

Episode 249: There's No Such Thing as a Safe Tribble

[Women at Warp theme]

Kennedy: Greetings, and welcome to Women at Warp: A Star Trek Podcast. Join us on our 10-year mission to explore intersectional diversity in infinite combinations. My name is Kennedy and thanks for tuning in.

With me today is the one, the only Andi.

Andi: Hello.

Kennedy: Before we get into our main topic, which is much beloved throughout the Trek universe, a little bit of housekeeping to do first. First and foremost, our podcast mission will be coming to an end after 10 awesome years on March 31st, 2025. Episodes will be released as regular until then and Patreon hangouts, watch along, and other rewards will be fulfilled. After our final episode, content will continue to be available for as long as we are able to make it, so, please visit the blog on our website for more details.

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If you're looking for podcast merch, which you should be, check out our TeePublic Store. There are so many designs with new ones being added all the time and so much more than just T-shirts, so you can find that at TeePublic.com/stores/womenatwarp.

As I mentioned, our final episode is set for release on March 31st, 2025. Until then, all patron rewards will continue and we're working up a special item for our final round of merch to celebrate 10-years of Women at Warp. At that point, rewards will end, but if anyone would like to continue donating, we will continue to accept contributions via Patreon through December 15th, 2025 to help offset the costs of closing town. This also applies to the TeePublic Store.

Andi: Fun fact. I finally bought merch for us.

Kennedy: What? What'd you get?

Andi: I got a shirt. We've got a lot of cute shirts.

Kennedy: We have so many cute shirts.

Andi: But I was like, I probably should after years of having the option get a T-shirt of my podcast. And I was wearing it at the grocery store and this gal at the grocery store was like, "Oh, I love them." And I was like, "Cool." And then I just kept grocery shopping. [laughs]

Kennedy: Andi.

Andi: I didn't say-- I didn't know what to say. I was like, "Yeah, me too." And then I just kept buying my fruit.

Kennedy: Oh my God. The next time you get spotted, [chuckles] you say, "Thanks, it's my show." Or even if you're—oh, my God.

Andi: No, I didn't want-- I was like-- First of all, to be clear, I looked like trash. [laughs]

Kennedy: I don't think that's possible, Andi, first. Second of all--

Andi: It definitely, definitely is possible. But I don't know, I felt weird about it, so I was just like, "Thanks." And she was very nice and she looked cool and she had a good vibe.

Kennedy: We're going to get an email. You're going to get an email.

Andi: She's like, "You are the one in Edgewater Produce?" "Yes, yes, I was," whoops.

Kennedy: Just too cool for school.

Andi: Although that does go to show the benefits of wearing your Women at Warp merch out in public is that other Women at Warp fans might notice you and say something about your shirt.

Kennedy: Oh, yeah. Instant community.

Andi: Yeah.

Kennedy: Instant community. So, if you want a shirt or a tote or a mug, mayhap a magnet [laughs] hit up our TeePublic Store, it's worth it, we promise. Speaking of things being worth it, *Tribbles*, the gifts that keep on giving. What can we say is one of the most popular episodes in television history, let alone *Star Trek* history. Certainly, there's so many puns, the dark humor, the questionable ethics.

Andi: Oh, yes.

Kennedy: Andi and I are going to get into all of that because *Tribbles* have appeared 20 times on screen. Could you die 20 times? Of course, it was in the original series with the premiere episode, *The Trouble with Tribbles*. Then there's *The Continuing Mission*, *The Animated Series*, *More Tribbles, More Troubles*. I almost wanted to say more Tribbles, more problems.

Andi: [laughs] Well, it's true. I mean, that's what it is, evoking.

Kennedy: I mean, pretty much, unless-- There's a handful of instances where they don't equate to problems, but we'll even get into that too. There are in four *Star Trek* films. *Star Trek III: Search for Spock*, *Star Trek Generations* in a display graphic. Also in the Kelvin Universe film, *Star Trek* in 2009, and *Star Trek Into Darkness*. There were not one, but two episodes on *Deep Space Nine*, believe it or not, *The Nagus*, also in a display graphic, and *Trials and Tribble-ations*, another beloved episode.

There's an episode of *the Breach*. Thank you Phlox for bringing a Tribble onto NX-01. Thanks so much, dear. They're on five episodes of *Discovery*, *Context Is for Kings*, *The Butcher's Knife Cares Not for the Lamb's Cry*, *Si Vis Pacem, Para Bellum*, *Despite Yourself*, and *Red Directive*.

Andi: Yeah, I mean, Lorca, we should have known he was a psychopath from the beginning because his ready room was full on serial killer vibes. And part of that was just like, "Hey, what if I had a Tribble just like there?"

Kennedy: Yeah. [crosstalk] A Tribble that I'm clearly starving because there's only one.

Andi: Specimen.

Kennedy: [laughs] Speaking of specimens in *Discovery*, for that matter, in *Short Treks*, there were two episodes of Tribbles in them. One was *The Trouble with Edward*, which I can't wait to get into.

Andi: Oh, my gosh. I have so much to say about this.

Kennedy: Me too.

[laughter]

Kennedy: If you haven't seen *Short Treks*, *The Trouble with Edward*, here's your chance to pause and go watch it real fast and come back because, hoo boy. Another episode being *Ephraim and DOT*, which was super cute. There was an episode in *Picard*, the episode *The Bounty*. Two episodes of *Lower Decks*, *No Small Parts* and *An Embarrassment of Dooplars*, which I think is a pretty excellent episode of television altogether.

