

## Women at Warp Episode 179: Why We Can't Have Holodecks

[Women at Warp theme]

**Grace:** 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 Grace and thanks for tuning in. With me today are Jarrah.

**Jarrah:** Hello.

**Grace:** Aliza.

**Aliza:** Hey, hey.

**Grace:** And Sarah.

**Sarah:** Hi.

**Jarrah:** And before we get into our main topic, we have just a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is made possible by our patrons on Patreon. If you'd like to become a patron, you can do so for as little as a dollar a month and you get awesome rewards like thanks on social media, silly watch-along commentaries, even customized loot boxes at some of the higher tiers. Visit [patreon.com/womenatwarp](https://patreon.com/womenatwarp) for more information. Thanks to our patrons for picking all of our episode topics this month as this was a three-episode month for us. This is our final patron-selected topic. And this one, we asked people to pick from themes and I will let Grace introduce theme we chose in just a minute.

But first just want to let you know you can also visit our TeePublic store and find Women at Warp merchandise along with other non-podcast-specific *Trek* designs. That's at [teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp](https://teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp).

And finally, we have another patron-related message which is a birthday shout out to our awesome patron, Eve.

**Grace:** Happy Birthday, Eve.

**Aliza:** Happy Birthday.

**Grace:** May you have new evolution during this year's revolution.

**Jarrah:** Yes.

**Grace:** That didn't work at all, did it?

**Jarrah:** Pretty good.

**Grace:** Oh, damn, I tried.

**Sarah:** Eve, may you le-eve the past behind and look forward to the future.

**Grace:** May this year be eve-n better. [laughs]

**Sarah:** I like that one.

**Jarrah:** It's New Eve's Year.

**Unison** Yay. [laughter] We did it, gang.

**Jarrah:** I hope that you like puns because that's what we got you.

**Sarah:** Yes.

**Jarrah:** So, thanks for all your support and have an amazing next year and we will hopefully see you again for birthday 2022.

**Grace:** So, for our main topic today, it's a little bit of a heady one. So, please beware of any warnings we may have at the beginning of the episode. Our topic today is consent in the holodeck, which is one that's been brought up by listeners many times. We've touched on it in a few previous episodes, but we honestly thought this was one worth devoting an entire episode to. Consent issues we've raised mostly have to do with the ethics of using someone else's image for sexual purposes, with or without their permission. But before we get into that, let's talk about the purpose of the holodeck that we see versus the discussion in the fandom.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Mostly what I was trying to note here is let's talk about the whole kind of-- I wouldn't even say it's a veiled discussion in the fandom about how if there was holodecks, most people who experience sexual desire would just be using them to have sex. I believe that Sarah called this the "why we can't have holodecks" dilemma. [laughs]

**Grace:** That sounds about right.

**Sarah:** I just want to give credit to my friend Nate for telling me that, yeah, if we ever get holodecks for the first 20 years, all anyone will do is have sex with him.

**Grace:** Look at what happened with *Second Life*. That happened so quick. That entire phenomena was over and done with so quick. And it was like dark ages. Dark Ages. Dark Ages. Tons of people having sex on the internet and done.

**Sarah:** What? Can you explain what *Second Life* is? I don't know what that is.

**Grace:** Second Life, it was kind of an online life simulation thing where you could go to events, you could go to mixers and stuff with a little avatar of yourself and interact with strangers in real time. And a lot of people were using that for sex stuff.

**Sarah:** Okay, interesting. I literally have never heard of this.

**Grace:** Oh, my gosh. Like I said, it was over and done with so quickly. But there was a point where they were like, "No, this is going to be the new way that people have sexual relationships." It's like, no. It's just another thing on the internet.

**Sarah:** Interesting.

**Grace:** And it's still out there, so you can explore it as this weird shrine to cybersex and all of the people who tried to convince themselves that it would be anything else.

**Jarrah:** Well, I remember there was a lot of buzz around it at one point, and all of these brands were going in and buying stores that people could shop in *Second Life*. I think we're going to talk a little bit more about other technologies between now and holodecks and what that presages for the future. But yeah, and a patron also mentioned the *Lower Decks* episode where they have to clean out the holodeck and how gross it is.

**Grace:** Yeah. And don't they in Trekkies, during the ending, they have just a segment of dude comedians talking about *Star Trek*, and there's multiple jokes about how, "Oh, everyone's just having sex on holodeck."

**Jarrah:** Yep. [laughs] But I think it raises interesting questions about if this is a technology that is presumably widely available by the time we get to *Deep Space Nine*, but most of the time when we're seeing it on *Star Trek*, it's in Federation starships. So, do you think there would be controls or should there be controls on what people are using it for in general?

**Grace:** If I'm going there for my adult education classes after dinner or something, I would definitely feel weird practicing Spanish in a room where I know people have just been doing the nasty in all manner of creative ways. That would be a little distracting for me personally.

**Jarrah:** We also know that the Federation in general is not great at confidentiality.

**Grace:** No.

**Jarrah:** Like, medical confidentiality is just constantly being breached. So, the idea that Starfleet would know what holo programs you're running and that no one would ever find out to me is not believable.

**Grace:** Yeah, they probably haven't figured out how to do incognito mode on the holodeck or in holosuites.

**Sarah:** Doesn't exist, yeah. So, you're basically saying people aren't having sex on the Enterprise holodeck because they have no expectation of privacy.

**Jarrah:** Oh, no, they 100% are.

**Grace:** Or they're doing it in a very creative way, like 12-year-olds trying to look up dirty pictures, but without it being-- phrasing that their parents will recognize in the search history.

**Jarrah:** Well one of the earlier examples that we see in *TNG* is that occurs to me as the Geordi-Leah Brahms situation, which doesn't start out as a program for him to practice his moves.

**Grace:** It gets there though. It gets there.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Grace:** So, you just know there was someone who's like, "I want to debate quantum mechanics with Einstein." And then they're like "Albert, you get me."

