish where Leyton and his folk are kind of indoctrinating younger members of Starfleet into this group that's being treated as elite and given special privileges and are being told basically "You know you're with *us* because you're more special and better than the rest of these guys. So you now have every reason to believe that *we* are the right way to go." Right? And that's really creepy when you think about a lot of different facets of history where youth indoctrination was a big part of fascism and just sort of maintaining a very loyal following.

SUE:

"Your covert actions have to be secret now, but they'll be celebrated later."

GRACE:
Exactly!

SUE:

I think what struck me about Leyton's speech about the chain of command was where he says "You know there is a point where you have to stop fighting and you just have to listen" and it's basically like "listen to me because I said so." And "I mean I'm doing this deal with it." Any time I remember like Captain Picard saying "Because I said so." to somebody like the moral of the story was essentially that Picard was wrong and he should have listened to the objections of his subordinate officers. So this guy is so headstrong that he doesn't want to consider anything else ever. And he just wants people to listen to him and defer to him. I mean that's like 17 red flags right there.

ANDI:

So when he was doing that speech is when I actually tweeted that he is one of the best villains this show has ever done. And there are a couple of reasons. One, just that this conversation is so hypocritical and just so creepy. And it was wild to me that he's trying to invoke chain of command when he is literally trying to eliminate the civilian government *from* the chain of command so he can be in control. And that kind of hypocrisy is just so compelling to me because it just goes to show how far people will twist their own justifications into turning them into the good guy. Like there is no doubt in my mind this guy thinks he's doing the right thing, and Sisko points out to him that really it's about his own power at this point. But like he still is trying to cloak it in "No I'm trying to protect people. No I'm doing the right thing"

GRACE:

Justification is a hell of a drug.

ANDI:

Yeah. Word. And then I also wanted to say re: the cadets, Red Squad. I thought it was so elegant in the way that they brought Nog in and he was just like Siskos dad where I was like "Oh it's cool to see him but like why is he here?" And then the subplot of him trying to become accepted at the academy even though he's Ferengi and like technically that shouldn't matter at the academy but it apparently does. And then like what he is willing to try and do to get in with the *in* group and then turning out that he is the one that brings vital information to Sisko regarding these group of cadets. And then also how incredibly slimy it is that they use children to carry out their work because they're easier to manipulate. And I mean even Sisko, Sisko ONE HUNDRED PERCENT manipulates that kid. And I understand why he did it, and I'm not saying it's the wrong thing. But like when you're in that scene you're watching him play this poor naive kid, you can see how easy it must have been for them to do that because he just doesn't have the experience to understand that sometimes you know the orders are bad.

GRACE:

That's one thing I love about Star Trek, this recurrent theme of "the might does not equal the right." The people in charge are not always the people who should be in charge and that it's really important to question the why and how of the structures of authority.

JARRAH:

Yeah like we never see in this episode what happens to, I'm going to call him mediocre white guy Cadet. *crew laughs* That like casting was so perfect, like it was obvious they were not actually casting the best cadets. They were just telling them that they were the best cadets but, oh and also they needed to be like sponsored by high ranking people, but Nog didn't get in. So there was this-like obvious it was shady. But then we also don't see what happens to Benteen, who-she knows what she's doing is wrong and she goes along with it a little bit, to the point that I think they say that like two people die on the Defiant and like 14 people die on the Lakota.

ANDI:

Oh yeah. She's getting court martialled for sure.

JARRAH:

Yeah. So like, I feel like the difference in punishment between the cadet who legitimately didn't know like really what he was doing probably until after the fact and also didn't kill anyone, to Benteen who's commanding a ship to fire on another ship that she knows is not actually full of changelings.

SUE:

Does she? How in on it do we think she is?

JARRAH:

Well I mean, because Sisko goes "You know they're not all changelings." I feel like after the first few minutes it should have become evident based on the behavior of the ship. But like, if she had been certain then she would have just kept going, but she doesn't.

ANDI:

I think she was just willing to go to a certain point and then the idea of murdering a ship full of Starfleet people was just a bridge too far for her.

JARRAH:

Yeah I think that's true.

ANDI:

Which actually, I wish we had seen more of that. Because that's actually a huge decision, because her making that decision saved everyone. And she personally is probably gonna lose everything but she's still made that decision. And even though she's not a good person obviously, or at least she made some really bad calls here that resulted in death, she at least

walked up to this like final line and decided not to cross it. And that is *very* hard. And one of the reasons why that's so hard is once you get people to take a step over that line, where she *knew* about so much of this, people keep going because they feel like now they have no choice. They're in too deep. Like they can't stop.

GRACE:

She goes ride or die and then is able to step back from it.

ANDI:

Yeah. And I find that really interesting and I wish we had gotten a scene for that instead of just her looking stricken when the admiral gives the order and, then I think it's Worf is like giving Sisko the casualty report and whatever and says that they stepped down. So we don't even get to see her make that decision. And I think that that's kind of a missed opportunity.

