

Women at Warp Episode 11: His Name is Mudd

audio from Mudd's Women

KIRK:

Captain's log: star date 1329.1. The Enterprise brings aboard the survivors of an ill fated vessel.

EVE:

seductively Hello.

KIRK:

Hello ladies. Is this your crew, captain?

MUDD:

This is my cargo.

JARRAH:

Hi and welcome to Women At Warp. 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.

ANDI:

Hi I'm Andy.

SUE:

Hi, this is Sue.

GRACE:

Hi, and I'm Grace.

JARRAH:

If you stick with us until the very end of the episode you'll get to hear a sneak preview from Grace's new Ferengi Bodice Ripper novel: a Price Beyond Latinum. And today we are going to talk about Harcourt Fenton Mudd. Everyone's *sarcastic* favorite lovable rogue. But before we get into that, we have some housekeeping. First we want you to just take a second to remind you about the Women At Warp Patreon. If you're enjoying Women At Warp it would super help us to have your support on our Patreon, which is a system where people can pledge a really small monthly donation as little as a dollar a month. And that helps us do things like pay for our website hosting, and our equipment, produce materials, so basically we can get our feminist Star Trek podcasting to a bigger audience. So if you're interested in supporting us head over to Patreon.com/womenatwarp. That's P A T R E O N/womenatwarp. And there's exclusive content and other cool bonus offers for people who support us. So make it so! Next up we have listener

mail. A subspace transmission *Sue laughs* from the former host of All Things Trek, Oren. And so, Sue would you like to go ahead and read his listener transmission?

SUE:

I would love to. Oren says, "I very much enjoyed your review of Uhura's Song. I totally agree that the term Mary Sue is super problematic. It implies that this is something that only women do in their silly womanly ways. And it gets lobbed at any female character with the gall to be good at stuff. If anything, I found the "too awesome" character just as common, if not more so among male characters. See Wesley Crusher from TNG or John Sheridan from Babylon 5. That said, this Evan Wilson character sounds really obnoxious from how you describe her. She shows up in this pre-established group of characters and is way better than them at absolutely everything. Then at the end they suddenly reveal that she was some kind of trickster spirit the whole time? No thanks. You can have a character who's super competent but it has to make sense in the story, and not make the other characters look silly. Xena for instance. But Wilson just sounds like a character the author super loved, can't say if it was a self insert or not, and tried way too hard to make us love too.

JARRAH:

Anyone have any thoughts on that?

ANDI:

Yeah I mean, I think Oren's absolutely right in that it's the Mary Sue character type, this too awesome character, is really really common among male characters but it's just not pointed out. And I don't remember where I read it, I'm sorry, *laughs* but I know I have read that it is because men are expected to be the hero of their own story. So it's not pointed out as much in our literature and in our movies. But when a woman has the audacity to be the hero-

GRACE:

Well then it's just silly.

SUE:

Yeah. It's accused of making them *too good* at stuff you know? Unbelievably so. It's not believable that a woman would be so competent.

JARRAH:

I definitely don't think we thought Evan Wilson was *obnoxious*. Certainly not until the very end. You know, she admires things about the other characters so she isn't going around saying "Look how awesome I am at everything. I'm so much better than everyone." But I naturally like the idea of just calling that trope "The too good character" and removing gender from the mix.

GRACE:

Because you get the accusation so much more with female characters. It's just naturally assumed that *any* competent female character is unbelievable or too much. Which is silly.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Well thanks again for that email Oren. If you want to send us listener mail you can e-mail us at crew@womenatwarp.com. All right. So moving on, today we're going to talk about a character who is often described as a "lovable rogue" or "charismatic con man." Harry Mudd. Thanks to listener Bob for this episode suggestion. The lovable rogue, as most of us can probably figure out, not a super original character. Since Mudd there's been Han Solo, Malcolm Reynolds, lots of other- let's not forget the Outrageous Okana.

GRACE:

Outrageous!

ANDI:

No one could forget that mullet.

JARRAH:

TV Tropes.org describes the lovable rogue as "a person who breaks the law for their own personal profit but is nice enough and charming enough to allow the audience to root for them, especially if they don't kill or otherwise seriously harm anyone." So on Facebook we put out "What do you guys think about Harcourt Fenton Mudd?" And here are some comments we got.

ANDI:

So my personal favorite- *all laugh*

JARRAH:

Yes! is this comment from Ryan who says "I haven't seen any of the episodes, but he looks like a mirror universe Ned Flanders."

ANDI:

laughs I laughed about that all afternoon! Stupid sexy Mudd! *all laugh*

JARRAH:

Yeah. Patrick says "All I know is after an encounter with Janeway he'd have died weeping." *Sue laughs* Which I definitely agree with, that she would not have let him get away with his shenanigans.

SUE:

Why couldn't that have happened? *all laugh*

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean, they brought Mudd back a few times. They talked about actually having a Mudd spin off.

GRACE:

Oh my gosh, why?

SUE:

Are you serious?

JARRAH:

Yeah. They never brought him back to Voyager to get tooled by Captain Janeway, which I'm always going to regret that. Finally Caitlin says "The main thing I remember from I, Mudd was the constant "hilarious" in quotation marks jokes about Harry's terrible shrewish wife, and how he made an Android version of her just so he could tell her to shut up" *singsong voice* Comedy!

GRACE:

That is a hallmark of a well-adjusted man.