**Sarah:** Catching feelings for Albert Einstein who, by the way, is adorable. He is an adorable man. I get it.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Sarah:** Yeah, I think going back to the question about generally, should activity be limited on a holodeck, here's the thing. There's multiple holodecks on the Enterprise. So, if I think on a healthy ship, you would not limit people's use and bar sexual activity from a holodeck because I feel like if you're out in space and you're single or your partner is not on the ship, or you're just single and don't want to date or whatever, it could be a very healthy way to release some sexual energy. But I agree that yeah, the cleanliness and hygiene is very important. So, I would want to know that, number one, let there be a holodeck that's dedicated to the horny people.

**Grace:** This is the designated masturbation holodeck.

**Sarah:** The Hornobot 1.0. The Hornodeck. [laughter] So, let the Hornodeck be its own dedicated space and get it-- goddamn, please get it cleaned.

**Grace:** Holodeck 4, the one you don't take your kids to.

**Sarah:** After every use, clean holodeck 4, for God's sake. That's all I ask. If I was a captain, that's what I would do on my ship. I'd be like "Y'all, sometimes we're horny. Go to holodeck 4, but hit the self-cleaning and disinfecting button after you're done."

**Grace:** If you thought being an exocomp was bleak, just imagine being the Roomba in the holodeck.

**Jarrah:** So, holodeck 4 is like a love hotel in Tokyo.

**Sarah:** Yeah, I don't think we should make it like an eww, gross thing. I think we should just let it be what it is because-- One of the reasons I wanted to talk about this topic is because I am a single person and I'm not actively dating right now, and fantasy is a big part of my sexual life right now. And if I had a holodeck, I would be fucking on there. I'm not going to lie.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Grace:** Who among us can honestly say we wouldn't explore that option?

**Sarah:** [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Yeah, I basically do that in my brain already.

**Grace:** [laughs]

**Sarrah:** So, I think it's a potentially really awesome resource for people. But I agree that there should be some ways to have it be good for everyone and not-- To me, the most, the thing is the cleanliness thing, that's the biggest thing for me.

**Grace:** In order for it to be good for everyone, it needs to be safely regulated.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sarah:** Or at least be able to ensure that there's some common cultural norms that you can kind of expect other people to uphold. But yeah, I mean, and also, I think looking at things that you do encounter in the real, especially since COVID where you're, "Hmm, now I also have to screen for--" In addition to STIs and stuff, are you anti-vaxxer? And other things like that. Yeah, Holodick is looking appealing. [laughter]

**Jarrah:** Exactly. Should we look at some specific examples from *Star Trek* and then maybe talk more about some of the general or the principles about consent and use of images and stuff like that?

**Grace:** Absolutely. yeah.

**Jarrah:** Well, should we start with the Leah Brahms situation? I feel like one of the things this speaks to as well as the other, I think, clear *TNG* example, which is the Barclay fantasy hologram with his co-workers, is this idea that does the Federation computer have detailed images of all its crew members that it is basically providing to anyone.

**Grace:** Barclay just running around real discreet with a holocamera, because then I think it's a little on them for noticing.

**Jarrah:** Or is it a deep fake where you're just pasting Troy's head over generic woman body number four.

**Grace:** Oh, deep fakes are so creepy.

**Jarrah:** [laughs] And does it matter, I guess, is another question. I think certainly, I would hope that if you were like the preeminent starship engineer and you end up being the Leah Brahms of your generation that you aren't required to just hand over your image for anyone on any Federation starship to use however they want.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** Yeah, I think that's the question. It's like however they want that's the key phrase there. For me as an actor, knowing that my image is out there and I don't know who's looking at my pictures funny or whatever. But I also don't have control over that. I have control over what images of me are out there as far as I can control that. But beyond that, what thoughts people are having, what actions people are doing around them, that's not in my control. So, I don't lose sleep over that for the most part.

Now, if someone tries to tell me, like a stranger on the Internet tries to tell me stuff like that, I'm like "Nope, no, no, that's you. Don't tell me," because then now that is a violation. It's like you have your fantasy life and keep it that way, fantasy. The minute you involve me in it, that makes it real and now it's not okay, because you've started engaging me in that relationship and that's not cool. So, I have boundaries for that, but I also think in the case of someone like Leah Brahms. If she was like, "Yes, I am a preeminent scientist in my generation and I have knowledge about this scientific thing," yes, have a holodeck program where I'm teaching someone or able to help someone work through some scientific questions. I could see her consenting to that.

But then, from what I remember, the way that episode is shot, obviously it's actually the actress doing it, not a hologram. So, she actually is programmed enough to have those conversations with Geordi that go outside the scientific conversations. I think in real life, you would just basically have the program not engage after a certain point. And if those questions start getting weirdly personal or start pointing away from that core scientific purpose, then the program says, "I'm sorry. I can't have that discussion with you," literally, just have the program shut it down.

**Grace:** You would just turn into James Cromwell in *iRobot* going, "That question does not enter into my parameters."

**Sarah:** Yeah. Does not compute, literally.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Like beep, "Would you like to transfer this program to holodeck 4-

**Sarah:** There you go. I love it.

**Jarrah:** -and replace characters with characters people that have agreed to have their likeness used in that way?"

**Sarah:** Yeah, I absolutely think that would be a perfect way to deal with it.

**Grace:** Because you absolutely know there would be people who would consent to their likeness being used in that way-

**Sarah:** Of course. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Grace:** -because that's how it goes.

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yep.

**Grace:** Some people enjoy being seen in a sexual light, and that doesn't mean that they don't deserve the right to control how that is used though.

**Sarah:** Absolutely. Yeah.

**Grace:** I'm thinking specifically, I was reading up on the Emily Ratajkowski thing with this. If you don't know, she is a model who was involved in multiple lawsuits about her likeness where, for one, she is seen on some stuff for one thing. She was in the *Blurred Lines* video, so she got to instantly have her likeness associated with that. She then had, as a prominent Instagrammer, a bunch of her pictures taken and used for a high art exhibit thing, which were then sold for millions and millions of dollars, and then she's like "Oh, cool, can I get a print?" And they're like "It'll cost you \$5 million." And she's like "For a picture I took of myself? That's weird."

This is the part that really fascinates me. She got into a lawsuit over her posting a picture that a paparazzi had taken of her, actively trying to avoid being photographed and posted on her Instagram, just being like "Yep, this is what my life is like." And then, that photographer tried to sue her for using

what he said was his property, which was the photo of her. So, she has some very interesting things to say about that if you want to look into essay she wrote about it.