JARRAH:

Yeah for sure. But yeah I mean, I think like as far as Red Squad goes I would hope they would have sort of like a First Duty type court martial and they would probably be punished for sure, but there's like definitely degrees of who should have known better to question more. And I mean, can you imagine being the people who were just like the rando and Ensign on the Lakota who didn't know what was going on at all?

GRACE:

sinister we-meet-again voice Ensign rando.

SUE:

Because we've seen how much the senior staff tells their underlings and it's not a lot.

GRACE:

And how much of it is, again "You're going to do it because I said to do it."

ANDI:

I mean even on a well-run ship that's not full of shenanigans, the people in lower decks rarely knew what was going on.

JARRAH:

Yeah, so we don't get to see the reckoning at Starfleet. I mean there was also about Bolian ambassador who was in on it all, so it's more than *one* ambassador.

ANDI:

Yeah, I just feel like there's high level decision making that happens and sometimes you don't know the reasoning for it. So like a lot of these people were probably totally innocent. *sighs*

GRACE:

And that's the nature of complicity sometimes. *Sometimes.*

JARRAH:

So hold your commanders accountable before you rush off and kill people.

ANDI:

I got to say like the final, I guess, of the episode-I don't think it's the last one but it's the best one is from Sisko who goes "If the changelings want to destroy what we've built here they're going to have to do it themselves. We will not do it for them." *crew makes noises of agreement*

GRACE:

Such a good line.

ANDI:

Yeah which goes right back to, Grace you were talking about O'Brien changeling guy. Where it's like "We do not fear you the way you fear us. In the end it's your fear that will destroy you."

GRACE:

Again, soooo The Monsters are Due on Maple Street!

ANDI:

That's good stuff.

SUE:

There's a lot of good stuff in these episodes.

ANDI:

And it's just wild because when you sit down and like think about the harm that happened in this episode, this admiral and his, like, misguided need to control everything killed people that would still be standing if they had just done nothing. Such a good episode.

GRACE:

And it forces you to think about some pretty scary stuff.

SUE:

"Paradise has never seemed so well-armed." *chorus of "yeahs" from crew*

GRACE:

Damn, how do we follow that up?

JARRAH:

Well I think it's interesting just-I feel like these are episodes that really get forgotten when you take a look back at the history of Deep Space Nine. They're just kind of Middle Season 4 and there such like intensifying of these storylines going forward that this stuff that happened that like one time back on Earth almost gets kind of just overlooked. But I think it's-that they should be considered a highlight of the season and certainly some of the best "able to stand up today" episodes of that arc.

ANDI:

I really think that these kinds of episodes represent the best of what Star Trek is capable of. I mean this is what science fiction is for anyway: it's taking what we would consider to be impossible situations and putting humanity under a microscope. Like, how would we handle these situations. And I think this is as good as it gets when it kind of comes to making humanity look in a mirror.

SUE:

I mean it shows us what fear can really do to people. We see Ben Sisko doubting the humanity of his own father right? So like when Joseph gets agitated and cuts himself we see Ben staring at that cutting board waiting to see if that blood is gonna turn into a changeling.

JARRAH:

Or you say like "Yeah we totally do need a big wall to keep people out" or "We need to be checking everyone's IDs all the time." "Police need to always check everyone's I.D. and ask you whether your citizenship is on the census."

GRACE:

Or "the people who are at the top of the chain of command should not be questioned because they are at the top of the chain of command."

JARRAH:

You know? And it's hard because sometimes, like you know, it never gets at the root of the fear. It's always just like-it's things that people without really thinking too hard give up rights, sometimes their own, but more often other people's rights in exchange for a false sense of security.

GRACE:

It's really true that when we are in a state of fear we want to believe that there are people in charge who have it all under control, that there is someone who-the people in charge know what's up, and that they're making the best decisions for us. That's a huge comfort when you're afraid. Thinking that everything is in capable hands means you will say *pauses* you'll say "yes" to a lot more things.

ANDI:

To stay comfortable and safe.

SUE:

Yeah. Woof.

JARRAH:

Woof.

GRACE:

Woof.

JARRAH:

Well we're about out of time. Do you want to rank these episodes? I mean like as a pair of episodes?

SUE:

To Clive.

GRACE:

To Clive.

JARRAH:

To Clive.

GRACE:

Five out of five Bread puddings.

JARRAH:

Oh yeah. Five out of five squishy seagulls.

SUE:

Three out of three centimetres of moved furniture. *crew laughs*

JARRAH:

Awesome. Well let's get to you all to go around and tell me where you people can find you on the interweb. Starting with Andi.

ANDI:

Easiest place to find me is on Twitter. My twitter handle is @firsttimetrek where I very rarely live tweet Star Trek.

JARRAH:
And Grace?

GRACE:
You can find me on Twitter @BoneCrusherJenk and in your sweet dreams and beautiful nightmares.

JARRAH:
And Sue?

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

JARRAH:
And I'm Jarrah. You can find me @Jarrahpenguin on Twitter or at Trekkiefeminist.com. To contact our show email crew@womenatwarp.com or visit us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram @Womenatwarp. And for more from the Roddenberry podcast network visit Podcasts.Roddenberry.com. Thanks so much for listening.