

Episode 157: Guinan Revisited

Voiceover: You're listening to a Roddenberry podcast.

Aliza: Hi, and welcome to Women at Warp: a Roddenberry Star Trek podcast. Join us on our continuing mission to explore intersectional diversity in infinite combinations. My name is Aliza Pearl. Thank you for tuning in. With me today is my cohost Kennedy Allen. Hi Kennedy!

Kennedy: Hello hello hello!

Aliza: How are you?

Kennedy: I'm well, thanks. How are you's?

Aliza: I'm pretty good. *both laugh* I'm glad to be here talking to you about Guinan. If you're already a listener of the podcast you already know me and Kennedy pretty well probably at this point, but for those of us just joining us for the first time Kennedy, can you tell them a little bit about yourself?

Kennedy: Oh man. If you're just now getting here, "hold onto your butts" *Aliza laughs* as Samuel L. Jackson says in Jurassic Park. No, long time Trek fan. Grew up on it. So "Cradle Trekker" as they call us.

Aliza: Cradle Trekker! I've never heard that. *Kennedy laughs* That's great, that's great.

Kennedy: A big ol' nerd, a long longtime podcaster, and glad to get into one of my favorite figures in science fiction.

Aliza: Yes! Yes. I'm Aliza Pearl. I am not a Cradle Trekker. Well, maybe. I don't know if I am, but that's a great term. And now I'm like, "Does it apply to me too?" *Kennedy laughs* I did grow up watching Star Trek, but I didn't- I loved it back then, but then I took some time away from it and came back to it as an adult and then got super hardcore into it. So whatever that's called "Later in life- "Born- again Trekker!" I'm a "Born-again Trekker"

Kennedy: *gasps* Oh my gosh. I love it. *Aliza laughs* I love it.

Aliza: All right. That's it. Born-again Trekker, actor, writer, improviser, and TTRPG game master. And a lot of what I do revolves around Star Trek in all of those spaces. But yeah, so before we get into our main topic we have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is made possible by our patrons on Patreon. We've revamped our Patreon tiers for the new year, bringing in some new rewards like exclusive Women at Warp merch. So if you've ever thought about checking out our Patreon, now is the perfect time to get in on it because we have some exclusive merch that you can get a part of if you sign up right now. Like, go right now. There's a cutoff happening soon. So go check it out to get some exclusive merch. Yeah, we really appreciate the support. Find us at patreon.com/womenatwarp. You can also support us by leaving a rating or review on apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcast. And finally, we're regularly curating new designs for our Teeublic store. Find t-shirts, hoodies, mugs, masks, and more stuff at teeublic.com/stores/womenatwarp. All of these

links are also, of course, on our website at Womenatwarp.com. And so today we're talking all things Guinan. Women at Warp previously did an episode on Guinan back in 2015, which also happened to be my first time guesting on the podcast. So y'all should definitely check that out. And now with me and Kennedy joining the crew last year as regular hosts, we thought it would be awesome for us to have a chat about our favorite Borg hating space bartender. *Kennedy laughs* So a quick intro to who Guinan is, so we're all on the same page. Guinan was a bartender on these starship Enterprise on Star Trek the Next Generation played by Whoopi Goldberg who was a fan of the show. And she was introduced in season two. She was part of a humanoid race called El-Aurians, who are very long lived. She is probably like 500 years old, it's not clear. Probably 500 plus years old. She had lots of run-ins with the Borg and Q. She was very wise and very empathetic and very mysterious. We didn't really know much about her past, besides a couple of stories here and there. She also sort of acted like a counselor to many many crew members, especially Picard and Riker. But then also Geordi, Barclay, Troi, Wesley Crusher, even Data's daughter Lal, and Data himself. She would just kind of- like helped a lot of people out on the show. So shall we jump in? What do you want to start with?

Kennedy: There's always #listentoblackwomen, because Guinan consistently, through all of that counsel that you mentioned. Through all that mentoring that you mentioned, always was- I don't know, I guess inherently intuned to- genetically intuned to, we can get into that in a little bit, alternate versions of reality or quantum existences. So you would think that if someone who is able to perceive time and space on an entirely different level, like an El-Aurian, you would listen to them. But apparently *laughs* they don't. They're like, "Listen, we appreciate your input." *Picard voice* We respect your sovereignty, but we're going to do what we want to do." and every time she's looking at them, like, "I literally just got finished telling y'all to leave this place alone, to leave this person alone, to leave Q alone. Like all types of stuff. You just would not listen." And I just wonder, because Guinan is really the only El-Aurian we knew, except for what's his face- Soren from Generations. It stands to wonder, like, are these traits indicative of the species itself? Like, is everybody like this? Or is it because Guinan is a Black woman El-Aurian? I like to think it's a combination of the two.

Aliza: Yeah. I think that is- I think that's a good assessment, that it's a combination of the two. And from my extensive research on Guinan, and I'm not even kidding when I say that. I've done extensive research on this character. But from my research on her and on El-Aurians we've met- so we've met Soren in Generations, we also did meet another El-Aurian in Voyager? I believe it was. I'm glad that they managed to get another El-Aurian on screen, because what we learned about that El-Aurian is that yes, a good chunk of Guinans empathy, like the way she can attune to what other people are feeling and going through. That's her, that's not all El-Aurians. The listening, yes it kind of is an El-Aurian trait, that they're good listeners. And it's not very clear whether it's like a cultural thing or if it's genetic or biological in some way. But El-Aurians do tend to have this ability to kind of like hear people on this level that can be advantageous to them or to others. So Guinan chooses to use it for good by being a good person. But this other El-Aurian on the Voyager episode does not. He actually is like a con artist. He scams people. He listens to like what their weaknesses are and exploits them. So I think that's a good case to say yes. It's, you know, part of it is her

being El-Aurian, but a lot of it is also her being a Black woman, and being this specific person that she is.