SUE:

Then, the ultimate punishment for him, spoiler alert, is being nagged by five hundred copies of his wife.

JARRAH:

Yep.

SUE:

Can I throw myself out the window please?

JARRAH:

laughs We still have a lot of Mudd to get through before you can even get to that point.

GRACE:

Good grief. We got a ways to go.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Just a little bit of background, so the episode was originally suggested by Gene Roddenberry but the character of Mudd was created by Steven Kandel, candle? Not sure how you say that. Who wrote all of the Mudd episodes. Roger Carmel who played Mudd was the only non-Enterprise crew actor to reprise his role in more than one TOS episode, and they'd planned to bring him back in the fourth season as well if they had had a fourth season. So of all of the guest actors they had, the one they loved most was Harry Mudd.

GRACE:

judgey voice Really? There's no accounting for taste I guess.

JARRAH:

So after they put forward the pilot, The Cage, NBC said that they found it basically too cerebral. They weren't sure the audience would totally get all the concepts. So Kandall later recounted "I said 'What if we start with a character who isn't alien or highly technologized, but rather somebody with whom the audience would easily identify? What we came up with was a roofing salesman, a con man, the medicine salesman in the Wizard of Oz that ends up as the wizard. An interstellar con man hustling whatever he can hustle. A lighthearted cheerful song and dance man version of a pimp."

SUE:

sarcastic That's charming.

GRACE:

Yeah, those aren't a series of words I usually associate with each other.

ANDI:

Wait, "a song and dance man-" *Sue laughs*

GRACE:

Slash pimp.

ANDI:

"-version of a pimp." Well it's accurate, I guess.

SUE:

I'm just going to think about that for a little bit.

JARRAH:

I'm imagining Sweet Charity crossed with I, Mudd or Mudd's Women.

SUE:

That sounds crazy but I would totally watch. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

So this outline by Roddenberry was basically about quote "space hookers" bound to be sold as wives on a distant planet by a quote "intergalactic pimp" named Harry Patton. Kandall felt the story lacked a focal point character and merged it with his idea of the charismatic con man. That's background. Like I said they also considered a spinoff series, at one point. Apparently Roger Carmel said that Gene Roddenberry said "It's a shame that the series thing for you never

worked out.” And he said “What series thing?” And Roddenberry says “Oh you didn't know? Well after the successful Harry Mudd episodes NBC wanted to know if I would develop a spinoff series for you starring the Harry Mudd character. A space pirate intergalactic con man kind of thing.”

SUE:

I don't understand. Was he a popular character, like back then?

GRACE:

There's not a lot to like.

JARRAH:

Like, I think that should be a question we discuss after we go through some of the episodes, is why do people consider him like- why the word lovable in lovable rogue? I mean it's hard to say from that quote whether Gene Roddenberry was really developing a spinoff or whether he was just trying to flatter Roger Carmel at a party. That thought occurred to me, that maybe that wasn't real. But if it is true that's pretty weird.

ANDI:

Well I do say a lot of things when I've been drinking wine, so maybe Gene Roddenberry is the same way.

JARRAH:

All right. So the first Mudd episode didn't become the second pilot of the original series, but it's very early in the first season of TOS. Mudd's women. Yay. *pause* No.

ANDI:

No.

JARRAH:

laughs So maybe Andi since you had to re watch this today, and I feel very sorry for you, do you want to explain to the listeners sort of brief synopsis?

ANDI:

Sure. So the Enterprise is chasing this small spacecraft that apparently has Harry Mudd on it, and they save him from an asteroid field, and then they beam him onto the ship and lo and behold they also beam three super sexy women with him. Which I always find it hilarious that while they're emerging on the transporter platform and they're all in like these super sexy poses like *Grace laughs* why would you transport like that? Off topic. So it turns out that these women like have some sort of kind of hypnotic thrall for the crew, and the crew is all like “Wow wow wowza!” when they're walking around. And it turns out that Harry Mudd has been planning to basically bring them to a mining planet and sell them as wives, like a mail order bride situation. But then Kirk catches them and there's a breakdown with the lithium(sic) crystals on the Enterprise. So they have to go to a lithium mining planet to replace their lithium crystals so

they don't all run out of power and, you know, like fall out of the sky and die. At least when you run out of gas your car doesn't fall into a planet. It turns out the women have been taking what they call Venus drugs to make themselves look pretty. And so that's awesome. They're taking these kind of drugs that apparently do their hair and makeup for them.

GRACE:

Also fixes the lighting.

ANDI:

Yeah. Soft focus.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And when they stop taking the drugs they look like me when I get up in the morning, which is to say apparently terrifying. *all laugh*

GRACE:

The whole world turns into overhead lighting when they don't take it. Like the dressing room in a Macy's. It's evil.

JARRAH:

They look totally normal. They just look like they wiped off their makeup and then they're all going like *pathetic voice* "We're unclleeean!"

ANDI:

dramatic voice "I can't live like this!"

GRACE:

wailing "Oh myy gaaaaawd! Noooo!"

ANDI:

Well, so the miners then feel like "Well we've been totally conned here. We wanted pretty ladies not these hag-ified women with no makeup on." *laughs* It's terrible. Do I have to explain more of the episode? It's so bad.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And so the women- it's argued that they very much want this. Like Eve the main woman has this big speech *girly voice* "It's the same story for all of us, Captain. *No men*. We've got men waiting to be our husbands for us. And you're taking us in the opposite direction."