Andi: Yes, indeed.

Kennedy: In *Star Trek: Prodigy*, *A Tribble Called Quest*. So, I mean, we can--

Andi: We've got to start at the beginning, Kennedy. Got to start with the foundation.

Kennedy: I suppose.

[laughter]

Kennedy: Those old scientists can be difficult to watch sometimes.

Andi: But this is one of the episodes of *TOS*, I think, holds up the best by a lot.

Kennedy: It is, but-- I mean, it does, but the plot is pretty convoluted when you go back and try-- Because I tried to paraphrase it for these notes and I was like, "This lot goes everywhere." I mean, what can I say? They went on shore leave and ran into some Klingons as they were loading grain onto the Enterprise. And Cyrano Jones was like, "Hey, pretty lady," to Uhura, "Why don't you like this cute fuzzy thing?" And she was like, "Oh, this is a cute little fuzzy thing. I'm going to take it back to my quarters." And then there were millions. [laughs]

Andi: Yeah, I mean, I find it to be such a very simple but silly concept that actually like works really well and is really broad, which, I mean, we'll talk about the many ways they've taken this concept and put twists on it throughout *Star Trek*, but it actually makes me think of like in fanfiction, there's a term called crack-treated seriously, where you take a really dumb, silly concept and then you act like it's extremely serious. And I love crack-treated seriously and this to me is what that is. They're like, "What if we picked out something that looks like could never possibly be dangerous in any way?" And then we actually made it surprisingly dangerous, and then we took the villains that we've set up to be like the toughest dudes alive and we made them terrified of this small fuzzy thing. To me, that's just genius concept work. Like, good job. Good job, guys.

Kennedy: For sure. Shoutout to David Gerrold for writing *The Original Story* and the follow up story. *More Tribbles, More Troubles* on *The Animated Series*.

Andi: Yeah, and we'll talk about that one more too. But when I was rewatching it, I was like, it feels the same, it has the same tone and feel to it and the thorough line is very much there and I enjoyed that. But yeah, the original one, I think the reason why it became so beloved is one, it's just a really solid episode, it's funny. The character dynamics are character dynamic-ing. The Tribbles are cute as hell. There's a surprising amount of thematic relevance when it comes to the political machinations between the Federation and the Klingons.

Kennedy: Right.

Andi: There're some surprisingly progressive themes around ecological balance and invasive species, which I am surprised by that they pulled some of this out early in those conversations in the ethos and just, it's funny, like that's the number one thing. I think if you make an episode, it doesn't even really matter if it's convoluted, as you said Kennedy, as long as it's funny, people will for forgive anything.

Kennedy: Yeah, clearly. [laughs]

Andi: Yeah, but there's so many iconic moments, you know?

Kennedy: Sure. And especially when you learn about the real life behind the scenes reasons to why all those things happening. Like in the scene where Kirk was being pelted by Tribbles, essentially, it's because the folks who were supposed to load them in through that space had no line of sight to see whether or not they were even hitting the mark, so they couldn't check in the middle of the shoot, "Hey, is this happening?" No, no, they can't do that, so they were just chucking them. And Shatner was just getting pelted with Tribbles and had to keep a straight face the whole time.

Andi: Look, he suffers for his art sometimes and it shows.

Kennedy: Mm-hmm. [laughs] That's all I'm going to say on that. [laughs] But, yeah, it's just fun. A few years ago, back before the world changed, it was *Star Trek* mission New York 2016, my first podcast, the one and only Black Tribbles were hired to interview David Gerrold on a panel. And it was super, super cute because he's such a sweet guy. [laughs] He's such a sweet, kind, spirited person. And we just had a great conversation about what making television was like back then. And we had to ask him, we were like, "So, we've been watching the show for a while, we've noticed that there are no actual Black Tribbles." And he was like, "Oh, God. Oh, no, please." And we're like "Listen, no, no, no. Obviously it's not your fault." [laughs]

Andi: Yeah, there's pink Tribbles, but no Black Tribbles.

Kennedy: But we just wanted to know, why are there no Black Tribbles? And he explained that the lenses on the cameras back then had a hard time picking up dark fabric in general, so they would just show up as voids on camera. So, they switched to a dark brown fabric so they look kind of dark. At least they're obviously darker than the other ones, but he said that the black ones just did not photograph well because they made a whole bunch from all different colors, and it was really just the pink ones that made it into *The Animated Series* version, but there were pink ones in the original designs.

And it was just interesting because that conversation turned into a focus on the ineptitude, really of television technology back then because he went on to talk about how in that episode, every time Nichelle Nichols had a scene, they had to halt production and put up more lights and do all this extra stuff so that she could be lit well, so that they could even

pick her up on camera. And it's just, like, when you think about what that means, they literally did not have the technology to photograph dark skin, dark fur, or anything like that.

He had this great story about how when they stopped production to set up all her lights and everything, they had her stand on her marker so they could see how far the lights had to be forward or back or whatever the adjustments were. And he said one of the grips was like, "No, no bring it back. She's still too dark, too dark, too dark. She's too dark." And then he stopped and realized what he was saying and just looked at Nichelle, mortified, like, "I am so sorry." And she was like, "It's all right. I'm still gorgeous." And they were like, "Oh, phew." They were so relieved that she wasn't upset about it, but it just goes to show you how pervasive biases and how-- Even though people mean well, they can unconsciously say and do harmful things to marginalized people in the room. So, it was just a really insightful conversation about what it was like back then just filming that episode.