Kennedy: Right. When I think about Guinan and her history, I wonder if the reason why she's been so clandestine about everything is because she experiences time differently than the rest of us. Being so long lived, for one thing, obviously your perspective is going to be different than someone with a lifespan like most human beings. But also, and this is something that I was just recently considering, like her and I guess her species' ability to perceive quantum existences is a sort of listening.

Aliza: Right. Yeah.

Kennedy: In Q Who when Q first abducted Picard and took him off the ship, it was before the rest of the crew realized he was gone, Guinan knew instantly. And she was standing at that window in Ten Forward kind of gazing out in the general direction of where they were. But you can tell by the expression on her face, shout out to Whoopi Goldberg's acting, that she wasn't necessarily visually looking for her friend. It was almost like she was listening for him. So I wonder if there's something to that species that, you know, enables them to do this. And now that we are in the genre of Star Trek where we've established there's been a temporal war in the Starfleet history. I wonder if we're going to see more El-Aurians because of their ability to see past temporal offshoots. Ooh! Oh God, the nerd! Ooh! *both make excited noises* It's just- it just makes me- like it effs me up. Like if I'm thinking about- okay, if we just survived a century of temporal war, right? The first people I'm going to put in positions to be able to seek out, you know, discrepancies and whatnot are people who have the ability to, you know, perceive quantum existences even if they haven't manifested themselves yet. *excited shudder*

Aliza: Yeah. That- oh my goodness. Isn't one of the new shows potentially going to talk about the temporal wars? Did I make that up?

Kennedy: Well, Disco season three mentions it for a hot second. They mentioned that it happened about a hundred years prior to Disco landing, essentially in the future.

Aliza: 29 hundreds or 29th century. I forget which one.

Kennedy: They said the 30th century. So you're right. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And it was a century long battle. Which is like, damn. First of all, how are you at war for a hundred years in any time construct? That's a long time.

Aliza: Where do you start counting too? Like-

Kennedy: Yeah!

Aliza: A hundred years compared to what timeline?

Kennedy: Yeah, so that's one thing too. To have to deal with a temporal- like all of those captains are El-Aurians. I don't care if they're commissioned officers or not. I'm putting El-Aurians on every single ship until we figure out what's happening. Put them into science or something.

Aliza: Kind of like a human sensor, like specifically for time shifts. Or they could be used that way.

Kennedy: And I like your note about Guinan and being like the canary for when stuff is about to get weird like that.

Aliza: So often. It happens so much. So another example is in Yesterday's Enterprise where she knows Yar is not supposed to be there. And of course, yeah, there was a temporal, uh, shenanigans that was going on.

Kennedy: *laughs* "Star Trek: temporal Shenanigans"

Aliza: *laughs* That's the series I want to watch!

Kennedy: *announcer voice* Coming to CBS this Fall. *both laugh*

Aliza: Temporal Shenanigans. Sounds fun! Sounds fun.

Kennedy: Yeah, it has to be a comedy though.

Aliza: Yeah. Yeah it does for sure.

Kennedy: I don't even want to like speculate on my favorites anymore, because I'm scared of somebody taking my idea. And then I look up six months later and you know, "It's Star Trek, Temporal Shenanigans." *Aliza laughs* I said that! I'm going to be mad. So let me-

Aliza: Yo. It's like a bittersweet thing when you see that. Cause I- I'm not going to lie. I've had like some slight elements of that happened to me with the new Star Trek stuff. And it's like, "Okay, well my ideas are good. So that's *laughs* that's a consolation." But yeah, as a creator I'm like- yeah, I'm kind of like approaching that differently, how much I share and don't share about my own Star Trek ideas.

Kennedy: And it's hard.

Aliza: Yeah. It's hard! Because I want to talk about them.

Kennedy: As fans you want to talk about it. As creatives you want to let your brain go that way. The community asks for it, like it's just constant discourse in Twitter. "What would your ideal crew be for this? What would your ideal captain be for that?" so everyone's constantly speculating about this kind of thing.

Aliza: Right. And speculation really is like the first step of that, of creating ideas and putting them down and stuff. So you're right. That's a good point. I was going to just touch on and briefly mention, I wrote a fan series that- well, start it as a fan series. And it was like Guinan's prequel series. Like her origin story. And I co-wrote it with my friend Shelton Perry. And we thankfully have never really publicly put out what the storyline is, but just the fact that it's a series about Guinan and that's it. But there there's something like key things that I'm like, "Oh my God, I want to share with you all! It's so cool!" But I'm like, "No, don't." Because if I- the second I share it, it's out there. And honestly it probably would never happen if I actually shared the storyline. Like, cause I don't know. I think this is the same with Star Trek creators,

but I know I've heard with like Marvel and with other things. If people are- not Marvel, uh, I'm thinking like Game of Thrones and other like really big pop culture juggernaut shows. If people have speculated on an idea already, they're not going to explore in the show. They're just not going to. Because it's out there. So I don't want to put our Guinan prequel idea out there, because I want it to potentially happen some day. And if it doesn't happen one day, that's fine too. But it's almost like protecting the idea is making it continue to be possible that it could happen one day.

Kennedy: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. You have to let the egg develop before you make the omelet.

Aliza: Mmm-hmm. Yes.

Kennedy: Otherwise it's all snot and that's not delicious. *Aliza makes gagging noise/both laugh*

Aliza: Anyway, the time shift, I think that's kind of where we branched off. So yeah, the Canary in a coal mine idea of Guinan. Now I- oh man, I'm excited to talk to you about this because this also wrapped into- wraps into Black womanhood in this culture we're in. Because you know, trying to separate the conversation a little bit, because yes, this is a fictional character. And in some ways, if they always listened to her, there would never be conflict. *laughs*

Kennedy: I mean, space is a big old place. I'm pretty sure they could find other conflict to get into.