ANDI:

I love your emphasis there Jarrah.

SUE:

Very well done.

GRACE:

Yeah, bravo.

SUE:

You should talk in that voice all the time.

JARRAH:

They're basically just like "We want to be wives and mothers, and help people clean their houses." And they show that they're valuable wives because they help like- she teaches this rough course miner husband a way to clean his pots but then he doesn't appreciate her.

GRACE:

It's all very Seven Wives For Seven Brothers.

ANDI:

So there's like, nothing wrong with wanting to be a wife and mother. But the way they set this up it's like they're bringing them to this horrible mining planet that basically you can't even like leave the house because of all the dust storms and everything, to marry men they've never met, because apparently that's their only option when they're, you know, they're not on these drugs that make them look pretty. And that's what I have a problem with. Like the idea that this is the only thing that they could ever possibly aspire to.

JARRAH:

Paula M. Block, who is an author of several Star Trek non-fiction books, has said that this episode was one of the most prominent examples of sexism in TOS. Her quote is "Take Eve, the most rational of the three women. After spending most of her life cleaning up after a bunch of unappreciative male siblings all she wants is the opportunity to connect with a good man. Even after learning that she doesn't need the Venus drug to appear desirable, Eve can't foresee a future that doesn't involve snaring a man. The thought of serving aboard a starship never occurs to her except perhaps as the captain's wife. So she consigns herself to life on barren Rigel 12, cleaning up for another unappreciative male, and listening to the winds blow day and night."

SUE:

I think it's really interesting that the word used in that quote is to "appear" desirable. So she's not even doing it for herself. She's doing it to appear desirable to a man.

JARRAH:

Yeah and he's awful. Like there's this part on the planet where he basically rages at her because she stopped taking these drugs, and he goes "You're not only as plain as an old bucket, you're not even good company. What the devil happened to your looks anyway?" And she goes "I got tired of you. I slumped." and he goes "You heard what I said! You're homely! I've

got enough in crystals already to buy Queens by the gross.” He's basically like “I'm going to buy hotter women.”

ANDI:

sarcastic Isn't that your Prince Charming, Jarrah? *all laugh* Doesn't that sound like the perfect man to you?

GRACE:

There is one recurring theme that I think holds true to this day, even in the dated context, and that is that there's this recurring thing of “Oh they tricked us! They tricked us with these beauty pills and these products!” and who of us has not heard a guy referred to a woman as having tricked him with makeup? Because seriously, good looking does not just come together like that.

JARRAH:

Oh my God. And then the ending totally confuses any possible positive message. Because what happens is they find out that the Venus drugs weren't real, and that they were basically a placebo. That confidence is what makes you attractive.

ANDI:

And does your makeup for you.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And like, it would still obviously be super problematic that all they want to do is be wives, but at least there would be a message that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and it's about your confidence. But then she actually gets beautiful again *laughs* like, or made up.

SUE:

She physically transforms. Kirk is saying “This is about how you feel about yourself.” But then she physically transforms. Which makes zero sense.

ANDI:

Her hair gets done. What pill does your hair for you?

SUE:

I would take that pill.

JARRAH:

And it totally creates this dichotomy too, between like beautiful equals stupid and like homely equals a good wife. She says *prissy voice* “Is this the kind of wife you want then? Not someone to help you, not a wife to cook, and sew, and cry, and need but this kind. Selfish, vain, useless.”

ANDI:

delighted This is my favorite thing.

GRACE:

We should just have Jarrah do Shakespearean readings in that voice.

ANDI:

Yeah but I mean, it's like you can't win then. Either you're pretty and useless, or you're ugly and you know *laughs* basically a servant to a man. Those are your choices.

SUE:

pitchman voice The Venus drug! Reinforce your heteronormative gender stereotypes. *all laugh*

ANDI:

That should be on the label. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

Yeah. Apparently Bob Justman, the associate producer at that time, he had a lot of feedback. And one of his points he made was "I would like to see Ben finally say that he does want Eve as she is and vice versa. I have a feeling that we may have left this fact unresolved for the audience. I'd just like to see Ben finally crumble and admit that he has been wrong and indicate strongly how much he wants Eve." This is from *These Are The Voyages*. The author Marc Cushman says "This change was made, but only after Eve transformed back into beautiful thereby losing the whole point of Justin's recommendation."

ANDI:

But the thing is, even with that like what about her wanting him? It's all about whether or not *he* wants *her*. Why would she want him? He's mean, he lives in the middle of nowhere in like a shack in a dust storm.

GRACE:

What a catch, right?

JARRAH:

Yeah. And all he wants to do is get drunk with his buddies.

ANDI:

And "buy Queens by the gross."

JARRAH:

Gross.

SUE:

And they missed, I think, a golden opportunity here. Because earlier in the episode Spock is talking about the dilithium crystals. Are they lithium or dilithium at this point?

ANDI:

They say lithium in this one. I think it turns into dilithium later.

JARRAH:

I think this is the last episode they call them lithium?

SUE:

It doesn't really matter. But Spock is looking at the lithium crystals that have burned out and he says "Even burned and cracked, they're beautiful" and that could have become a theme in this episode. Instead, nope. They have to be perfect and shiny and new when the women transform with their *self-confidence*.