And he was a young guy, so he felt like he was taking all this in, and this was his first time really being on set. And that was the scene that he happened to be there for as they were setting up, and he just felt that it was interesting to bring up and it was super contextual. Because like who would have known? She was always gorgeous in those shots. They did an excellent job compensating for the fact that the camera literally didn't work right, but like wow, what a time, can you imagine?

Andi: Yeah. So that's interesting because this is a problem we still have. It's less to do with technology now and more to do with just pure laziness, but it's a problem we have with both lighting and makeup in which the lighting will not be lit for people of darker complexions or they won't have makeup for people with darker complexions or they'll have hairstylists that can't deal with different kinds of hair. Like that to me is like basic stuff that should not be still a thing. And it's interesting that you brought that up, Kennedy, because when you first brought up the fact that it's hard to photograph the Black Tribbles or whatever, I was thinking to myself, "Yeah, then that attracts because Lord knows it's hard to take pictures of my black cats." They always tend to look like [crosstalk] with eyes.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Andi: But then I was thinking to myself, I think I will have to try and track it down, and I could be wrong. But I think John Cho did an interview which he mentioned this, the lighting thing, and how that was something that he had noticed that when Asian actors were in Western films, they looked worse. And he couldn't figure out why until he figured it out that in Asian movies, they had correct lighting for their skin tones and then they would come over and act in American films and the lighting would be off and they would get washed out and stuff like that. And I just thought it was interesting that there was another *Star Trek* connection there where John Cho has spoken about this as well.

And I believe he brought up specifically how much harder this is for black people as well, but it must have been years since I've read that interview. I remember thinking that this is just another one of the subtle ways that we make things non-inclusive. But that's really cool that David Gerrold, like even in those times noticed things like that and was able to speak about it thoughtfully to you, that's really cool.

Kennedy: Yeah, it's so cute. Just as a side note, if anybody else wants to look up or is interested in the history of photographic racism, there's a content creator named [@tanita.dee](#) D-E-E, on Instagram who does a deep dive on how Kodak and all these other photo companies just did not factor in to their developmental process of any other skin outside of Caucasian skin tones. So, it's not like a *Star Trek* was racist thing. It was literally just the photography industry didn't bother to factor anybody else in.

Andi: Yeah. But, going back to the episode, there's so many moments that I just feel are super quintessentially *Star Trek*, and kind of like-- I said at the top of this, that the character dynamics or character dynamic-ing. There are so many moments in this that just feel so that character. Probably the one for me that I love the most is Scotty being able to handle all sorts of insults to all sorts of things until they insult the Enterprise and then he's going to throw hands. And that to me is pure Scotty. Like, I just love that so much. He's just like, "Say it again. Say it again, sir. I got to deck you. I got to knock you out. We got problems now."

Kennedy: And just spend all this time trying to set a good example for my subordinate officers and now I have to get in that teeth. [Andi laughs] "Because you want to talk about this ship. You could have just walked away. Now I have to fight you, even though you're a whole lot stronger than I am despite the Augment Virus, [laughs] We're all going to fight now, congratulations."

Andi: Well, and he like really does a good job for a long time because it's very clear that Klingon wants him to throw a punch.

Kennedy: Oh, sure.

Andi: So, he's like trying out all the insults and then he figures out all the Enterprise, this is the weak link, okay. And then he hones right in on it and sure enough, Scotty goes off, can't blame him. I also think that this is just a really good Shatner performance, like Kirk is really charming in this.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Andi: He's like, "My poor chicken sandwich."

Kennedy: "I just want chicken sandwich and coffee."

Andi: "Why? Where is my chicken sandwich?"

Kennedy: "Why? Are there Tribbles in my chicken and coffee?"

Andi: "Covered in Tribbles."

Kennedy: "I want these Tribbles off the ship."

Andi: This episode really sets the tone for all the Tribbles episodes. You mentioned earlier, the dark humor. This is part, I feel like part of the crack-treated seriously dynamic of all of this is that it's actually terrifying and horrible. And also, the way at the very end, they're like, "We are going to kill them all ha-ha-ha. No Tribble at all." And it's like they're making these goofy puns while being like-- and then they all died.

Kennedy: Yes. We're dealing with giant space lice, essentially, like lice, mice, rats, gerbils. Like, if lice and gerbils had space babies, that's what Tribbles are, because they're so cute.

Andi: They're so cute and they purr.

Kennedy: Yeah, but that's just us as human beings.

Andi: Oh, I know.

Kennedy: Everybody else is like, "Ah, kill it. Kill it with fire."

Andi: [unintelligible 00:19:42] soft and makes cute noises. But this episode, it's just fun to watch. I could rewatch this episode a million more times.

Kennedy: Yeah, it's a good one for sure. Good one for sure, leads us to its sequel, *More Tribbles, More Troubles*.

Andi: I love *The Animated Series* so much.

Kennedy: Yeah, it's a good one.

Andi: If making fun of the Enterprise is what gets Scotty hyped up, making fun of *The Animated Series* is what gets me hyped up because I love *The Animated Series*. There are times when it's super goofy, but it's goofy in such a fun way. I just love it, I love the visuals in this. I love that the Tribbles are pink because it's TAS, of course they're pink. TAS is well known for having some weird color issues, which is fine with me. It adds to it stylistically, in my opinion. But I am not at all surprised that it was also written by David Gerrold, because as I said earlier, it just fits, it's super *Star Trek-y*.