Aliza: That's true. And what happens is- yeah, like once or twice if someone's like, "Hey, I have a hunch that this might be bad. Let's not do it." And you ignore them once that's a good episode. But if it keeps happening, then it becomes "Why aren't you listening to this person?" Repeatedly.

Kennedy: Consistently. I feel like- I don't know. Just forget it. Go ahead, please continue. *both laugh*

Aliza: I mean, just continuing with that thread, like, okay. Yeah, this is a TV show and it's happening. But then in real life we have experienced this. And it's that sense of, I have instincts, me Aliza, as person based- because of who I am and the cultures that I grew up in. I have instincts and I tend to sense some things before they go down. And sometimes I will, you know, try to give people a heads up. And thankfully I have some- I have people who do listen to me for the most part. But that hasn't always been the case. Like I have been in plenty of spaces, especially workspaces, places that I don't choose who all else is around me, where I don't get listened to. I have ideas and they get shut down. And then later someone else has the idea and it's brilliant. *Kennedy groans* Yeah. Like, I don't want to like spend this whole time harping on the woes of being a Black woman, but let's harp on it a little bit! Like, and how Guinan represents that in a lot of ways.

Kennedy: It's real talk. And there's something to be said about the fact that Picard learns early on to go to her. Right? He didn't always feel comfortable going to Deanna. And I mention this, shameless plug in an episode of Your Away Team with my co-host Tony Ray like,

Picard didn't go to Troi with a lot of this stuff because he didn't want it to be, you know, on the record. He didn't go to Crusher, who was his oldest friend on board, outside of Guinan. He always went to Guinan. Which means he knew the importance of having the counsel of a Black woman. Even if he didn't always listen to her, he knew how important that was. He even went so far as to, you know, elicit support from Lilly on First Contact. Always, always, always, always, when stuff is getting real, he goes to the Black woman closest to him and he's like, "What do I need to do?" *Picard voice* "Teach me your ways" *Aliza laughs* and makes a decision from there. But I just appreciated the fact that- did I appreciate it? Or did it make me a little "Hmm"? The only- now that I have kind of cleared the cobwebs away from the notion of her being the mystical magical Negro trope, it does still raise the issue at the end- I know I keep going back to Q Who, but at the end of this episode when Q ultimately brings them back to where they were after the Borg knows who they are prematurely. Like, "Screw you for this," right? Picard and Guinan are playing chess. They're playing three dimensional chess in 10 forward. She's like "I told you" *Aliza laughs* this was a bad idea. Now these raggedy behind cyborg ass- wipes know who you are. They're going to come looking for us. And they're going to come looking for you specifically. I told you this would happen." And he's like, "Yeah, well, maybe Q did us a favor. And now we know not to be all, you know, confident and complacent and everything's all cool." And Guinan looking at him like, "Okay, I could have told you that. And guess what? I did tell you that. But now you have to worry about these jerks too." She's like, "I don't think you really understand what's happening." *Picard voice* "Oh no, Guinan. Everything's going quite well." And still insists on his own hubris and doesn't listen to her. I would not have expected Guinan to just be like, "Oh well, humans will be humans." On the end of that. I would have been like, "Mother- I'm not telling you this for my health! I mean, I am telling you this for my health ultimately because I'm on this ship. *Aliza laughs* I'm telling you this for my health, for your health for your health, for everybody's health on this ship. Why aren't you listening to me?" I would've been more upset than her, personally. But she has a different perception of quantum, you know, inevitability than I do. So maybe she was- she caught wind of a reality where, you know, everything was going to be okay. And knew not to get upset. Me, as a human being, I'd have been hot. I'd be like, "Don't take that with me, bro. Like, we literally just went through all this. We almost died and you were talking about some, maybe it's for a good reason? Bro! Let me off the ship next time. Next starbase base we get to I'm out of here. I can't do this with you. I can't."

Aliza: Yeah. You mentioned like, you would have been hot for not being listened to. And this is one of my gripes about the way Guinan is written, because as much as I enjoy the character and I love the way Whoopi plays her, she was still written by mostly white people. And she kind of exemplifies this, I think, an idealized version of a Black woman who is almost *mysterious voice* mystical in her abilities to sense things and so wise and so patient with all the people who are not listening to her. But still willingly giving of herself to give that counsel, to give that empathy, to give that knowledge, even if she's not going to be listened to. And I feel like I've been in so many situations personally, as a Black woman, where that's expected of me. And I have like fallen into that trap many times too. And then I'm like, "Wait, what am I doing? No. If you're not listening to me, I gotta go." Like, I can't stay in situations where I continue to give so much of myself, and try to help people, and help all of us

together, like you said cause we're on a ship together, and then still not be listened to over and over again. Like it's not fair. It's not fair to us. And Guinan, like you said, she's a different person. So I'm not saying that no Black woman should ever do that. But I'm just saying when it becomes an expectation that that's who we are and that's how we'll always be, that's where it becomes a problem.

Kennedy: Right. "Don't come to me to continuously save your behind if you don't listen to me when I tell you how to prevent getting into the situation in the first place."

Aliza: Right. And Picard not listening to her and having to experience it for himself is almost like that thing that happens with parents and teenagers, where it's like, "Well, you can tell your kid not to do X, Y, Z, but literally they might have to just do the thing and experience it for themselves to learn." And that's fine and all. But when your peers- like, I'm not your parent, you're not my teenage kid. Like, you know, we are peers. Like if you don't respect my opinion enough to actually like take my warnings, then why are we even still doing this? Why are we like connected? Why are we still collaborating?

Kennedy: Yeah, that's true. But also if she is hundreds of years old older than everybody else, then she might have that patience of an adult and their teenager. She has that like great great-grandparent patience. Where it's like, "Okay. *derisive sound* Go head over there. But when you look back now-" *Aliza laughs* you know?