**Aliza:** Yeah. For sure.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** I think it speaks to another thing that's kind of interesting and challenging about this conversation is that a lot of the ways that we think about our rights to our images are just very tied up in capitalism.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** And so, for instance, people who-- If you were looking for grounds to sue someone over using your likeness, usually you'd have to prove they were profiting off of it or your image is your brand, there's certain other-- But then again, we wouldn't want to get into a situation where I don't think any of us would be like yes, you should definitely be able to sue, like that fan artist who drew a picture of Bashir and Garak kissing because you don't like how they're using your likeness because we feel some ownership over them as characters as well as even though we know that there's actors underneath. So, there is that kind of dynamic to it as well. Like, what do these rights look like in a post capitalist society? But I guess maybe it goes more to ethics and about more like treating people how you'd want to be treated. And if you have the ability to-- the Leah Brahms example that we're saying, basically say like, "Here's what I'm cool with this being used for, and here's what I'm cool with it not being used for." And for other people to be like kind of seeking out affirmative consent a bit more.

**Grace:** Mm-hmm.

**Sarah:** Mm-hmm.

**Grace:** Well, that affirmative consent, as we progress through technology and the way hologram technology has come along in recent years has been fascinating and horrifying. And a while back, there was a lot of debacle about talking about having hologram Whitney Houston go on tour and the ethical consideration behind that. Because for one thing, you are putting a woman who is literally dead, on display and having her perform for people's entertainment. She is not in a position where she can say no to that, but she's also not in a position where she can say yes to that. And while there are people who want to profit off of her image, you have to ask, where's the line drawn between someone's sense of self as property of someone else?

**Sarah:** I don't know too much about this, but I do know that we are at a point where actors and celebrities, specifically, they are having full VR scans of their bodies made.

**Grace:** Right.

**Sarah:** And before, it was the studios who would do it and that's why in *30 Rock* like five, seven years ago, there was that whole episode of Jerry Seinfeld popping up in every show on NBC because they owned his image and they could do that. They had enough data to do that and then he's like, "I never consented to this." And they're like "Actually, you did by working with us." But now, now that the VR technology is becoming more prevalent, and we are more aware of the possibilities of that technology, a lot of celebrities, I've heard are-- or some I should say, are getting these VR scans of themselves done, and then they own that scan, so they can then sell it or license it to studios or other creators with parameters in place, with contracts in place, rather than having a studio take that VR impression. Say, if I were to get cast in a Marvel movie, they might take a VR impression of me, and then they would own that impression. Not great for me unless I really can have a good contract in place that limits how much they can use it. Or say, "Hey, if you want to use it for the second and third movie, I get more money." You know what I mean?

**Grace:** Yeah. The Crispin Glover factor, yeah, where you get to say no.

**Sarah:** Right. Right. So, what I'm saying is Whitney Houston didn't live in a time period where that existed, where those things were in place. So, that is, to me, kind of ethically very gray, because like

you said, she's not here to say yes or no. But if a living celebrity had that VR thing in place and put it in their will, I feel like we're not far from that being a reality where celebrities will start putting that kind of thing in their will. Once I pass away, you can use my VR likeness for PSAs on going out and boating, but not for cigarette commercials.

**Grace:** Boat safety PSA specifically and that's it.

**Sarah:** You could literally delineate how people could use your likeness after you pass if at all. You can also probably say, "Nope, don't do it." Yeah.

**Grace:** Yeah. But in hindsight, even if she was one of the most photographed women of her time, there's no way Marilyn Monroe could have known, "Yes, a company would own the rights to how I look in the future for merchandising purposes."

**Aliza:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Conversely, though, there is also the issue of-- Once a person's been dead for a really long time, does it become okay again? In terms of copyright, we obviously have a period of time although, in my opinion, it's too long before works go into the public domain.

**Grace:** Speaking of Marvel/Disney.

**Jarrah:** Yeah, but like Data creating a hologram of Stephen Hawking, is there a point at which it's like "Okay, well, we're like 300 years in the future now, so obviously no one's being hurt by this."

**Grace:** Stephen Hawking is now public domain.

**Aliza:** Weirdly-- Oh, my God, my brain just went to such a weird place with this because-

**Grace:** Take us there. Take us there. [laughter]

**Aliza:** -Stephen Hawking. Okay, okay, come with me for a second. Come on this wild brain ride. Okay. Stephen Hawking obviously was alive to consent to *TNG* doing that with his likeness?

**Jarrah:** Well, yeah, he was in it.

**Aliza:** Oh, sorry. I'm thinking in the super weird meta, sub-meta way. Stephen Hawking was alive to consent to it, right?

**Jarrah:** Yes.

**Aliza:** So, God, can you just imagine what the world would be like now if like Jesus could have done that? [laughter]

**Grace:** Oh, my gosh.

**Aliza:** This is where my brain went, what if we knew what Jesus looked like, just hands down, no question, we have the VR imprint of Jesus?

**Grace:** What a friend we have in VR Jesus.

**Aliza:** First of all, it would be bad because people could then make Jesus say and do things that are complicated.

**Grace:** People do that now, yeah.

**Aliza:** People do that now, right. It's already being done. But on the other hand, there's a lot of questions about what he looked like. There's a lot of racist people who hate Middle Eastern people but love Jesus and like my bruh like you're dumb. I mean, we knew you're dumb, but you're real dumb. Extra dumb for the racism.

So, I don't know, just my brain went to a weird place of-- I think it could be a good thing to preserve likenesses of people who had a big impact on the world because people's legacies sometimes get muddied and shifted and misused and misappropriated. So, to me, there's something comforting about being able to preserve someone's legacy so that it's like you can't make shit up about this person because we actually have a lot of data on them. You can't use them for your own agenda because we actually have data on who they were and what they were like. So, I don't know why, that's where my brain goes when I think about this thing for posterity's sake.

And going back to the public domain question. Yeah, to me, that goes back to also estate planning and your will. Like, if Picard, I guess If Patrick Stewart had his VR likeness written into his will and he was like, "Yes, you can do *Star Trek 9* or what is it, *10*," whatever, "Do like five more *Star Trek* movies and that's it, then I'm done."