That first cold, open bit where Kirk is trained shots with the Klingons and is maneuvering them and they use a new weapon on them called the stasis weapon, which doesn't work all that well, but at least for a moment knocks him for a loop and could have gotten bad but Kirk is creative and finds a way to get out of it and I just really love. And it's Koloth again. Him and Koloth just doing that whole--

Kennedy: Back and forth.

Andi: The back and forth. Yeah, like the frenemy thing where it's like, "Yeah, they're enemies, but also there's just this vibe to it that they enjoy sparring with each other and they enjoy putting themselves against each other and stuff." And the whole thing could have been live action and it would not have felt out of place at all, so fight me. I guess.

Kennedy: Yeah. I mean, once I realized that *The Animated Series* was just a continuation of their five-year mission, I was like, "Well, this is what it is. I don't want to hear anybody's mouth about why it's not good, because it is good. You just haven't watched it on a sleepy Saturday afternoon."

Andi: [chuckles] Yeah. You got to get some snacks.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Andi: And just enjoy it. Don't think about it too hard. Although I'd say this episode is like really, truly very solid. And it brings Cyrano Jones back, which-- I think Cyrano Jones is funny because he's basically like a trickster type character, like a Mudd-type character, but way less problematic. And so, I find him more endearing and funnier than Mudd because there's no super creepy vibes off him. It's more that he's just like, he's a capitalist. He's out there to make money and he's going to do questionable things in the pursuit of money, but ultimately not super malicious guy. But I do think it's funny that it's like, "He's wanted in 20 galaxies for his ecological crimes." [chuckles] It's just like so funny. But it makes me think of-- So like if you go to Australia in the airport, the Australian conservation police or whatever they're called are like, no joke.

They were like, "What you got in your pockets? You got apples? You're bringing apples to our continent?" They will fight you. That's their trigger. That is like, "How dare you try and

bring an invasive species to our continent?" And they're really serious about it. The laws are really serious. The invasive species thing is a real thing, it can cause real harm.

Kennedy: Yeah. And they do. That's the thing. We as humans, "Oh, Tribbles. They're cute." No, they gorge themselves on grain-- How much grain did they eat?

Andi: So much.

Kennedy: Tons.

Andi: And those people were starving, Kennedy. Like they ate the grain of starving people.

Kennedy: You explained to whoever they were that--

Andi: [laughs] Those randoms.

Kennedy: That a box of Tribbles ate through everything we'd promised them. You explain that to them. Look, those starving alien babies in the face and tell them that a Tribble ate all a grain. Go ahead, you say that.

Andi: Yeah. And the Klingons are definitely channeling the Australian Conservation Police because they're very much like, "No, this is serious. No, we're dead serious about this."

Kennedy: But you know what? I used to treat this pretty frivolously in the before times, before there was a global pandemic that shut the world down for a period of time there. And that happened because people weren't taking it seriously. People still don't take it seriously. And it changed my entire perspective in terms-- As far as I was concerned, the Klingons were no longer overreacting, they were acting appropriately, like, "No, kill them with fire."

Andi: It's super rational. The history that's explained throughout the show is basically the reason that the Klingons are like this is, is because Tribbles almost destroyed their culture. They almost like killed everybody. And also, you know it's serious because they're going into Federation space, they're about to take out-- they're like "We will shoot you down Federation flagship." And they unveiled their new secret weapon before it was really ready in desperation to take down the Tribble. So, they don't play about the Tribbles and I do not blame them.

Kennedy: They had to genetically engineer a predator.

Andi: Yeah.

Kennedy: Because Iota IV is their home planet, and initially, they were kept in check by natural reptilian predators. But when they were taken off that planet for whatever reason and those natural predators weren't there to keep the balance, then they became a menace. And when you have to create in a whole other predator specifically that preys on them specifically, that's a bad [unintelligible 00:25:55] right there. I don't care how cute it is, I don't care how pink it is. I don't care how much it coos at you. It's time to throw it, yeet it out the airlock.

Andi: Well and the Glommer, which is the predator that Cyrano Jones steals. They develop a new predator and then Cyrano Jones is like "Yoink, I'm going to take this." And then they pursue him with fire. But then Cyrano Jones goes and there's so much genetic manipulation when it comes to the Tribbles, like they've been genetically modified to hell and back by the end of this series. But he makes giant Tribbles and then they send the Glommer back and the Glommer is like, "I am not about that life," [chuckles] and he just runs away. And I can't

blame him. But again, we get the same vibe as the *TOS* episode, in which it's the same thing where they're just like. "Ha-ha-ha," and then fade to black. It's like, "Oh."

Kennedy: In my opinion, it's doubly as terrifying because, yeah, these "safe Tribbles," which is where we get the quote, "There is no such thing as a safe Tribble," because they don't reproduce. Well, come to find out, they do reproduce. They just get outwardly fat, but they don't get fat, no, no, that's not one big fat Tribble. That is a colony of Tribbles. You just pop it. Just poop, just pop it real fast, and you'll have hundreds of Tribbles again. So, it's really still an issue. Apparently, Bones went back and continued to genetically modify them, "Here we are playing with the species genetic makeup on a molecular level. It's not questionable, not at all," so they are finally safe, and it's just like, "What is happening?"

Andi: Yeah.