Aliza: And she's- I love that she- you're right. Like, cause she's not phased by it either. Like she's like, "Well, I know." She's just like, assured. She's like, "I'm going to say this thing. You're probably not going to listen, but I'm gonna say it anyway. And then you're there to learn and that's fine. That's what we're doing here." whereas we are human beings, not ancient El-Aurians, and we don't have to put up with that. *laughs*

Kennedy: Right. And we're also at a different point in our social evolution as well. Right? Like, we are still existing in a time period where our Blackness is inherently deemed as a threat or less than, or, you know, whatever else it's labeled as to the lens of white male supremacist perspective. Guinan exists in a future where she might have seen that firsthand by traveling back to the 18th century, but she was on vacation. She was able to see that from what it was, and then leave, you know? Her perspective of that is going to be a little bit different. And I always find it interesting to see how some of these Black characters perceive situations that would have, you know, present time Black folks be like, "Nah, fam." *laughs* But because they don't have, like I said, the social boundaries in place to prevent them from being their fully realized selves, they're able to look at things from a different perspective

Aliza: And Guinan- yeah. Like in Times Arrow she like- she gets to earth and injects herself into the highest echelons of artistic society and things like that. So- and that was something, obviously, that was incredibly difficult to do if at all possible for Black people on earth at the time.

Kennedy: Yeah. And somehow no one- she didn't have to go through no one's backdoor. She didn't have anybody like with her to beard as her, I don't know, client that she's nannying for

or taking care of or something. She was just able to live autonomously. So once again, I aspire *laughs* to be as carefree as Guinan.

Aliza: Yeah. And without those limitations or rules, the barriers. Just being able to transcend those barriers is like pretty magical. Magical? Hmm.

Kennedy: Hmm!

Aliza: Speaking of magical, let's talk about the magical Negro stereotype for a little bit, because I really would love to hear your thoughts on this in terms of Guinan specifically.

Kennedy: I feel like- Again, because you and I and many other folks, many other diasporans *chuckles* are forced to look at things through a very particular socioeconomical political lens it's hard for us to not see these red flags when they appear, right? Because like you mentioned, all of the stuff is ultimately written by white men or white people at the very least. So there's going to be some biases there on both sides of that coin. But however, in reviewing some of her stuff today, I kind of convinced myself against the entire idea of a magical Negro because of the fact that, "Oh, right. She's not just a human being who happens to be, you know, sensitive to this kind of thing. Like she is of another species." And apparently this species is like, their whole jam is being able to be sensitive to quantum shifts and alternate realities and all that fun stuff. So it kind of takes a little bit of that pressure of being a trope off of her. The thing that maintains that trope though, is the fact that people only come to her for advice. We never saw a story about, "Hey, we think it's Guinan birthday this week. We're not really sure she doesn't talk about it. We're throwing her a party. Don't say anything." Right? Or we don't see, oh, Picard coming back from, you know, this symposium on Kallas three. He bought this fabric back for Guinan because he knows how much she likes this shade of purple. You know? Like there was never any type of incorporation of her into the everyday lives of this crew, except when they were on 10 forward. So that kind of molds into another archetype of, you know, the servant Negro. The "Help" Negro.

Aliza: Right.

Kennedy: Which, you know, we would hope to have moved past *laughs* by the time the 24th century comes around. But you know, there are still tones of it there. Again, I could be over sensitive to it because of the fact that this is the lens that I'm forced to deal with. But even objectively speaking, when you take away from the fact that obviously the action of the show didn't happen in 10 forward, nobody was like, "Hey, let me get this for Guinan because she helped me with this this time" or, "Hey, sorry I was late. I was, you know, finally winning a game of racketball against Guinan" or- you know what I mean? Like, no one tried to incorporate her into their everyday life, even though whenever things got weird they all ran to her. So it's kind of like that thankless advice, that thankless support, that thankless source of support trope that exists with her that burns my ass more than the magical part.

Aliza: Yeah. And you're right. I think Guinan, if anything, she has elements of a lot of different tropes. So she's not just all one thing. And she also isn't fully fleshed out to be honest. Like, I've even heard some fans say like, "Oh, I actually liked that we didn't know about Guinan."

And I'm like, "What?" Like, I didn't. That bothered me. I wanted to know more about her. I wanted to know more about who she was and where she came from. But a lot of people were just kind of okay with her being this kind of quasi mystical help- source of help and consolation and empathy for everyone.

Kennedy: It's because it's convenient. They don't want to know that she's a fully realized person with hopes and dreams and aspirations and shortcomings and families. They don't want to know that, because then they have to be responsible for taking her wellbeing under their consideration. And that takes too much time. They can't be bothered with considering her- the sanctity of her life in its fully realized sense if they're utilizing her for something. Heaven forbid.

Aliza: Right. How great would it have been if they had just lifted one of those nuggets, because she shared a lot of nuggets about her past and herself, but they never explored them in the show. Like she talks about her dad. She talks about her several husbands and all her children that she had. And she talks about an uncle that was rebellious. She like tells us about her family throughout the show. But they never dived deeper into it. So it's just kind of like sprinkled in. And I'm grateful that they did that, but I really would have loved to have a TNG episode that was focused on Guinan, for the love of God. I think that's one of the biggest downfalls of TNG, that we never got a Guinan episode.

Kennedy: And they had the perfect opportunity with Time's Arrow. She was there. That was her chance. Instead, you want to spend all this time on Mark Twain, who was disrespectful as shit. I'm going to say it. He was not only disrespectful to everybody that he encountered on the crew, but as soon as he got onto the Enterprise, he was disrespectful then too. I was like, "I don't know *scoffs* Mark Twain personally, but I don't like him *both laugh* after this." if this is what he was like, I don't like him. I don't like him. He was disrespectful as hell point blank period. And I got to spend not one, but two whole episodes dealing with how ignorant he is when we have pristine mint out of box 19th century Guinan?

Aliza: Yeah!

Kennedy: FOH y'all.