**Grace:** You just know Tom Cruise wants to be VR scanned to keep making mediocre action movies for the rest of time.

**Jarrah:** But personally, I wouldn't necessarily have a values-based objection to say that you can't maintain those provisions longer than 200 years seems to me a really long time after you die. If anyone's boning the Leonardo da Vinci hologram, I don't have any ethical issues with that. [laughter]

**Grace:** I feel like we would need to have an active estate of Leonardo da Vinci working to protect that. And if that wasn't a thing, then it's kind of free range. That said, before I forget it, I'm just very, very certain that VR Jesus would be able to run flip moneylendertable.exe. [laughter]

**Aliza:** I love it. I love it. He would also do like walkonwater.exe.

**Sarah:** Aliza, I just want you to know that animatronic Abraham Lincoln at Disneyland agrees with you.

**Aliza and Grace:** Yay.

**Jarrah:** Also, if you're looking at image as a form of intellectual property or copyrightable property, that another exception that at least American law makes is for satire or education. So, that would mean that technically someone could-- That you could make something using the Federation presidents' likeness even potentially in an offensive way if the intention was satirical and it was understood to be satirical.

So, I guess that would be another potential wrinkle in things, should people be always viewed as individuals first, or is there a necessary nuance to be added based on the importance of kind of freedom of the press to criticize people in powerful positions or freedom of the public, I guess, in this case that wouldn't be necessarily the press.

**Sarah:** I am 100% sure there are people all over the Federation who are learning poker from holographic Riker. [laughter] And I am also 100% sure he does not mind at all.

**Grace:** I'm just imagining Vegas video poker, but with Riker instead of the busty ladies in the tuxedo jackets.

**Aliza:** Someone needs to make that happen. [laughter]

**Sarah:** I love it.

**Grace:** Well, speaking of the educational purposes, I'm thinking now specifically of hologram Janeway in *Prodigy* because totally seems like a thing she would do to be like, "Yeah, use my likeness as an educational tool." But one of my favorite things that people just decided was a thing that happened was they were like, "Oh, no, that was in Janeway's hologram contract that she would always be drinking coffee." That's just a Janeway standard there. It ain't Janeway unless she's drinking coffee.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Grace:** But I also choose to believe that she definitely said, okay, we're making hologram Janeway happen, but here are seven words hologram Janeway is not allowed to say.

**Sarah:** Mm-hmm. Oh, yeah, absolutely.

**Grace:** Specifically in front of cadets and such.

**Sarah:** Mm-hmm.

**Jarrah:** Hmm. Good point.

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** Yeah.

**Sarah:** So, boundaries. I think boundaries is the key to all this.

**Jarrah:** I think another one that kind of straddles some of the questions that we've talked about so far is in *Author, Author* where The Doctor makes his hollow novel and casts all his fellow crew members as villains, and they find out, and they're really upset because this is one where we're not talking about like a sexual consent.

**Grace:** This is just likeness rights in general.

**Jarrah:** It's like betrayal of friendship is the issue here. We're not talking about necessarily a legal issue unless the people have the rights to their images. And potentially, their privacy is being violated because someone could undress their holograms or something and you'd know exactly where that mole on Paris' left forearm is or whatever.

**Grace:** Well, The Doctor would know that, wouldn't he? Damn. This is just a medical scan, I swear.

**Jarrah:** But that is an example of The Doctor making political speech although I think debatable whether the crew of the Voyager qualifies as important public figures.

**Grace:** If you are an emergency medical hologram, do you have to sign an NDA or the special OSHA regulations that you will not share the medical information of someone?

**Jarrah:** That's a really good question. I think, as we discussed on Starfleet, they have no medical privacy, but they really need to. [Grace laughs]

**Aliza:** No HIPAA.

**Jarrah:** But I think that would be a good example of if you joined Starfleet, I think Starfleet could reasonably require you to make your holographic image data accessible for medical purposes.

**Grace:** God, does Starfleet own your likeness rights? If you join Starfleet, do you have any control whether they use you in the promotional materials, whether your face is on the billboards for Starfleet or anything?

**Aliza:** I'm guessing they do have the rights because-- How do I say this? Every predominantly white institution I've been to which I guess is two, high school and college, I've been all over their freaking materials and everything.

**Grace:** Yeah. That's the kind of situation I was thinking of. Yeah.

**Aliza:** So, yes, I imagine Starfleet would be the same. And that includes holographic likenesses too.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. But it would be cool if you could set some boundaries again on-- I really would rather that co-workers not know exactly what I look like naked.

**Sarah:** Right.

**Jarrah:** Unless it's The Doctor or someone else who actually needs to know what I look like naked.

**Aliza:** Right.

**Grace:** Which, very small parameters where that would be needed, I'd assume.

**Sarah:** And so, yes, wrapping this back around to the holodeck and consent and sexual consent, specifically, can we talk about Tuvok and his wife? That situation?

**Grace:** Okay.

**Sarah:** Because that was a situation where goes through Pon Farr, and we know sexually and medically, he needs some support to get through it. And so, the program-- I actually-- like coming off of this part of the conversation about Starfleet owning Starfleet officers' likenesses, I never thought about whether the program was something that Starfleet commissioned for him or where did the program itself come from. Did he bring it on a little thumb drive and say, "Hey, I just got assigned to this ship. Here's my wife on a thumb drive. In seven years, we're going to need this. Hang on to this for me." Or did Starfleet-- You know what I mean?

**Grace:** It would have been even trickier when he was with the Maquis, just like "Hey, I don't know how long I'm going to be on this ship for, but here's a scan of my wife."

**Sarah:** Yeah, just hold on to that for me-

**Grace:** Be cool with it. Okay?

**Sarah:** -nobody else use it. Password protected. So, yeah, I want to point to the listener comment on this because there were some really interesting conversations that can be had based on what some of our listeners have told us, their thoughts on this.