Kennedy: You guys are laughing a whole lot with this happening. I don't know if I'd be okay if I saw a Tribble on a spaceship. I feel like, "Wait--" [crosstalk]

Andi: No. I would immediately be like, "Peace." But there's also some fun Spock dynamics in this. I truly laughed out loud. Spock has this great line where he's like, "We could throw Tribbles at them," which is actually what they end up doing. [chuckles] It's like he's saying kind of like, "We could throw Tribbles at them." And Kirk thinks it's a joke. It's like, "I thought Vulcans didn't have a sense of humor." And he's like, "They don't. That's a real plan. We're going to throw dribbles at them," and that's what they do.

Kennedy: Right. You know what kind of irks me about that exchange is that earlier in the episode, when they got hit with the stasis field weapon and nothing worked, Uhura was like, "Well, we could throw rocks at them." And no one said anything, crickets, crickets.

Andi: That was pretty funny too, to be honest. She's like muttering under her breath is like, "Just hurl rocks."

Kennedy: "Get the rocks at them." No one's-- crickets and crickets. It bombs, right?

Andi: I laughed, Kennedy, at home.

Kennedy: Spock says it, "Ah, hmm, oh, uh, Vulcans, [chuckles] you guys are so funny. [chuckles]" No.

Andi: He wasn't even being funny, Kennedy, that's what's funny about it.

Kennedy: And he also didn't give Uhura the credit for the inspiration of the joke either for the plan. This is the BS I'm talking about.

Andi: Oh, that's amazing.

Kennedy: 2260 something, and black women are still being overlooked for their contributions in the workplace? [Andi laughs] Sick of this.

Andi: I mean, that could have been a good-- Like, if you want to bring that back, there should be a joke where like we could throw rocks at them and then later, they hurl an asteroid at them, and that would be the same setup. It's like, "No, I wasn't joking. Let's do that."

Kennedy: Right. Missed opportunity.

Andi: Indeed.

Kennedy: What do we have next here? *Trials and Tribble-ations*. Oh, boy.

Andi: Yeah. So, *Trials and Tribble-ations* rules. And there's lots of reason it rules, but one of them is that I love that it doesn't change anything from the underlying episode. It just adds to it around the edges. And that, to me, I think is real smart because the whole idea of they time traveled for this is such a cool concept because they are going out of their way to not change things. They're going out of their way to keep the status quo, which means you can still watch *The Original Series* episode and just picture Dax and Sisko above that in that vent [laughs] disarming a bomb above Kirk. And I just love that.

Kennedy: Pelting him with Tribbles? Yeah.

Andi: Yeah.

Kennedy: Now I know it's them.

Andi: Yeah, I love that. That's so cool. And they did such a good job of like making it look very seamless and like just inserting the DS9 crew. And it must have been so much fun to just dress up in the old costumes and just have a good time. This very much has a *Lower Decks* feels for me where it's kind of like the fanning around, like fanboy, fangirl stuff where they're just like, "Oh my God, it's Kirk. It's Spock, Scotty," and it's super cute. But then also they kind of subvert the trope by having like O'Brien be like, "That's Kirk." [laughs] That's really, it's not Kirk.

Kennedy: Them really just not knowing their Federation history.

Andi: Yeah. And it's so funny because-- And then also Bashir is so funny in this where he's like, "I don't know anything about this timeline. Who are these people? No idea." It's super funny. And then O'Brien just be like, "Yeah, that's Kirk, why does he have lieutenant stripes?" "Ah, because that's not Kirk, bro." That's so funny. But this is another one where it's just funny and fun, but also it does some interesting world building, and we get to see the Department of Temporal Investigations. And I love the way they wrote them as just like long suffering.

Kennedy: Yes. Just no sense of humor. Nothing is funny. Nothing.

Andi: It reminds me of *Men in Black*, where they're like, "Are you joking?" He's like, "No, ma'am. We at the FBI don't have a sense of humor we're aware of." That is the whole vibe the Department of Temporal Investigations bring. And they're like, "Oh, God. They deal with these dumb mistakes every day. And I loved that they're just like, "Oh, Kirk."

Kennedy: Right.

Andi: Kirk. [laughs]

Kennedy: I love that they're super futuristic, 23rd century or 24th century suits had pinstripes.

Andi: Yes. I just loved them. They were funny.

Kennedy: They were great. One of my other favorite moments of that is when Sisko and Dax are supposed are working on something, and Kirk and Spock are walking down the hall and Sisko is like, "Just act natural." And Dax is thirsting over Spock.

Andi: Can you blame her?

Kennedy: I mean, no, but she's like, "Hmm, look at this fine mother sucker over here. Just line up. I always knew he was fine. Good God almighty." Sisko was like, "Well, get over here, mam. We at work."

Andi: It's like, we have time to look at Spock, Benjamin. It makes me think of the *Lower Decks*, *Strange New Worlds* crossover where Mariner is just like, "I was not prepared for how hot Spock is." I feel like that's what Dax is feeling right now or she's like, "I knew he was hot, but I was not prepared for how hot he is in person." And that's fair.

Kennedy: I just love how he gripped Dax up not as Jadzia, but as Curzon.

[chuckles]

Kennedy: "Get your ass over. I'm not doing this with you today."

Andi: Well, apparently Dax really likes those old scientists because she also implies that she hooked up with McCoy and one of her other hosts and they has surgeon's hands.

Kennedy: Sisko was over it. He was like, "I don't even want to be back here."

Andi: I can just make sure Dax being like, "Got to complete the set. I just [laughs]--"

Kennedy: She's like, "Got to catch him, oh."

[laughter]

Andi: Oh, she's the best. I love her so much.

Kennedy: Oh, wow.

Andi: But we do get some of the good stuff that we should get in a Trouble episode namely the Klingons and the political implications of the Klingons. I love that they bring Darvin back and they do it in such a creative way.