Aliza: Also, speaking of Times Arrow, you have tweeted about period dramas in the recent past. And this reminds me of what you've said about it, because like, why do we- First of all, Star Trek has this tendency to kind of center like classically European pasts. So like whether it's on a holodeck episode or whether it's actual time travel, they're usually going to some like Western and or European type of civilization and touchpoint. And so here's another episode where we have Guinan who, yeah, she ends up being in this time period that they go back to. And it is again, one of these like very Western white male-centric societies. And they spend so much time on Samuel Clemens in that society. So it's like- what? God! I want to just like re-imagine what would have been a great time travel episode for Guinan, like seeing her in some other place that was not always freaking centering the European descended narratives and storylines and pop culture references.

Kennedy: Literally. Like they're just- the possibilities are endless. Like, it is very telling of 90's Trek, and before really, of who was in that writer's room. Because like you say, every example of antiquity was always European. Every example of classical whatever, classic humanity, was always European or Western. And if they ever went somewhere quote unquote "exotic", it was completely different planet with completely different flora and fauna when you could have gone to Nairobi. You could have gone to Cape Town. You could have gone to Delhi. You could've gone to Bangkok. You could have gone- there's so many other places when the examples of humanity that could have served as that point of reference for the timeframe that you were examining that she wouldn't have had to worry about surmounting, you know, the social political climate at the time to be considered aristocratic. If she had landed in, let's say 15th century Benin and Togo, that would have been a whole other ball of wax. So I just, *uncomfortable noise* it makes me so thrilled to know that she's going to be included in the second season of Picard. I just hope that it isn't to fill this space canary archetype. Like, if she doesn't get more character development, I swear to God. If Picard goes to visit Guinan and she's behind somebody else's bar.

Aliza: Oh my God.

Kennedy: Okay, I'm going to flip a table. I'm going to set something on fire. Someone's going to hear my mouth because at this point like, don't bring me over here to save your ratings. Don't do it, okay? Not unless you're going to do it right. If you're going to do it right, do it right. But don't bring me over here just to be your Canary again.

Aliza: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, I am fully supportive of this table flipping and I will join you *Kennedy laughs* and this is also where I have to like reiterate my freaking mission as a Star Trek fan is to get a Guinan series. Like, cool if I'm the one to write it, but I don't need to be. I just literally want it to exist. I want this character to have the full growth that she deserves. And yeah. *laughs* Good Lord. We need a Guinan series so bad.

Kennedy: Yeah. I want to see the episode where her youngest son, who was an old man meets her new husband who's like 25. Okay? That's what I want to meet. I want to meet that. I want to see what happens when her new son-in-law realizes *laughs* that that talisman that he saw on Craic Five really was his new mother, because she's lived at- like that's- you need to give me like a reverse Quantum Leap kind of deal. Like *groans* don't get me started.

Aliza: Bits of Doctor Who.

Kennedy: Yeah!

Aliza: She is a time Lord. We know this. *laughs* She is basically a Time Lord.

But stepping back to I Borg, that episode I found interesting because she filled another trope. Of that "Mm-mm! Whozy-loazy get away from me!" You know? And it was cool to see her combat her own prejudices. And even though those prejudices were valid, and well-earned, and justifiable, I love the fact that she had to come to terms with them. I love watching stories when any character who has longstanding prejudices has to come to terms with them in general. But specifically with this, because we all know how much Guinan and all

El-Aurians despise the Borg. So for her to start off from a perspective of "What the f- are you doing? *laughs* Why is this on my ship? Why is he still here? He's still here? Y'all trying to rehabilitate him? What the f- is wrong with y'all? Did you not experience the same shit I experienced? Because I'm pretty sure we was both on that ship at the same time. I know I bop a bit around the time stream a lot, I notice. But I know we were here for the same- is this the same Borg that I know, that you know, that we know?"

laughs "What am I missing?"

Kennedy: "Cause he's still here. He's not- he can't help himself. He's going to do us all in. He's going to kill you. He's going to be the end of us all. Get him outta here!" Ultimately, she was proven to be wrong about Hugh, but it took her looking inwardly to realize that she was wrong. Unlike most cases where prejudices are combated, where something external forces them to change their perspective, her perspective has changed because of the interaction that they had. And the conclusions that she drew from that interaction herself instead of any type of outside or external influence.

Aliza: Mm. And isn't- that's so beautiful and powerful too. I think that's a good lesson that like, all people should take, which is, "Guess what? You can change your mind." When we're presented with new information, you're allowed to like deliberate on that and change your opinion. That's fine. That's actually a good quality to have in a person.

Kennedy: That's good people-ing right there!

Aliza: Yeah, it's good people-ing! Yeah. Like, and right now I feel like just with the current- the way that we discourse right now, not everybody, but a lot of people discourse where they just plant their flag. And there are immoveable. But it's like, you're literally just doing this because of pride at this point, because if you just reconsider the information you're being given, you can change. It's okay. We're not going to call you- remember, like back in, what was it like John Kerry days? Like when John Kerry was running for president, they were like, "He's a flip flopper! He's a flip-flopper!" And like, we're not talking about that. We're talking about just like, as people, like we're allowed to change our minds about things and change our stances over time. So I liked that Guinan gets to demonstrate- is like demonstrating that and living through that moment here. And also, you know, tying this back to what we were saying about the magical Negro trope. What you were saying about that, I agree. I feel like- I agree that there are certain things that kind of support that, but also counteract that, and this is when the counteracts her status as like magical Negro type. This gives her layers, her being kind of wrong and having to change her mind humanizes her and makes her a person, just like the rest of us. Who's learning how to people, as you said. *laughs*

Kennedy: It makes me think of the end of Steven Universe, when we talk about shifting your perspective and you know, deprogramming and deconditioning. *singing* I don't need you to respect me, I respect me. I don't need you to love me, I love me. But I want you to know that you could know me, if you change your mind. Change your mind. Change your mind. *speaking normally* And it's true!