ANDI:

Well, and Eve too could have been a good character because she gets these moments, and I don't know if that was the actress, because the writing is pretty- her dialogue is pretty terrible. But she gets these moments where she just is so angry and it seems like she's angry that she's being put through this. You know? Like there's this horrible scene where Ben, Prince Charming here, decides that she's not you know being happy enough and smiling enough so he decides to go and like try and dance with one of the other women and it causes a fight. Because, you know, now she's the one that nobody wants. And she's like "Why don't you guys just have a lottery and the loser gets me" and then she like runs out into the storm. Like, that anger could have been really really interesting. Because she's right. The way they've set this up that, you know, each man gets a woman and like, which one do they want, and like trading them is just so creepy. And she gets really angry about it as she should. And I would have liked to see that actually done well, because I feel like there's a lot of thematic elements here that could have worked. Our obsession with beauty, and you know the pressure we put on women to be beautiful. There were *shades* of that in this episode, they were just so undercut by everything else.

SUE:

And this is where we jump into that question that I think might even deserve a full episode, which is "What can we really expect from TV that was made 50 years ago?" You can certainly critique it from a current day standpoint, but how much leeway do you give it because it has

been 50 years? We obviously don't have a memory of that time, you know? So we don't know what the societal pressures or expectations or deviations were for women in the 60s.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean, this is the most common criticism we get, for the kind of analysis we do anyway, when it comes to the original series is they're like "Lay off. It was a long time ago. It was progressive for its time" kind of thing. I still think we need to critique it, but I do think you're right Sue that it would be a really interesting topic to kind of discuss the 60s aspect of it all. And how progressive was it? And are we being unfair?

SUE:

Yes exactly. But especially, I think for something like Star Trek that is held up even today as being groundbreaking in its time, that means that people are going to continue to watch it now and into the future. So there needs to be conversation about the things that are great about it, and the things that are not so great about it. And what was progressive, what wasn't, and are the things that were progressive then problematic now?

JARRAH:

Yeah exactly. But I don't think that this would be considered even progressive by 60 standards. I think when you look at the body of work in the original series this is one of the worst episodes for women. I think there are *far* better ones. And I don't think it makes sense when, you know, they're basically saying "We came from these planets where there were no men. Our only option is to hook up with space pimp and get him to find us husbands" when there are women all around the original series doing other jobs. So it doesn't make sense to me that everyone would buy into this inevitability, that their only option is to be- and there's nothing wrong with women who do you choose to and have the ability to have a domestic life and want to raise kids at home if they have that ability. But for that to be the only choice? There were a lot of women characters not just on Star Trek but on other shows at the time who were starting to have valuable careers. And the other thing is the behind the scenes commentary, like that memo from Bob Justman shows that people, you know, maybe we wouldn't have come out with the most amazing episode ever, but there were changes raised even at the time that could have been made that would have been marginal improvements.

SUE:

Yeah. I didn't mean that to sound like a defense of this episode whatsoever. Just that was an interesting question that comes into the conversation. *laughs*

JARRAH:

Yeah. I think it's an important thing to ask. And like you pointed out that, you know, even if we ruled "Yeah. This was good for the time" you still need to critique it from today's perspective as well, because it's still being watched today.

ANDI:

One of the smaller things that really bothers me about this episode is how often the women are dehumanized. Like he calls them cargo. That kind of goes throughout the episode. Like they're product. Like to me it sounds like that's exactly what they were going for, because they called him a space pimp and them space hookers. So it really was like setup as him selling them.

JARRAH:

Yeah.

GRACE:

Yeah.

ANDI:

Are they paying him to transport them? Because I don't even really understand how this economic transaction is even happening.

JARRAH:

Maybe he just collects the fee.

ANDI:

Yeah, like a finder's fee or something? I don't know.

JARRAH:

It sounded like he was arranging for the husbands to pay him upon delivery.

GRACE:

It just adds this idea that these women are exploited in this situation.

ANDI:

I don't like that.

SUE:

A lot of those organizations go and like- that happen in our world today, go and like pitch to the families "Oh your daughter could have such a better life. Let me send her to America. You know it's gonna be so great." And sometimes they even take money from families to take these daughters away to be mail order brides, and then the men also pay for them. So he could be getting money on both ends of that trade if you want to make it analogous to the terrible terrible trafficking that goes on in our world today.

JARRAH:

And that's *again* why I do not get the lovable thing. Human traffickers are not lovable rogues. It's a pretty awful thing that happens.

ANDI:

Yeah and I mean, when we're thinking about like actual *good* lovable rogues, like you were saying Han Solo and Malcolm Reynolds. Like, there is no comparison there. *laughs* No comparison. And there's nothing lovable about Harry Mudd. And I think that they wanted him to be funny, and maybe some people found him funny. I found *everything* he said to be grating and horrible. Like he's annoying. Forget all of the sexism and the misogyny, he is annoying. Like this over-the-top kind of "Mua-ha-ha" kind of vibe from him is just so annoying, I can't take it. Like his voice makes me want to claw my- well clawing out my eyes wouldn't help.

JARRAH:

He also looks like he just escaped from a really historically inaccurate local theatre production of the three musketeers.

ANDI:

laughs That's so accurate. His stupid hat. *laughs* Where do you get a hat like that? I don't know.