Kennedy: Mm-hmm.

Andi: And this dude sucks at his job because he sucked at his job back in *TOS*. And then before his plan has the chance to work, he tells them the plan so then they can stop it. I was like, "Bro, what are you doing?"

Kennedy: He has no idea anymore. He just wants the attention. That's what I was getting from Darvin, that he just wants the attention.

Andi: Yeah. What a pathetic guy. But it just was like, "Okay, you tell them your cool plan after the bomb goes off, man."

Kennedy: Like, "Why are you monologuing your entire plan? [Andi laughs] Why have you lived this long and learned nothing? How are you this old and have learned nothing?"

Andi: No wonder he failed so badly at this in the past.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Andi: We also get kind of a nudge-nudge, wink-wink about the change in Klingon design from Worf. We do not talk about it with outsiders. Yeah, okay.

Kennedy: Yeah, you know, it's kind of rude. Mind your business.

Andi: [chuckles] But they're like, "Wait a second. Those are Klingons?" Yes. It's good. [unintelligible 00:35:35]

Kennedy: And they all turn and look at him. Oh, it is so interesting when Starfleet officers are faced with an unknown that they're not prepared for how disgustingly human they conduct themselves. They're like, "Klingons? Where?" And then when they didn't understand it, they all collectively turned and looked at Worf as if he was supposed to be the representation of an entire species and just-- "No, we don't talk about it. We don't talk about it because I don't have time to get into this with you. I don't."

Andi: Yeah. The other thing I thought was interesting is they attacked Worf as if he was Federation Starfleet, which obviously he is. But that made me-- He's not wearing the uniform like the others are. Is it just he got caught up in the bar brawl but the Klingons attack Worf in that scene. And I just thought that was kind of interesting. I also, by the way, my favorite detail about that scene is that all of them go into TOS style fighting and it's so funny. Watching Bashir do like the two-handed swing is just like everything I needed. It made me laugh so much. I love it.

Kennedy: Speaking of Bashir, must they always make him the creep, why?

Andi: Yeah. What the heck? What the heck? Bashir, bro, he's like, "Man, that might be my great-great grandmother. I better bang her." What? What? Why did your brain do that?

Kennedy: "If I don't bang her, I could not exist."

Andi: What the hell? Why would you do that? That's the weirdest thing. What a weirdo. I truly was like, "I cannot follow the logic here." I think you just saw hot gal and you wanted to bang her. But like, "Bro, you can just do that. You don't have to make up a thing where this is a relative of yours."

Kennedy: Yeah. Or even if that is a relative, that's the part you don't say out loud.

Andi: Yeah. It's just super, super weird. I don't know what they were trying to do with that joke, but it just makes Bashir [laughs] look like a freak, which is funny in a different way, but really does not make him look good.

Kennedy: Just big yikes.

Andi: The other thing that I find very funny is that we get the same fade to black Tribble genocide ending [laughs] that we are used to getting from these episodes. Well, because that's the other thing is Worf goes on and on, and he's like, "Yeah, we eradicated them. We went to their planet and eradicated them." And they're like, "Oh, okay."

Kennedy: Odo was giving him a hard time, he's like, "Oh, did you win the great Tribble War?"

Andi: He's like, "Yeah, we did. We won that war."

Kennedy: "We did it actually. Yes, you're welcome." [laughs]

Andi: They really blow past it. But the end of this is just as bleak as the other Tribble episodes. It's something that all the Tribble episodes really share is this kind of really dark humor that's like under all of the cute, fluffy Tribble stuff. And I really think this is exemplified in *The Trouble with Edward*, which is just such a wild episode.

Kennedy: For such a short little nugget, little Trek nugget, just some heavy stuff. If you've never seen *Short Treks*, Captain Lynne Lucero, played by Rosa Salazar, deals with the brilliant but inept Edward Larkin, played by H. Jon Benjamin. On her very first command, very first command, gets sent off from the Enterprise. Pike is like, "Boohoo, I'm going to miss you." She's like, "I'm going to be fine. You're going to be fine. Everything will be fine."

And on her first command mission, she has to deal with Larkin. This scientist was charged with trying to find a decent food source for another group of impoverished people somewhere in this galaxy. And he surmised that Tribbles were a great food source, except that they didn't reproduce quickly enough. And they were like, "Okay, that's cool, but we're going to put a pin in that and move on to other projects because we need the food like now-ish, not when you're finished." And proceeds to be a whole problem for everybody on that ship because he just does whatever he wants.

He insists that he's the right person to do this job. He insists that his way is the only way to do it and proceeds to do literally whatever he wants and everybody on the ship has to clean up after him because this [pause] genius [Andi laughs] injects his own human DNA into the *Tribblestus ventricosus* and it speeds up the reproductive cycle essentially, which turns the Tribbles now into a *Polygeminus grex*. So, there's two different--

Again, like you were mentioning, Andi, all of this genetic modification on these poor things, that's the issue. Whether they're higher beings or civilized or not, like what are we doing? What in the genetic manipulations going on here? Because now we're at a point where the Tribble as it exists is no longer the same species as the Tribble that it was indigenous to Iota IV. So, what the hell is happening? These Tribbles start producing at a point where they have to abandon the ship because this Tribble, the sheer weight of the Tribbles was taking up everything that the ship had resource wise in terms of propulsion, everything. They had to abandon ship and just let the Tribbles have it. Just let the Tribbles have it. And because of when that was positioned in time, it was like the mid-2200s, they were saying that ship kind of wandered into Klingon space. And that's kind of what started the problem to begin with. It's just a mess.