Aliza: Aw! I love that!

Kennedy: Isn't it cute? Steven Universe for the feels. And that's basically what Hugh said to Guinan, "I don't need you to respect me. I don't need you to love me, but you could know me if you change your mind." And she changed her mind. It was kicking and screaming, *laughs* but she got over herself. And I feel like the whole point of that, that that was the heart of that episode. That was the meat and potatoes there. Like, it took the staunchest most polarized person on that, whether it's proper or not to rehabilitate this drone, to change their perspective for Picard to be like, "Oh, well maybe this is cool." The other thing about that episode that I really appreciate, and it really speaks to Guinan's involvement in Trek overall, is the visibility. And by that I mean, I don't know if you shared this experience as well growing up Aliza, but I know personally growing up and liking quote unquote "white people things" like things that were enjoyed primarily by, you know, a certain group of people. We have always been raised to not engage in the same way. You can be there. You can observe, right? You can be friendly and support the action that's happening. But actually doing the thing? Two different separate things. So for example, my- let's say- oh, geez. I'm trying to think of something cool. Um, um. Going tubing, right? You get your little inner tube, you got your swim suit. You got your cooler with your snacks and your extracurriculars in it. You're going to take off down this river. Oh no. No. I'm not doing that. I'll wait for y'all at the bottom of the river. I'll be here when y'all get here, but I'm not doing all that. Cause it's dangerous and Black people don't do those things. Right? "Oh, I'm not skiing with you. I'll go on the ski trip with you. I'll book the lodge. *both laugh* I'll chill at the bar scene-

Aliza: *laughs* I'm guilty of that. *both laugh* I went on a ski trip in high school and I did not ski *laughs*, but I have skied since then, twice!

Kennedy: So, right? So I'll chill at this lodge. I'll drink this kahlua and cocoa while you ski, if you want to hop your little narrow behind on and off that lift, if you feel fit.

Aliza: Go on and break your legs. It's fine with me. *both laugh*

Kennedy: I don't care! I'm chilling right here. I got my little throw pillow, Svens over here massaging my feet. I'm good. But we're not supposed to participate, cause that's white folk stuff.

Aliza: Right.

Kennedy: She was fencing with Picard. Right? She was fencing, just the visibility of seeing a Black fencer years and years and years and years before Ibtihaj Muhammad won the bronze medal, right? And people were losing their minds over Ibtihaj Muhammad winning that medal. And I was like, "Okay, and Guinan done did this. So what's your point?" you know? *both laugh*

Aliza: I love that. People like, "Did you watch the Olympics?" "Did you watch TNG?"

Kennedy: "Please!" Totally still want an Ibtihaj Muhammad Barbie though, not gonna lie.

Aliza: Ooooooh!

Kennedy: Did you know she's got a Barbie?

Aliza: No!

Kennedy: Yes! Ibtihaj Muhammad has a Barbie. She's the Olympic bronze medalist for US fencing and she has a Barbie with her little hijab and everything. *Aliza squeals* It's amazing.

Aliza: Oh that's beautiful! I love that.

Kennedy: Yeah, it's amazing. My point is Guinan was fencing, doing some quote unquote "white people's stuff", with her best friend. And didn't appear to be uncomfortable with the action. She was uncomfortable with the fact that there was a Borg drone on the same ship that she was, but she wasn't uncomfortable with the fact that she was fencing with this man. Right? But what's the other example? When she was Gloria from Cleveland.

Aliza: Oh yes!

Kennedy: You know, she rolled up in the holodeck, showed us a little gam, trying to figure out where to put the garters at, you know? And was LARPing. She basically- her friend said, "Hey, I got some downtime. Come LARP with me." And she's like, "I don't know. It's not really my thing." He's like, "Come on Guinan, please! You always want to hang out. We never hang out. This is what I do. I never have time to hang out, please. Like, I don't want to hang out with anybody. I want to hang out with you. Come on. Guinan, please! I got this really cute dress for you. It's like mint green, it's going to go great against your skin. Come on Guinan! Pleeeeease!" And you know, she was like, Fine! Ugh, I'll meet you down there. You're so weird with this stuff Jean-Luc." And what she do? She gets down there and she gets shot at. She looks at him, she's like, "Is this- is this fun? This is fun for you? This is what you do for fun?" And he's like, "It's a mystery! We get to figure out things! Go get some clues! Who is this man? Why is he shooting at us? What money is he talking about? It's fun!" *both laugh* She's like, "You nerd. I love you, but you a nerd hun, you know that right? Okay."

Aliza: It's so funny. I'm just thinking about like inviting a 500 year old friend to cosplay with you or to like LARP with you. Like, "You know, I was at the real battle where they dressed like this right?" *both laugh*

Kennedy: He's just "My cousin." and she looked at him, I said, "This is pure." This is pure because he didn't skip a beat. He didn't think it was weird. He didn't react. He just said it, "My cousin" his family.

Aliza: So cute.

Kennedy: So, you know, I'm hoping that the strength of that relationship, all those hours logged LARPing with Picard, means that Guinan will have an actual, you know, storyline and plot in Picard too. If we can spend all that time on that planet looking at the Troi Rikers we can spend an episode talking about Guinan.

Aliza: Mm-hmm. Yeah. I mean, okay. Doing some light speculation about Guinan in season two of Picard. Yeah, let's get into that. I mean, that would be fun too, to see them LARPing together in a holodeck. I would be here for that. That would be actually a great opener of an episode or even of the whole season. Just, we see Guinan and Picard in some time and

space, maybe it's 15th century Benin Togo, they're hanging out at a little cafe, sipping some tea and eating some food and listening to music. And then we find out they're in the past and it's the holodeck and they're LARPing. That would be fun.