**Jarrah:** Well, the original question that was posed to us on-- it was like our second mailbag episode. So, I admit I don't even remember exactly how our conversation went on it, but the question was about, basically, would it be creepier for Tuvok to have holo sex with a fake version of a real person versus just having a physical relationship that serves only that purpose with no commitment attached, but with a real person on Voyager? And like I said, I don't exactly remember how we replied. I think we talked a little bit about the potential issues about how long does consent last if you do consent for your image to be used in that way on the holodeck and things like that. But then, Lady Bridget had a very thorough follow-up question, which I think raised some additional interesting questions.

**Aliza:** So, here's what Lady Bridget said. "Let's look at this from another perspective. If I were Tuvok's wife, I would much rather he used an image of me to have sex with on the holodeck than have sex with a real person on the ship. Holodeck sex with an image of me would not feel like cheating to me. But having sex with another real person on the ship would definitely feel like cheating. Because no matter how much you think or say no strings attached, there always are. There would always be that between them and it might lead to a deeper relationship, and that would not be kosher for a married man and would be especially harmful to Tuvok, given his character, in my opinion."

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** So, I agree with Lady Bridget, I think-- And of course, it depends on your relationship. It depends on Tuvok's and his wife's relationship, but if this were any other couple in this situation, it would depend on their preferences. I personally would also feel like, "Hey, yeah, take my VR version and you're going to be gone for years. I'm going to miss you. You're going to miss me. Have sex with my hologram." [laughs]

**Grace:** You'd want to believe that they've got healthy communications and healthy views of each other's sexuality, but you've also got to wonder, how often, "Are you cool with me having sex with a hologram version of you?" comes up in standard conversation. I mean, how do you broach that topic?

**Aliza:** Yeah, I mean, this is the future, and holodecks are a regular part of life, so I would imagine it comes up more often than that conversation come up now, but we are-- Think about if you were married to someone who is in the military, and they're going to be gone for months and months at a time.

**Grace:** Hey, babe, here's some pictures of me. Keep 'em locked in your bunk.

**Aliza:** Literally, yeah. We already do have a real-life version of this.

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** So, it's not hard to for me to make the leap to say like if you could just make that 3D. I mean. Yeah.

**Grace:** And while you're at it, make me like half a foot taller. [laughter]

**Aliza:** Delete the wife. [Laughter]

**Grace:** Clear up my skin while you're at it.

**Sarah:** That's another thing. It's like, uh-oh, what if then the holodeck program starts getting edited and it's like, "Wait a minute."

**Grace:** It is absolutely hologram you. I just may have given you Jennifer Aniston's head.

**Aliza:** Yeah, that's another interpersonal thing for the couple to work out, but--

**Grace:** There's a lot of ways for it to get awkward.

**Aliza:** Yeah, but I also do agree. I mean, again, this comes from my own subjective experience, but I do sort of agree with Lady Bridget in saying that the whole no strings attached thing can easily get really messy and difficult. And you're on a ship and you have other crew members who you have to work with, it's a workplace. So, the no strings attached thing, to me, would get messy. But again, it depends on the relationship, and it depends on what the partners can agree to and feel comfortable with. What do you all think about this?

**Jarrah:** Yeah, I agree. I think that for me, the Tuvok and hologram of Tuvok's wife example is not quite as thorny as some of the ones where the people are kind of experimenting with dating with people they know but they haven't told they're interested in. I do get-- I think personally I've gone back and forth on this quite a bit because I do get the arguments about ultimately, it's not that different from imagining something in your head and you can't legislate what's in someone's head. There's also the argument to be made about creativity and if you drew this thing or sculpted a hyperrealistic sculpture of someone, then you own that isn't their right just because it's a likeness of them.

**Grace:** Well, now I'm just remembering that sculptor who did the really creepy, hyperrealistic sculptures of Britney Spears when she was pregnant and stuff and was like, "No, she belongs to the ages now." And people are like, "Um."

**Jarrah:** I mean, it doesn't mean that people don't have the right to judge you. I think, on all of this-- A lot of the stuff we're talking about today, I think that if people walk in on your holo fantasy of the Goddess of Empathy and the Three Musketeers and stuff, your co-workers are going to judge you and that's fair, but it's a question of like to what degree is this ethical or a violation or a form of assault. And I think that it lands in different places depending on the exact situation. And in many situations, it might be creepy and it might be weird, but the question is, is it more just like something that should have stayed private and wasn't harming anyone, or is it actively harmful? And I go back and forth a little bit, depending on the exact situation we're talking about.

**Sarah:** Well, I think in the 24th century, they're just, in general, more emotionally mature than we are and more respectful of other people's feelings. So, whoever that guy was who sculpted the Britney statue, if she said, "I'm uncomfortable with that, I don't want it out there," if he was in the 24th century, he would be like "Okay, I'm going to recycle that."

**Jarrah:** Well, except for with Barclay's holo program, when they all come upon it. And we had an interesting article written on our blog by Carlie Whalen about virtual reality and the connections with the holodeck and specifically talking about how Riker and Geordi start out being like, "Oh, what you do on the holodeck's your own business, and this isn't really a big deal."

**Grace:** Right up until it involves them.

**Aliza:** Right.

**Jarrah:** Right up until it involves them, yeah. And Troy really is not a big fan of her likeness in that program.

**Grace:** Well, Geordi and Riker aren't being brought up wearing a toga. So, yeah, there's some differences there.

**Jarrah:** Yes. So, I mean, I think that what-- I do also get the point that the blogger was raising about, that there is also kind of an entitlement to women's bodies in our culture that is problematic even on *TNG* that even if this isn't in and of itself a form of assault, kind of underpins these kind of rape culture narratives.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** But sorry, back to your original question. That is to say that while marriage doesn't equate you consenting to have sex whenever the other person wants, I do feel there is inherently a bit less of an issue if you've talked to your partner about using their likeness for that way, particularly if you're away on a mission than there is with Seven of Nine sleeping with the Chakotay hologram before they start dating.

**Grace:** If you think about it, the futuristic version of, "Here, my beloved, take this lock of my hair," is "Here, babe. Take this full body scan of me and all of me."