SUE:

I mean, we can only assume that the humor in this episode is funny by 60 sitcom standards right? If they're claiming that these are successful episodes, and this is a successful character it *must have been* funny.

ANDI:

I mean the only thing that I found funny was the over-the-top reactions from the dudes on the Enterprise. Like, Scotty's looking at them like they're made out of ham. Like just like *drooling noise* like he's practically drooling. And like McCoy at one point is like glazed over, and is like grinning like an idiot.*laughs*

JARRAH:

Kirk is hailing them and he's just like "Bueller? Bueller? Anyone? Anyone?" And they can't even answer because they're just staring.

SUE:

That happens so much in TOS and I cannot take it. Like if you cannot concentrate on your job if there is a woman around you, get a different job.

JARRAH:

laughs And like why do you even need phasers? Like, you just bring these women around with you and they'll just stun everyone. *all laugh*

ANDI:

I also like how creepy McCoy gets when he flirts. And this is true throughout the new JJ movies, whenever McCoy flirts he gets so weird and creepy *laughs* and it makes me laugh because

like I would totally be down with dating McCoy. McCoy is the man. But when he is like, trying to be charming to the ladies it's just- *laughs* so weird. I like McCoy as McCoy. You know, when he's like mean to everyone. That's when I'd date you. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

But you know, I actually did find there were funny moments in the next Mudd episode, which is I, Mudd, which is about halfway through season two. Does anyone want to give a synopsis of that one?

ANDI:

I think Grace should do it because she dropped out and we didn't get to hear from her for the last- we need more Grace is all I'm saying.

GRACE:

So there's this weird crewman on board and he takes on this planet where, surprise, the leader is Mudd of all things! And the planet is filled with beautiful women who are waiting on him. And as it turns out they are robots trying to form their own little robot society. But Mudd just kind of wants to have them be his robots.

ANDI:

I do like the very beginning of this episode, because McCoy is talking to Spock about how weird the new crew member is, the robot crew member and he is like "So weird that he doesn't like have feelings and stuff" and Spock's just looking and he's like "I mean, you know if he's not a Vulcan it's weird" *laughs* and it's so awkward. And Spock gets kind of- just kind of turns on his heel and walks down the hallway in a huff and I just- Spock versus McCoy is one of my favorite things ever about the original series and they need more of it always.

JARRAH:

I think this hook is really great. I love crewman Norman. It's just so creepy *all laugh*

GRACE:

"Norm-man"

JARRAH:

laughs Exactly. And he basically sabotages the ship to get it to go to this planet where Mudd is, and then we find out he's an android, and it's just so great. I'm like- I am sold on this episode even though it has Mudd, and I know Mudd is coming.

SUE:

Androids that the rest of Star Trek keep telling us are way too advanced to exist. There are sure a lot of androids that are too advanced to exist.

ANDI:

Yeah. I don't know, it's like they bring up technology and then we forget about it, and then we bring it up again and it's revolutionary.

JARRAH:

Yeah. So basically they go to this planet which he has populated with 500 basically sex-bots. He talks about the Alice model, because these are all women he's dated or had a thing for in the past. So he goes *Mudd voice* "They're all identical, beautiful, compliant, obedient." Yeah. I wasn't super shocked, because this is after What Are Little Girls Made Of, So we've already seen sex-bots before we know it's Harry Mudd. But it is cool though, because after a bit we find out that Mudd is not in charge, that the androids are actually in charge of him, and he's trapped.

ANDI:

I just like the shot of like numerous numerous numerous like femme bots. And it's so gross, and it made me laugh because it's just so over the top how gross Harry Mudd is.

JARRAH:

And Uhura gets a scene, because they basically offer to turn her into an android so that she can be eternally beautiful. And at first it seems like she's going along with it. And if you have really low expectations of the original series, like I did when I first watched this, I was going "Oh my God this is going to be awful" But then it turns out she's been leading them on. And she obviously was never gonna go along with it.

ANDI:

Maybe she got a glimpse into the future to know that she remains gorgeous forever.

JARRAH:

laughs Totally. They set it up and she is like "I want an android body, I want immortality, I'll live forever Captain" and then he sort of picks her up and like it looks like he's gonna shake her, but then he congratulates her because she fooled the Android. So that's pretty great. I enjoy it.

SUE:

Once again, they outsmart the androids. At least they do it with dancing and this time.

ANDI:

It's one of my favorite scenes of the original series, and definitely one of Chekhov's best moments.

GRACE:

You watch the scene and it's hard to imagine them not having fun making it.

JARRAH:

They all really got fun stuff to do. They basically figure out that in order to destroy the androids they have to confuse them to death, to the point where Norman is actually smoking out of his *Sue laughs* head and it is amazing. It's kind of annoying because Mudd kind of gets forgiven for his role in everything, because he helps them confuse the androids. Even though they totally could have done it without him. But then at the end his punishment is, like Grace said, that they make a bunch more copies of his ex-wife and he gets to be controlled by ex-wife Android.

ANDI:

True comedy is Spock trying to be illogical. They should have stuck with that. "I love you, but I hate *you*." "But we're the same." "Exactly." Oh my God. Smoke coming out of their ears. So funny.

JARRAH:

It's pretty great. I mean I'm glad that at the end that is his punishment because obviously it was super awful to create a robot of her so that you could shut her up. Like, that is just an awful thing to dehumanize someone literally. It's very much this classic shrew archetype. So it's cool at least that that's the punishment, even though it doesn't really challenge the archetype.