Andi: Edward dies.

Kennedy: Yes, thank goodness.

Andi: He gets crushed under Tribbles. The first time I saw this episode I was like, jaw to the ground, like I couldn't believe it. But the more I watch it, the more I'm like, it actually does kind of fit the super weird dark humor of the Tribbles kind of well, it's just taken to an extreme that was like wild. And there's a whole scene where he's at the meeting table where they're all talking through things and the way he pitches the idea is so disturbing. The entire like--

Kennedy: Senior staff.

Andi: All his co-workers are like, "What? This dude's a sociopath." [laughs] [crosstalk]

Kennedy: And they're looking at Captain Lucero, like, "I'm so sorry." [laughs]

Andi: Yeah. But he's so creepy and weird, but he doesn't realize it and just it gets worse and worse and worse.

Kennedy: Yo. like, that scene between Lucero and Larkin when she releases him essentially and, like, tells him he's being transferred, and he just was not acknowledging the chain of command. He was not conducting himself like a Starfleet officer. He was just, "Well, what if I want to do it?" She's like, "This conversation's over." "But it can't just be over from talking to you." "No, the conversation's over." "No, but see, like, if I'm still talking the--" like, how she didn't haul off and punch that dude in his mouth multiple times, I don't know. I don't know. I would have lost all my pips that day because I would have beat the tar out that dude. Like, "Shut up. Stop talking. This is your fault. Get out of my face."

Andi: Yeah, but it's just funny because the episode can't be much more than 15 minutes long, and it like completely upends everything we know about Tribbles and where they came from and why they are like they are. And also, just the weirdest, darkly, hilarious, like the more I watched it, the more it is funny to me, because the first time I watched it, I was laughing, but it was laughing in that horrified way where you're like, "Is this for real? Are my two eyes seeing this episode?" And then, now when I rewatch it, I do genuinely find it funny, but still in that like, "what the hell" kind of way. So, I genuinely think people should watch it because it's so interesting. I think it's very rare that you get a piece of *Star Trek* that is that weird.

Kennedy: Yeah. And that good. *The Trouble with Edward* is a classic example of when a man's fragile ego can turn into a fatality.

Andi: his own fatality. And he was like an inch from death, and he still was trying to get them to insist that he was smart and right and better than them and stuff. And it's like, "Wow."

Kennedy: Yo, when he came out into the hallway with his underwear with no pants on, I was like, "Get him out of here. Get out, you're done. Pack your stuff."

Andi: I would be fascinated to be in the writer's room for this one. Just truly fascinated that some of the decisions made are just so odd. I have a very big soft spot for this one, but as I said, it's kind of a "what the hell" soft spot.

Kennedy: Yeah. It was difficult for me because I'm not particularly a fan of H. Jon Benjamin. There's another guy who sounds just like him. They have that very dry, deadpan, "I'm a guy" voice. And, I mean, I don't know him personally, so I can't say it in that regard. But everything that he's done, like those characters, they're very dry. "I'm going to do what I want. I don't care. You're just going to deal with it," like that is so triggering [laughs] to me. Again, I don't know how Lucero didn't just tee-off on him because what are you doing? How are you conducting yourself on this level? How did you get here?

Andi: Yeah. Our last episode to talk about is a high note to leave on, which is *A Tribble Called Quest*, which I laughed a lot when I heard that title, and I was just like-- because we always do puns for the titles, but this one is I think the first time where it's like a pun on a pop culture thing rather than like a saying of some kind. But in this episode, the crew is on an away mission to get plot device from the planet below. And the planet below, they go on an away mission, and it turns out that the planet is covered in Tribbles and Kennedy, the Tribbles have teeth.

Kennedy: No.

Andi: Is not ideal.

Kennedy: No.

Andi: And there are also some versions that are giant.

Kennedy: No, I don't like it. Return to sender.

Andi: [laughs] Yeah. The very first scene they end up running for their life from giant Tribbles with teeth.

Kennedy: No. Immediately no.

Andi: She's like, "Ah-ah. No, I'm not playing around with that."

Kennedy: Immediately no. Kill it with fire.

Andi: They run into a Klingon scientist that has been sent by Martok to eradicate these Tribbles, or rather to genetically manipulate them again.

Kennedy: Oh, my gosh.

Andi: So, they won't reproduce same song that we've heard before. And he's struggling with the formula. And it's so funny because he's like, "Man, I've been thinking through it for years, and I don't think it's possible." And Rok-Tahk's, like, "Oh, yeah, it is. If you just do this, it'll work." And he's like, "What? What?" She's like, "Yeah, yeah. Just do this and then do this, and then, bippity-boppity-boo." And she completely makes him look like a not very competent man. But honestly, sometimes you need different eyes. And you will have a breakthrough. You can look at something the same time, like, 20 times and you'll just see the same thing every time, where if you bring in new eyes, sometimes they'll see something different.

Kennedy: Sometimes you just have to be professionally upstaged by a child. No big deal.

Andi: Yeah. I mean, sometimes that's called growth.

Kennedy: [laughs] Shut up, Wesley.

Andi: [laughs] So Rok-Tahk puts together a retrovirus to do this. She puts it all together, but she's working in less than stellar conditions in this Klingon dude's very messy lab. And she's like, "Not to my standards, man. Not to my standards." And she ends up sneezing into her virus and she ends up making a Rok-Tahk Tribble.