Kennedy: I need to rewatch Picard season one to really kind of speculate on what could happen. Because we didn't see too too much of the terrestrial climate, right? Like, we saw what was going on on other planets and in other situations. And the only reason why Picard even went to the Troi Rikers is because he needed them. Right? He was content to leave everybody alone because this huge risk mandated him to do it by himself. So I know that the character has had a lot of growth over the course of that season. And I wonder how that is going to influence how he interacts with Guinan. I also want to know, like, what has she been doing? Where has she been? Has she stayed away from the whole XB thing? Is she, you know, even still a spacefaring individual? Has she hunkered down and you know, bought her little piece of Bajor, you know?

Aliza: Right. Has she retired? Is she a retiree?

Kennedy: She better not be up behind nobody's bar. I'd tell you that!

Aliza: Yeah. I mean, my theory about why she was bartending in the first place is because she did literally everything else under the many suns and was like, "What haven't I done? I guess I'll bartend now." *laughs* That's how she ended up bartending.

Kennedy: Maybe.

Aliza: That's how I justified it in my brain. Cause I- yeah. It's like, "Why is this 500 year old person a bartender?"

Kennedy: That's literally the only way you can justify it, right? That's the only way you can justify anybody working in 10 forward, is because they want the experience of working on a starship. On a Galaxy class starship. On the flagship Galaxy class starship, just the scene, you know? They want the experience of hobnobbing with those officers and being in peril without actually having to have any responsibility. Like, I can understand that.

Aliza: Yeah. Yeah. But we want more, we don't want her to still be a bartender when she comes back.

Kennedy: She better not be in any type of service role whatsoever. Not that there's something wrong with a service role. There's nothing wrong with a labor-intensive position. I'm saying at this point in her life, she better not be cleaning up nothing, or I'm going to lose- I'm going to lose my mind. *makes frustrated noises* I'm going to go to LA. *Aliza laughs* I'm going to start banging on some doors, with my mask on, and start cussing people out. Because that's unacceptable. And she better not be no Savior Negro, neither. I need him not to get into some perilous-ass, you know, situation and Guinan kicking the door with a phaser rifle. Talk about some pew pew "Picard, I told you." Cause I'm gonna be mad at that too.

Aliza: *laughs* Yeah. Yep. I would like to see more of her own family situation and relationships. We- like I said before, we get kind of like blips and blops- blips and blops?. What?

Kennedy: No, you're right. It's cause there's little blips and blops.

Aliza: *laughs* Blips and blops of her home situation, but we never see it. And we never find out more. And so I would love to- is her dad still alive? Like, does she have a child who's now living with her who's 300 years old and they're hanging out? Does she have great, great, great, great grandkids? Like, yeah. I want to know about her family life, her home life. And also like, what are some other- like you said fencing, and she also is a very good marksman. We saw her like going up against, was it- it was Worf, right?

Kennedy: It was Worf. Left-handed.

Aliza: Beat him left handed! So I want to see- yeah. Is she doing that? What she doing? See, I want to see like Guinan for Guinan sake. I like how you put that too. Cause that's not- that's something that didn't clock the first time I watched Picard, which is that he only, yeah. He only went to Riker and Troi. He- like, that would not have happened if he wasn't in peril, that reunion. So- and kind of- I mean, he encountered Seven of Nine during that adventure. But yeah, in the same way, like if he wasn't in peril and on this mission, those reunions wouldn't have happened. And it's like, is that going to be the format for Picard? If we get Geordi, if we get Worf in the future, is it because he needs them? And I'm not- yeah, I'm not super down with that. Like, I don't really want to see that version of these reunions. It would be nice to just see them kind of occur in the world. Like he- kind of like the way Burnham, bringing Discovery into this, the way that Burnham and her mom re encountered each other. Spoilers, sorry. Spoiler warning.

Kennedy: Right. And it was definitely too late. Cause we done dropped all types of spoilers *both laugh* about Disco.

Aliza: Yeah. Oh! And speaking of- one more thing, Kennedy. I wanted to like kind of like get your take on this. When going through all of our notes for Guinan, I realized that there's this inversion that kind of happens with Burnham, because we see Guinan- like the way we've talked about her. You know, she's an empathizer, she's a counselor. She's wise. She is the canary in the coal mine, and people still decide not to listen to her in times of peril. And yet here we have Burnham, a new Black female character on Star Trek who goes towards the peril. She literally does the opposite of what Guinan advises people to do.

Kennedy: Flings herself *Aliza laughs* into rips of space and time with no shuttle.

Aliza: Constantly!

Kennedy: Just a suit that she built on the way.

Aliza: Just a suit. And I even clocked the other day, like when I was watching a Discovery episode, how much- how often she's injured and still just limping along. Like, she literally puts herself in bodily harm on the daily. So the opposite of Guinan and people are not happy.

So it's like, do people want- I don't know. It's interesting. Like what do you think about that? I see it as a pretty clear inversion of that character and I think it's really compelling. But people- people still aren't down for it. A lot of people are. We are.

Kennedy: Right. Those enlightened of us are. You know But the people who were upset about that, and the people who are upset about Burnham are the same people who are upset about *make frustrated noise* They're the same people who get mad when you make a statement that includes the group of people that they are in, even though you're not talking about them directly.

Aliza: Ah! Yeah.

Kennedy: Do you know what I mean? There is something to be said about a type of behavior, like Michael Burnham's, for example. Right? As you say, tits out balls to the wall, flinging herself into danger whenever humanly possible and then some, for the sake of her crew. Yet doesn't somehow deserve that PIP. Right?

Aliza: Right.

Kennedy: When the captains that have come before her have been habitual line steppers, every single dope captain that has existed before her and since her has done wild stuff, *laughs* and people are okay with it. Kirk was wild. Picard through a whole lot of diplomacy at things, but he also went towards the Borg when he was advised not to. You know what I mean? For the sake of scientific exploration and curiosity. Okay. That's all well and cute. However, *scoffs* we don't need to be in here. Sisko was a habitual line stepper. There's a whole episode about him sanctioning fraud to get the Romulans into the war.