ANDI:

Can you imagine what it would be like to be married to Harry Mudd? I would turn out to be a shrew too.

JARRAH:

I probably just would have let him go and divorced him. I'm hoping.

SUE:

"He ran into my knife. He ran into my knife nine times." *Jarrah laughs*

ANDI:

That's exactly what I was thinking! I was like I'd be doing this cell block tango. He had it comin' man.

JARRAH:

But yeah, I mean realistically none of us would ever end up married to Harry Mudd.

ANDI:

That is very very true.

JARRAH:

I hear he doesn't even like cats.

ANDI:

Well that's a deal breaker.

GRACE:

Where to begin? I'm just saying, if you had five hundred blank robots- I just really feel like Mudd made a real waste of them. I mean when you have an opportunity for a robot army why waste even one making it look like your ex? And why just make them all to just stand there and look pretty? You could have an army! You could take over! This is just another example of Mudd, and stories with Mudd, being a wasted potential. Makes me very sad, as far as stories of robots go. It's a damn shame.

JARRAH:

Yeah I mean, I know that people- their complaint about Mudd is "He just wasn't good enough antagonist for the crew" that he kind of lowers the crew. But to me like, that's not even the biggest problem because there are a few of those in the original series. Like you know, there's a lot of psychotic children and the Spock's brain ladies. So-

ANDI:

"What is brain?"

JARRAH:

Yeah. He's certainly not unique in being kind of a weak antagonist for the TOS crew. But he's kind of unique in just being super super gross.

ANDI:

If I had the ability to make 400 robots, I would make a robot army. Just saying.

SUE:

If I could make 500 robots I would make a season two of Firefly. *all laugh*

ANDI:

Much better use of robots than Harry Mudd came up with.

SUE:

That's a different podcast. *laughs*

JARRAH:

I would make a musical Sweet Charity TOS mash-up.

ANDI:

Yes.

SUE:

There you go. It would finally get made and I would buy every seat in the theater.

JARRAH:

So actually, I would say that the Mudd episode that made me the angriest though was the animated series episode, Mudd's passion. Basically what happens in the animated series episode is Mudd comes on board again and he is trying to sell a love potion and he's basically being kept under guard but he weasels his way out by telling Nurse Chapel "But like hey, you could make Spock love you." So she goes to try to make Spock fall in love with her with this potion and it appears to not work. So then instead of reporting him and admitting that she kind of let this guy go she *goes after him with a phaser?* And then he holds her hostage because she isn't very good with the phaser. *laughs* Then it turns out the love potion did work. Yeah. It's basically just awful in terms of how it treats chapel.

SUE:

It makes her so desperate. It's really really sad. But my favorite thing, my absolute favorite thing about this episode is that this is a love potion *only* if it's between a man and a woman. They make it explicitly clear that if you touch two men or two women they just become really good friends.

JARRAH:

Oh my God. It's totally like in the Enterprise episode Bound where the thing only makes men delirious but it makes women have headaches. Just like everyone is heterosexual in the future.

SUE:

And that scene between Kirk and Spock on the planet is totally hetero, you guys.

JARRAH:

I do really enjoy Spock going **robotically** "Christine my **pause** love." *laughs* But other than that I couldn't enjoy anything about this episode.

SUE:

What about Spock saying "That is an outstandingly stupid idea."? *laughs*

JARRAH:

Oh yeah. That was actually kind of funny. If they- because like the animated series is so silly that if they had Mudd just come on board with like a stupid potion? That could have been funny.

ANDI:

Yeah. I don't understand why Chappel is so easily fooled.

JARRAH:

'Cause women. It was basically just like, women need love of a man and that is their greatest desire in life and therefore they can be totally tricked out of their duty. I mean we see this all the time in the original series. Just in this episode, because it's the animated series because it goes

faster it's like there's even less resistance. *And* it's a regular character. Normally we see this in like Space Seed with Marla MacGyvers and a bit with Apollo and Carolyn Polamus, that there's always women falling in love with villains because women just lose their heads. But it frustrated me more because it was Chapel, and because it was just such a stupid reason.

ANDI:

Yeah. I mean, even the animated series has the episode The Survivor in which the female crew member can't get over the fact that the enemy looks like her ex-fiance. So she keeps letting him go. But it's just really frustrating to see Chapel knows who Harry Mudd is and, you know, she knows his shenanigans and apparently she's cool with- I mean like her love for Spock overwhelms her or something. But the thing that bothers me most about this episode is basically Harry Mudd peddling rape drugs. When it comes down to it.

SUE:

Yeah. Because when it affects the entire crew and gets through the air circulation system *all of* the women are desperate for affection, and *all of* the men are total players and it's just so terrible.

ANDI:

It did make me laugh though to see M'ress and Scottie, *laughs* because her accent like, no intonation she was just like "You're very attractive, for a human" but she didn't even sound like she meant it. It was really weird and funny. *laughs* But yeah I mean, this whole idea of like a love potion or like a love pill is *really gross*. I mean, you can make it seem like love, but what it comes down to is rape. You're making somebody do something against their will, without their consent.