Kennedy: Oh, my God.

Andi: It has a face.

Kennedy: No.

Andi: But it's super cute.

Kennedy: No.

Andi: It kind of looks like a hedgehog, but with the red rock spikes.

Kennedy: Immediately, no. Kind of like Fizzgig?

Andi: It's super cute, Kennedy. It's super cute. But of course, Rok-Tahk is really upset because she's started to feel really proud of her skills and stuff, and she's like, "I made a mistake." And this kind of jars her confidence a little bit. But the whole point of the episode is that when you're doing science, if you're doing science right, you're going to make mistakes, and that's a good thing. And that fuels *Discovery* and it fuels, like, growth and learning.

So, what ends up happening is they put the virus out there and Dal and Gwyn go down to get the Boronite or whatever, and they do, but then the Tribbles come back, and as you might remember, Kennedy, they're giant and they have teeth. So scary.

And with the little Tribble, the Ribble[?], I guess they call it, that Rok-Tahk made, talks to them and saves them all, and it's really cute. And it's a cool message, especially for kids I think that mistakes are a necessary part of both science and growing up and being alive. The point is not to beat yourself up over mistakes. The point is to use them as an opportunity to make things better. And even in the episode, Rok-Tahk calls it a problemtunity, like a problem that turns into an opportunity. I just think that's a really cool message, especially for kids, which is obviously the audience for this show.

And it's just a really well-crafted-- I really like *Prodigy*. It's just a really well-crafted 22-minute episode of about this theme and working together with everybody and it's really cute and it's a really good entry into the Tribble canon. The only thing I'd say is it's not nearly as dark as most of the Tribble episodes are, which is probably correct because we don't want to-- The Tribbles with teeth is probably enough darkness for the children. But, yeah, there's no extinction of the Tribbles this time.

Kennedy: Thank goodness.

Andi: Yeah, I think we've had enough of the extinction of Tribbles.

Kennedy: Yeah, for sure. And not for nothing, the *Prodigy* kids, they've been through enough.

Andi: Yeah, for real. So, it's a real cute episode, *A Tribble Called Quest*.

Kennedy: So, it's interesting that's what the title is called because. Okay, so Black Tribbles, for those of you who didn't know, was a geek podcast that yours truly was on. And we talked about just geek culture through the lens of the black perspective, because there were no Black Tribbles, we were the Black Tribbles.

And part of our fandom was that every part of our mythos really was that anybody could be a Tribble because everybody could be a geek about something. Even people who proclaim not to be geeks, like sports people, like, you're cosplaying, you're wearing somebody's jersey, that's a cosplay. You know what I mean? And we would just encourage people to nurture their geekiness in wherever it lied, and they could choose a Tribble designation to distinguish themselves in the Tribble-nation. I was Storm Tribble, we had a Bat Tribble, Super Tribble. And our fans could choose them as well. So, we had a couple good ones.

There was Tribble sec, Tribble play, [Andi laughs] Big Tribble in Little China, David Boreanaz from *Buffy and Angel*. And now I guess *SEAL Team* is another show he's on. He was Secret Agent Tribble, Or was it Secret? Special Agent Tribble, excuse me, but we also had a Tribble called Quest. And I feel bad because I can't remember this dude's name. He was a comic book artist, actually, and he was one of the first professional interviews that we had on the show and wasn't really a big *Star Trek* person but got the gist of what we were trying to do. And as we were explaining what a Tribble designation was, he was like, "Oh, I Got it. *Tribble*

called Quest." We were like, well, that's easily the best we've ever heard. And we were all immediately mad that we didn't choose that one for ourselves.

Andi: Amazing.

Kennedy: So, the fact that this is what this is called, I don't know. I'm not saying that Black Tribbles was pivotal in the development of culture as we know it, but I'm also not going to say that Black Tribbles was pivotal in the creation of pop culture as we know it, just saying.

Andi: I just think that's a tremendous pun. Very good.

Kennedy: So good.

Andi: And I mean, if you made a Tribble episode and the name is not a pun, you haven't made a Tribble episode. Sorry.

Kennedy: Right. You're not working hard enough.

Andi: Sorry.

Kennedy: Less base, more tribble. You know what I'm saying? [laughs]

Andi: At the end of the day, I would say that the Tribble episodes in general are not super deep. There are some real themes there, especially around environmental themes, but for the most part, they're just like a break. They're funny, they're kind of silly, but they're also weirdly darkly silly.

Kennedy: Yeah. They're very sinister when you think about it.

Andi: Yeah. And I think that especially for the *DS9* one, it's like, "Hey, you need a little bit of a break from all of the things that are happening. We got you. Here's some time travel and Tribbles." And that, to me is a very important part of *Star Trek*. They can't all be like, mind melting sci-fi, sometimes they are just fun. And I think that's a valuable part of *Star Trek*.

Kennedy: Need a break from the Dominion War? Come cuddle with the Tribble. It might be a bomb, it might not be, who knows? *Star Trek Deep Space Nine*. And that's about all the time we have today. Andi, where can folks find you on the internet?

Andi: You can find me as @FirstTimeTrek, on lots of places. I'm not really on the internet much anymore, but you could try.

Kennedy: I'm not on the internet much anymore either, but you could try kennedy@womenatwarp.com. If you'd like to learn more about our show or to contact all of us, you can visit womenatwarp.com, email us at crew@womenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook or Instagram [@womenatwarp](https://www.instagram.com/womenatwarp). Thanks so much for listening.

[Women at Warp theme]

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