**Sarah:** Mm-hmm.

**Grace:** Take it to deep space to keep you warm.

**Sarah:** Okay. I have a question too, because for me, the line is pretty clear. I think it is all about consent, and I don't have an issue with it if the person whose likeness it is has agreed to it and is okay with it. But then, of course, let's talk about the Quark episode and Kira, because he just barreled forward with his plan, didn't even stop to think about whether or not to get consent or try to get consent. He was just like, "Well, I'm not going to get consent." That didn't stop him from doing it. He just was like, "I'm going to do it." So, there's always going to be some asshole programmer out there who's going to do exactly that and make a Jennifer Aniston holographic image without her consent.

**Grace:** And we've already got that. We've already got people photoshopping celebrities heads onto pornographic images.

**Sarah:** Right. And we have deep-fakes. We kind of touched on that a little bit. So, that, to me, that is the harder thing to figure out, how to keep the cap on, because we don't have control over what those people do. And we can't be in their computers stopping them from making these images. So, we can have all the laws and regulations we want to say, "Don't do that," but then people can still do that and put them out there like what-- In terms of holodecks, let's say that someone else started running Quarks and wasn't going to allow people to have those types of programs or you had to show your

paperwork that you have the consent and the release form from all the images-- all the image release forms from the people appearing in your program.

**Grace:** The consent and release forms which a lot of sex entertainment workers have and need to maintain a safe, regulated culture of what they do.

**Aliza:** And even just as actors, we always have to sign a release form when we appear in something. So, yeah that's where my brain is like how do we, in holodeck terms, avoid-- Oh, I know. Okay, I just thought of AN answer, a potential answer to this. Maybe there's some type of digital certification that a program can get.

**Grace:** Ah, this program has been approved by the real...

**Aliza:** By the Federation OSHA.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** Yeah. So, once the paperwork is filed for your new program, that Federation OSHA reviews it and gives you the digital signature to tie to the program so that Federation so the holodeck-

**Grace:** Feder-OSHA.

**Aliza:** -will validate or read your program. If you don't have that digital signature, the holodeck won't even load the program.

**Jarrah:** Ah, that's a cool idea.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** Okay, so maybe. Yeah, maybe it'll work. [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Yeah. I mean, I think the Quark example with the-- Because he's also acknowledging he doesn't have a scan of Kira. And so, he's taking an imager around and trying to get images of Kira just randomly on the station, which is another level of gross. He has to go to extra levels of planning for this.

**Grace:** So, he knows that it's a bad thing he's doing and he knows that it's something she wouldn't be comfortable with if she knew about it.

**Aliza:** Yeah. To me, this is one of the most egregious examples that we have of like this is not cool.

**Grace:** And if you've ever had someone, try and take your picture without your permission, then you know that feels incredibly violating and you are allowed to be as angry about that as you want.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. And he's going to profit off it. It's not just the guy who-- this particular Jeffrey Combs character just saw Kira, decided to recreate this in the holodeck from his own memory and then get off to it, which would be gross, but ultimately closer to the idea about just fantasizing about someone that you're attracted to. But it's like no, Quark is going to profit off this. And so, there's this extra middleman kind of involved.

**Grace:** Well, let's be honest, the effort is also the diff-- The effort put into making a hologram of someone is also the difference between finding out someone thinks you're hot and finding out someone has a full body-sized body pillow of you. The effort is the part that makes it uncomfortable.

**Jarrah:** Yes. This brought up another question for me, just randomly while I was thinking about it, are there holodeck parental controls? We see Wesley and Wesley and his friends skiing and stuff like that, you have to assume that there's something.

**Grace:** Yeah, there's got to be. But there's also the fact that you know exploring sexuality is a healthy part of adolescence and learning about that for yourself is very important for health and well-being.

And then, you get into the whole parental controls debate of, okay, but how much of that does that stymie personal growth and allow for the stigmatization of various things.

**Jarrah:** Like the mud baths that Lwaxana takes Worf and Alexander and Troi to, are there examples like that some people might be like, "Oh, my kid's too young for naked adults hanging out in a mud bath." While some people would just be like, "Freedom and cultural differences."

**Aliza:** Oh, I feel like Lwaxana absolutely was-- She walks into the holodeck with Alexander, loads the program and the program is, "Age check." And she's like, "Eh, never mind, forget it. Don't worry about it, computer. It's fine."

**Sarah:** I'm sure she went around whatever check there was.

**Jarrah:** Lwaxana is just like, "Computer, please suggest a program that's appropriate for a 10-year-old child but also has nudity." [laughter]

**Grace:** I'm just imagining that they have the pixelated blurring-

**Sarah:** Yeah.

**Grace:** -on everyone in the holodeck for that very purpose which, okay, that's a compromise.

**Jarrah:** I don't know. Or you might need to be approved to be with your actual parent or guardian or something like that for them to be able to override. But I totally appreciate that point, Grace, about also not stigmatizing normal sexuality, especially for kids that are getting older. And one of the things we always point to in motion picture rating is how sex is often censored more than violence and particularly women's pleasure.

**Grace:** Yeah. Women's pleasure will be censored way more than men's.

**Jarrah:** Yeah.

**Grace:** So, men's pleasure is normalized and women's is stigmatized.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. And in queer sex as well. So then, the other thing question I had was, should there be limits on what you're allowed to do in the holodeck in terms of violence? Specifically, violence towards actual people's likenesses.

**Grace:** You'd hope so, right?

**Aliza:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** The one example that *Trek* has is the one where Tuvok suggests that Suder uses the holodeck to vent his murder tendencies and then he ends up killing hologram Neelix.

**Grace:** I mean, who wouldn't? Who wouldn't? And then we've got the Jem'Hadar in *Deep Space Nine* trying to curb his murderous tendencies by fighting on the holodeck. And then, we've got Mariner working out her mommy issues on the holodeck.

**Jarrah:** Right, right. Yeah.

**Sarah:** You've got the Ferengi shooting Moogie in *The Magnificent Ferengi*.

**Jarrah:** Whoa. I forgot about that.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** I think the holodeck in all these episodes is just too generous.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** Why do they program it this way, where anything goes? Don't let people do that in the program.

**Grace:** It makes you uncomfortable the more you think. So, is this like a *Westworld* situation where there's no policing of this?

**Aliza:** Exactly. It's like anything goes.

**Grace:** Speaking of places where you're, like, why are there kids here? Why would you bring your kid here? You know what's going on here?