JARRAH:

Yeah. You know, it wasn't just that it was Chapel getting tricked by Harry Mudd but, you know, we see in What Are Little Girls Made Of that she, you know, she was very emotionally torn by running into her ex-fiance. But you know, at no time did she come close to shirking her duty. So I didn't buy that her unrequited love for Spock, that she would have just been totally OK tricking him into loving her, into this artificial love, enough that would make her want to totally let her guard down around Mudd.

ANDI:

The other thing too is in Plato's Stepchildren when they're forced to kiss she hates it. Like that's really- it's like torturous for her because it's not Spock that she's kissing. You think that she would figure that out. Like if you have to resort to chemicals to make someone I'm using air quotes here "love you" then it's not real.

JARRAH:

Yeah for sure.

ANDI:

Love is honesty and respect for each other.

JARRAH:

Yes. So I wanted to touch on a couple of the similar characters in later Trek. So the first one is Cyrano Jones in Trouble with Tribbles. And he actually was supposed to be Mudd but they couldn't get the actor who played Mudd. So they created another character.

ANDI:

I'm so glad.

JARRAH:

I am too, just because of what came before. But I think that Cyrano Jones is like, he shows kind of an appropriate role for a lovable con man. That he-

SUE:

I just think that if it had been Mudd it would have been *made* more gross.

JARRAH:

Yeah absolutely.

ANDI:

Well you know Cyrano Jones traffics Tribbles not women, so that's better. I just feel like Mudd would bring down all the Tribbles episodes.

JARRAH:

Yeah. Yeah, exactly. And Cyrano Jones also isn't the main enemy in the episode. So you know it takes care of that idea that he's not a worthy antagonist, because he was just, you know, a piece in that plot. So another one is, I mentioned briefly, The Outrageous Okana.

ANDI:

That episode is so horrible.

JARRAH:

He also has some issues with women. I don't think quite as egregious, definitely problematic. But he's not selling women.

ANDI:

laughs I love that this is like the lowest bar. It's like "He's not that bad. He's not selling and trafficking women." *all laugh* We really lowered the bar and our standards. Harry Mudd really destroyed our standards.

JARRAH:

Yeah. You know, I think he also the outrageous Okana was supposed to be really irresistible to women. And that would have been even more disgusting, if Mudd was supposed to be attractive. But I don't think he's meant to be, which is I guess good.

SUE:

Maybe he should take some Venus drug. *all laugh*

JARRAH:

We're just like really struggling to find nice things to say about him. I like his outfits better in I, Mudd.

ANDI:

laughs There you go, that's his compliment.

SUE:

They did a really good job animating him to look like the actor.

JARRAH:

Yeah. *Andi laughs* And I don't think the actor is bad. I think he's just, you know, like he's playing a role. But the role is built on so many sort of awful tropes and assumptions.

SUE:

It's hard to say whether the character could have been better if the plot was better, or if the character would still be a terrible person, you know? But it's just the two of them together especially, telling these stories with this character just make him terrible. And that doesn't mean the actor's bad. It just means that the character and the story are really really problematic.

JARRAH:

Yeah exactly. I mean like, regardless of thoughts on- because there is a difference between like sex work and sex trafficking. But romanticizing a pimp and being like "A lovable song and dance man pimp" is super problematic in any context.

SUE:

He doesn't sing *one* song, *Andi laughs* or do *one* dance.

JARRAH:

Exactly. Yeah. I don't know that it could have really been better. I think the premise off the top was just a bad idea. And I'm still really surprised that he's the one character that made it back. I think that there were a lot of other interesting guest stars in the original series that would have been more interesting coming back for a second shot.

ANDI:

And that's why I go back to the question like, did audiences actually respond to this character? Or is this just the four of us going *blech*? Like, are there people out there that actually like his character? Because I would be surprised by that.

SUE:

I think there are fans who watched this in maybe first run or early reruns, for whom this was like real comedy. Like, and they might have some kind of *nostalgic* soft spot for it. You know what I mean? Like viewed through this lens it is just- it's unfortunate.*laughs*

ANDI:

You know, I was thinking when you said that he should take the Venus drugs and it was right when we're talking about the outrageous Okona or whatever his name is. And I was- I was like picturing Mudd taking the Venus drugs and getting the mullet. It's like this picture in my head.

JARRAH:

I mean, I read an interview with Roger Carmel where the author was just talking- raving about how much he loved Harry Mudd as a kid. He thought he was so funny.

SUE:

Yeah. All I keep seeing is "He was a popular character." He was a popular character but nothing to support that, like no ratings information or fan mail or whatever to support it. So I guess we just have to believe that that was the case in terms of whatever metrics they used at the time.

ANDI:

Yeah 'cause I mean, it's one thing bringing him back for the original series but it's a total nother thing to, you know, bring him back for the animated series. He made it through two different Star Trek shows.

SUE:

And didn't they actually pay for the original actor to voice the character?

JARRAH:

Yes they did.

SUE:

Because they got away with as few voice actors *as possible* on the animated series.

JARRAH:

Yeah. All the women are either Nichelle Nichols or Majel Barrett. *laughs* So Herb Solo, who worked for DesiLu said about the script "It was very well-written." This is for Mudd's Women. "It was very well-written. It was fun and it featured three beautiful women hookers selling their bodies throughout the galaxy. It later became a stand out and much loved episode in the

series.” And I feel like you need a *bro-y laugh* at the end of that, because it just skeeves me out. *laughs*

SUE:

But they're not hookers. Right? They're being trafficked. They're not selling themselves. They are being sold. There is a difference.