Aliza: Such a great episode.

Kennedy: Oh it is. It's one of the best ones. Who else was- Janeway!

Aliza: Well, people also aren't happy with that.

Kennedy: Right. But you know, they don't like any marginalized group of people doing things to exceed when it means they have to break down the barriers of a system that has been structured specifically to keep that marginalized group at bay. So they're not going to have- they're not going to be happy about the fact that Janeway not only hacked the Borg, stole a drone and a couple of babies, went back and did that shit again for her friend. They don't want to hear that. All right? They don't want to hear the fact that Michael Burnham is exceptional in everything that she does. They don't want to hear that. They don't want to hear the fact that, you know, you have to make space for people who constantly test the validity of the boundaries in a systemic situation. They don't want to hear that, because then it makes them look inwardly and makes them feel shame for adhering to the rules of the system and not getting as far. People are more caught up with their own self status in a system of oppression, how it portrays themselves, right? "If I'm living in the same exact system you are, and I've had to bust my hump to get everything that I have, how is it that you get all of this just for being you?" Well, my guy, you're not wrong for busting your hump. They're not wrong for doing more than you. The system's wrong for creating situations for us

to have to exist in this way. So instead of you being pissed at Michael Burnham has had to do all that to get that pip, instead of you being pissed that Janeway had to do all that to get her crew back, instead of you being pissed about the fact that people are getting visibility in spaces that don't include you, be pissed about the fact that these situations exist in the first place. Like, be mad that the captains have to do this wild and crazy stuff to get that PIP, instead of just being taken at their word. Like half the stuff that went down in season three of *Disco* didn't have to go that way, because all they had to do was listen. I'm telling you, "Hey, we have a ship that can get us over there and back before anything pops off. All you need is a seed home. We can go get you that seed to be back before you blink. Listen to me! *laughs* I am 900 plus years older than you my guy, I know what I'm talking about. All right? If I'm telling you we need to leave, I understand that Q took us over here where the Borg are, but I'm telling you right now, we need to go. "Your answer should not be* Picard voice* "Now hold on, let me understand-" no! We need to leave. Listen to Black women.

Aliza: *Picard voice* "Lets explore."

Kennedy: *laughs/Picard voice* "Lets explore forthe sake of curiosity". I don't give a good John Brown what's out there. We need to go the opposite direction, my guy. So it stems to putting faith, having faith, trusting in supporting the innate experiences that brings a person to this table. If this table is comprised and surrounded of the most exceptional of us, then why are you so hell bent to exclude the input from the people who are at this table who don't look like you? If anything, *Trek* has taught us that those are the people you need to be listening to specifically. I don't understand how an El-Aurian can perceive quantum, you know, existences in all its ways. But I know I'm putting one on the bridge if I'm dealing with a temporal issue. If I got an encounter with the Borg, how many El-Aurians we got on this manifest? I need to talk to you for a second. That's the strength of intersectional diversity, is knowing that you have somebody on your team, or you have a resource that's available-accessible to you, that is comprised of experiences that you have not directly going through.

Aliza: Right.

Kennedy: So why alienate that? Why give it shit when it gets its flowers? And then at the same time, if you're super mad that this specific demographic of people is doing well in general, then maybe you got a problem with this specific demographic of individuals, which means you need to look inwardly. If you just as mad that Michael Burnham will throw herself in front of danger for her crew, or really anybody right? If we're being real. And you're also mad at Guinan for avoiding conflicts of this type of severity, then maybe you just have an issue with Black women doing powerful things instead of it's on the individual.

Aliza: Or- and Black women refusing to be ignored too.

Kennedy: Right. If visibility is what is pissing you off, then you need a new pair of glasses, my guy. You need to leave. You need another room. You need to change that lightbulb. Because the present conditions that you're existing under are preventing you from being able to see not only what everybody else is contributing, but also everything that you can contribute as well. It's preventing you from being your best self. Guinan was not her fully realized best self until she realized she was being a bigot when it came to Hugh. She was being a bigot and she

realized it. She didn't want to realize it, *Aliza laughs* but she realized it. And then she was able to progress and evolve and become a better Guinan.

Aliza: So everyone, be like Guinan AND Burnham.

Kennedy: Yup. Break all the rules!

Aliza: Yes! Break all the rules. But then also listen to Black women. Because guess what? They listened to Black women. *laughs*

Kennedy: Listen. To. Black. Women.

Aliza: That's about all the time we have. Kennedy, you amazing human, where can people find you on the internet?

Kennedy: You can find me on the internet on Twitter and Instagram, both @thatMikeychick. That is that M I K E Y C H I C K. Don't act up in my comments because I will drag you publicly and then block you.

Aliza: And I will watch it and enjoy it!

Kennedy: *laughs/sings to the tune of Maria* Aliza. I just did a show with Aliza. Where can they find you on the internet?

Aliza: You can find me @Alizapearl, A L I Z A on Twitter and Instagram, at apizaLiza on Twitch. I will start streaming someday, I promise. And you can find me on Sword and Scroll if you want to play some TTRPGS with me. So, thank you so much Kennedy. To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit women@warp.com or find us on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram @womenatwarp. You can also email us crew@womenatwarp.com. And for more Roddenberry podcasts, visit podcasts.Roddenberry.com. Thanks so much for joining us.

Kennedy: Listen to *singing* Black women!

Aliza: *Singing* Listen to Black women!

Kennedy: Gosh, that's like a Greek chorus. *singing* Listen to Black womeeeen!

Aliza: Okay, folks.. If you want us to write a Klingon opera, send \$5,000 to me and Kennedy each at our cash app. Thank you very much.

Kennedy: KTHNXbyeee!

Aliza: Peace Y'all.

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