**Aliza:** Yeah.

**Sarah:** Here's the thing about the holodeck though. The more you think about any aspect of it, the quicker the whole idea falls apart and makes no sense whatsoever. [laughter]

**Aliza:** It would be fun, but also, yeah. [laughs]

**Jarrah:** Yeah. I generally feel if you're going to be doing something like combat drills, the people that you're fighting don't have to look like your co-workers. And I'm not going to go so far as saying that doing those you know acting out violent things on holograms of your coworkers would make you behave that way in real life, but it still doesn't seem to me a cool thing to do. And I think I would be more disturbed to walk in on a co-worker beating a likeness of me up than sleeping with a likeness of me.

**Grace:** I wouldn't feel great about either.

**Sarah:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Grace:** I feel like I have the right to talk to HR about that.

**Sarah:** Mm-hmm.

**Jarrah:** Yeah. Certainly seems questionable. Questionable use of people's likenesses.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** On our list of things to talk about, are there ever allowances to be made for different cultural norms, e.g., cultural violence?

**Grace:** And I was thinking the same with nudity with cultures where communal bathing is a thing, like hot springs and sweat lodges and such.

**Aliza:** Mm-hmm.

**Grace:** Oh, man. And then we're getting to a whole situation where there'd be having to argue censorship in the holodeck, isn't there?

**Aliza:** Right.

**Grace:** Yeah.

**Aliza:** That's where I lean too. I don't want to be censoring every little thing people do in the holodeck, but I think when it comes to the consent thing, like we said, using someone else's likeness without their permission, that does need some parameters around it and some literally like firewalls, where you can't go past a certain point if that program is not intended for that. But yeah, beyond that, I don't have an issue with people using the holodeck for these things. [laughs] And that includes violence except like we just-- I agree with you all about violence against holograms of people you know or people who exist who haven't consented to the use of their likeness for that, that I'm like no.

**Grace:** Oh, imagine how creepy the deepfake randomly generated holographs would be that don't look like anyone technically.

**Aliza:** Yeah, they would have to-- Statistically, I feel like they would end up looking like someone eventually that you know and then it's like, "Whoa. Ugh."

**Jarrah:** Or they determine that everyone's likeness from more than 600 years ago is in the public domain, and so they all just look like Leonardo da Vinci.

**Grace:** You accidentally hooked up with Henry VIII. [laughter]

**Sarah:** I mean, going back to what you said earlier, Aliza, about not having control over what people are doing with your image out there, I feel as long as two things happen, one, people are keeping it to themselves, whatever they're doing with your image. And two, it's not becoming destructive like it was for Barclay. I think those are the two basic boundaries you can set around it. And other than that, it's hard because it's very gray.

**Aliza:** Right.

**Jarrah:** Mm-hmm.

**Aliza:** Yeah.

**Grace:** So, we just have to instate an intergalactic "be cool, guys" clause.

**Sarah:** It seems like everybody is pretty cool, or they're a lot cooler in general than we are in our time period.

**Jarrah:** I do think that just partly, it's like you said, Sarah, with the holodeck, this concept being so broad and the things we see it's capable of doing, the way we've seen programs designed seem very unlike the way that anything is designed today, even though our own programs have gotten so much immeasurably more complex, the idea that you would have a program that would just kind of intelligently respond to everything in a way that's pretty seamless and doesn't have blocks for example, you go try to kiss the Goddess of Empathy, and she's like, "Mm, No." If you want to go this route with the Counselor Troi hologram image.

**Grace:** This program has been reported to HR. [laughter]

**Jarrah:** Yeah. So, I think that I'd like to envision there was some more thought to this in the programming of these, particularly on Federation starships that are kind of supposed to be places of mutual respect and not the Quark's holosuites, dens of capitalism and depravity.

**Aliza:** Yeah.

**Jarrah:** And the other thing that throws like a massive wrench into the entire conversation is if you go to the-- We've touched on this, I think, in some previous episodes, the *Voyager* kind of extreme that all holograms are sort of basically presentient, then is this even like an ethical use of technology? And I don't think we can really answer that. I think that largely the way they're shown is they're not sentient at this point.

**Grace:** But they have the potential to be.

**Jarrah:** They have the potential to grow beyond their programming. And then, what if they remember that one day they were the hologram that was the emergency holodeck 4 hologram.

**Grace:** Oh, no. Please state the nature of your sexy emergency.

**Jarrah:** Oh, God. I'm joking, but actually that would be terrible and I'm kind of sorry I brought it up.

**Grace:** Oh, that's horrifying.

**Jarrah:** But I mean, *Voyager* only goes that direction at the very end of things. I think largely *Star Trek* doesn't really lean in that direction.

**Sarah:** I was just going to say maybe we could discuss Vic Fontaine for a second, who is given self-awareness but not free will.

**Grace:** Weird combo there.

**Aliza:** Yeah.

**Sarah:** [laughs]

**Aliza:** Right.

**Jarrah:** Oh, man. I'm sure someone must have written a philosophy paper on Vic, and I want to read it.

**Grace:** There's got to be.

**Aliza:** Yeah. Vic, to me, reads as a-- He's an employee. He becomes an employee. He has a job on the ship, and he serves a purpose and helps people and he serves people. And so, yeah, it becomes kind of this ethical consideration.

**Grace:** Well, what if the crew members wanted to pursue something more with him though? Would he have actual say in that?

**Aliza:** I think he should.

**Grace:** He should definitely.

**Sarah:** Because he has say in a lot of other stuff that involves his person. So, I feel like, yeah, if a program has gotten to the point where it can make decisions for itself, it can be protective of other people and itself, then it probably can say, "No, I don't want to pursue that."

**Grace:** You would hope that Vic would get to make the rules of his own holo program.

**Jarrah:** That's a good point, Sarah, but does he really have free will? As I recall, they do end up leaving his program on 24/7.

**Grace:** Which can't be good for the electric bill.

**Jarrah:** Well, but maybe he appreciates that because he can-- maybe they actually-- like, he maybe has a normal sleep roughly. The issue is if there's coercion, right? He's self-aware, so he's almost basically sentient. But if people are able to change things to be coercive or to make him do what he doesn't want to do, then that would be a problem for sure. But I think when The Doctor starts to evolve beyond his programming, one of the first things he asks for is the ability to turn his program on and off.