JARRAH:

Yeah. And even if they think that they know what they're in for, and they think they're going into this willingly, they end up being in a situation they can't escape from. They don't have a choice once they've entered into that to withdraw their consent.

ANDI:

Yeah, I mean the Enterprise leaves them there. Right? What if they want to leave eventually? How are they going to get away?

SUE:

They wait for a supply ship, I guess.

ANDI:

Yeah but will their husbands let them leave? We don't know. We don't know who these guys are. This is literally a random mining planet. It's not even the original one they were going to.

JARRAH:

I mean certainly the miners could physically overpower them. I don't really have a lot of faith that if the miners didn't want to let them go, that they could go. Yeah. Especially the way that the miners talk about them like basically “I bought- I paid for you and now you're gonna do what I want.” So Yuck. Oh God. Apparently Simon Pegg suggested in Star Trek Into Darkness that they could have cast his co-star from Paul Nick Frost as Harry Mudd in the movie. So I'm really glad that didn't happen.

SUE:

Nooo.

JARRAH:

Although he is writing the new one.

ANDI:

If Simon Pegg puts Nick Frost into that space fedora and makes him wear a big mustache and be Harry Mudd I can't even. I will freak out.

SUE:

Well, he is writing the next one and making it less Star Trek-y, which in my opinion the first two were not Star Trek-y enough to begin with sooo. But that's me.

JARRAH:

Yeah. I mean you know, I've heard he said he, you know, he was basically hired to dumb it down. I'm determined to reserve judgment until I see the final product. Because with the writing in the directing changes, I really don't know how it's gonna work out. But certainly there's reasons for unease. And I think putting Harry Mudd in it would be a horrible choice.

ANDI:

I'm looking forward to see Justin Lin.

JARRAH:

Yeah. That's one thing is originally I was like "Oh great. This action director" and a lot of my followers on Tumblr were like "That's not really fair. The guy actually does have a history of movies that treat women and people of color with you know thoughtfulness and exploration of race particularly" so I'm determined to try to keep an open mind.

SUE:

I will say right now, that I will add an entire star to my rating of the next Star Trek movie if Christine Chapel is in it. That's all I need. Give me Chapel and I'll be much happier than if I don't have Chapel.

ANDI:

So it'll go from a one star to a two star?

SUE:

Well, I have to reserve judgment to actually rate it right?

JARRAH:

I've also seen that they haven't actually confirmed Alice Eve yet as Carol Marcus. And while I was obviously super frustrated with her role in the last movie, I think it would be worse to just drop her.

ANDI:

Like she got dropped before?

JARRAH:

laughs Yeah. There was potential to do cool stuff with her so it would be a mistake to drop her.

SUE:

At least in the JJ-verse she doesn't have a son to give all the scientific credit to. Anyway we're way off topic. *laughs*

JARRAH:

So do we have any final thoughts on Harcourt Fenton Mug?- Mudd- mug- Mudd?

ANDI:

I feel like every time they do a Mudd episode- well not the first one but the second two, they're like Harry Mudd shows up and they expect that I'm gonna be like happy to see him and every single time I'm like "Feh!" *all laugh*

SUE:

Yeah. Both returns had me going "This guy? Like, really?"

JARRAH:

You know, we didn't have anyone write in on our Facebook saying "Yeah, I totally love Harry Mudd." So if you totally love Harry Mudd please help explain why. So that's all that we have to say about Harry Mudd today. So thanks again for joining us today. I'm Jarrah and you can find me on the interwebs at Trekkiefeminist.Tumblr.com. Andi where can people find you?

ANDI:

The easiest place to find me is on Twitter, where I am live tweeting my first time seeing Star Trek, [@firsttimetrek](https://twitter.com/firsttimetrek). And I took a little bit of a break to watch the animated series but I am primarily watching D.S.9 now, so you can check that out.

JARRAH:

Awesome. And Sue where can people find you?

SUE:

The best place to find me is over at anomalypodcast.com ANOMALYpodcast.com and there are more podcasts and some blogs and some geeky tutorials over there as well.

JARRAH:

Great. And we lost Grace unfortunately, due to internet mishaps. But you can find her writing over on the Mythcreants blog, and she's also on Twitter [@BoneCrusherjenk](https://twitter.com/BoneCrusherjenk). Oh and if you want to get in touch with Women At Warp we are on Facebook, we are on Twitter [@womenatwarp](https://twitter.com/womenatwarp), we have a Website WomenatWarp.com. At the Web site you can find all the places you can listen to us. And if you're still listening we would absolutely love you to leave us a review on iTunes. Thanks very much for listening.

GRACE:

sexy voice I give you now a Price Beyond Latinum. *Careless whisper plays in the background* As Grava ran his fingers over his many strips of latinum, Froome could only wonder what it would be like to find their bodies flush together in reckless defiance of the Rules of Acquisition. If worst comes to worst she could just lie on her back and think of the Nagus. But in that moment Froome could only think one thing "Thank God she was already naked" Grava couldn't tear his eyes away from her. If she were glowing any more she would've been dipped in Latinum, and frankly that mental image just turned him on harder. From her ample bosom, heaving as bosoms do, that perfect bald head that mirrored her miraculously formed rump. Froome saw the burning desire in his eyes, focusing on them to tear her mind away from the hanging depth of his lobes. His lobes. *whispering* His lobes.