**Grace:** Yes.

**Jarrah:** So, I feel that's kind of a good indication about whether you have the right to regulate your own life.

**Grace:** You know Vic's got a hologram Mamie Van Doren in there somewhere.

**Jarrah:** I feel Vic is overall a lovely fantasy that they don't really think too much about the implications of.

**Grace:** Yeah. Vic is an extension of the don't think too hard about it or the whole thing falls apart situation.

**Sarah:** Okay, can I just bring up for two seconds on the part about don't think too hard about it, what happens if you stay in one place and your friend just walks away from you in a straight line and keeps walking? [laughter]

**Grace:** There's a buddy system in the holodeck. You've got to stay within five feet of each other.

**Jarrah:** I assume that it's an imperceptible treadmill, and the walls seem like they're moving, and you feel like you're walking forward, but you're actually just walking on the spot.

**Grace:** Another reason why, if you're in the holodeck and you're going to get up to something in there, you don't bring a friend, because then they'll know they're within four feet of you with whatever's going on in there.

**Jarrah:** Also, if ships are close enough together, can they network holosuites?

**Aliza:** What?

**Grace:** Ooh, yeah.

**Jarrah:** Or if you're in different holodecks on the same ship, but you want to have your own space but then networking with your friends.

**Grace:** Sexual LARPing. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Or just regular LARPing. [Laughs]

**Grace:** It's the holodeck though. Holodeck 4.

**Jarrah:** Good old holodeck 4.

**Grace:** Good old holodeck 4. It's cleaned 87 times a day.

**Aliza:** Yeah, it better be. On my ship, it is.

**Jarrah:** So overall, we got to be clean, hygiene wise. Dirty minds are fine.

**Grace:** We have a safe, sane, consensual system here. Yeah.

**Jarrah:** Yep. Generally speaking, it would be nice if people had the ability to set some reasonable boundaries over what they're cool with their image being used to do. And that there's fair whatever post-capitalist compensation looks like for people that are cool with working in the holodeck 4 entertainment industry. And what else? What else have we identified? Kind of key takeaways.

**Grace:** VR Jesus.

**Sarah:** Mm-hmm.

**Jarrah:** VR Jesus.

**Sarah:** Be discreet.

**Aliza:** Digital signatures.

**Jarrah:** And there could be some really cool potential things that the holodeck could be used for if you're keeping that safe, sane, and consensual thing in mind. In the blog article, Carlie was talking about how people are exploring using VR for practicing disclosing an STI status or practicing-- You

could use it to, for example, learn to recognize or to seek enthusiastic consent from your partner. So, there are ways that you could do that in a way that wasn't necessarily infringing on someone's privacy.

**Grace:** Guys, what's your ultimate non-sexual holodeck fantasy?

**Aliza:** I definitely would want to visit some other planets.

**Grace:** Yeah. Sounds like it would make travel way easier and more accessible.

**Aliza:** Yeah. Visit planets and not have to even worry about being in a suit and not suffocating on a planet with no atmosphere.

**Grace:** Yeah, you could go wherever you wanted and just be wearing your sweats.

**Aliza:** That's mine.

**Jarra:** I'd want to do-- I'd assume there would be licensed holodeck things and you could just be in *Doctor Who*.

**Grace:** Yeah, that's what I was thinking. I'd want to just be in the middle of something dramatic and just be walking around through it, just being like "You believe this?"

**Sarah:** I mean, Dixon Hill, right?

**Grace:** Yeah, except the plot is still happening, and I'm just there in the background yelling stuff.

**Sarah:** So, this is not like an ultimate holodeck idea, because I would need to think about that, But I was just thinking taking cooking classes in the holodeck would be awesome because you could screw up so much and not waste any food.

**Grace:** And you could hang out with Julia Child.

**Aliza:** Yeah.

**Sarah:** I love that.

**Grace:** I want to walk through the Louvre but be able to throw whatever I want at whatever I want.

**Aliza:** Oh, wow. So, throwing tomatoes at artwork in the Louvre.

**Jarra:** Or throwing artwork at other artwork?

**Grace:** I just want to trash the Louvre. That seems like a fun fantasy.

**Jarra:** Just like take the Mona Lisa off the wall and smash your head through it.

**Grace:** Yeah. And then, walk around the rest of the place with it around my shoulders going, "I'm the masterpiece."

**Sarah:** And then, call up the Leonardo da Vinci hologram and be like, "Suck it."

**Aliza:** Grace, I think you're going to probably also, at the end of that program, the holodeck is going to be like, "We have some suggestions for you. Anger management and journaling your feelings."

**Sarah:** Counselor Troi's appointment availability for this week is as follows.

**Grace:** My brain is short-circuiting because I'm imagining getting to end it with a dance party with all of the famous statues in the Louvre. It has to end with a musical number, that's the rule.

And that's about all the time we have today. Jarrah, where can people find more from you online?

**Jarrah:** You can find me on Twitter at J-A-R-R-A-H-Penguin. That's [@jarrahpenguin](#).

**Grace:** And Sarah, where can people find more from you?

**Sarah:** I am on Twitter at S-A-R-A-H-M as in Mary-I-Y-O-K-O [@sarahmiyoko](#). And you can find my fanzine, Star Trek Quarterly, on Facebook.

**Grace:** And Aliza, where can people find you?

**Aliza:** You can find me on Twitter and Instagram [@AlizaPearl](#). That's a A-L-I-Z as in zebra-A-P-E-A-R-L.

**Grace:** And I'm Grace and you can find me on Twitter [@bonecrusherjenk](#). And imagining the awesome rave I'm going to have with confetti made from Georges Seurat's Sunday in the Park. [laughter]

**Aliza:** Fantastic.

**Grace:** Remember, if you can dream it, the holodeck can do it. To learn more about our show or to contact us, visit [womenatwarp.com](http://womenatwarp.com) or find us on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram [@womenatwarp](#). You can also email us at [crew@womenatwarp.com](mailto:crew@womenatwarp.com). And for more Roddenberry podcasts, visit [podcasts.rodtenberry.com](http://podcasts.rodtenberry.com). Thanks so much for listening.

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