

Women at Warp Episode 255: Article 14, Section 31

[Women at Warp theme]

Kennedy: Hi 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 are Sue.

Sue: Hello, hello.

Kennedy: A returning guest, the one and only Anna Rozay.

Anna: Hello.

Kennedy: And for the first time. That's right, the first time. Could you die? The one and only cosplay expert extraordinaire and podcaster host, Tony Ray.

Tony: Hello, hello, hello.

Kennedy: Yes. Before we get into our main topic, *Section 31*, which I'm sure you're all interested to hear our thoughts on, I have a little bit of housekeeping to do first. Our show is made possible by our patrons on Patreon. The support we get via Patreon helps us pay for things like web hosting, design work and transcription services. And there are still about a hundred episodes that need to be transcribed. If you'd like to become a patron to help us out with that, you can do so for as little as a dollar per month and get awesome rewards from thanks on social media up to silly watchalong commentaries and the art for our final patron-exclusive item has been released. It's very, very, very, very freaking cool. It's a NASA-style mission patch with all of our names on it. It's super cute. Designed by the one and only Sue herself.

Sue: Oh, no, not me. My friend, Denise.

Kennedy: Oh my gosh. Sue's friend, Denise. [Sue laughs] Thank you Denise. It's so freaking cool. You can check out the public post on Patreon to get a look at it. You'll agree that it is super cool. Thanks to Denise. That patch will be sent to anyone who is a Warp 5 level supporter between now and the end of the year as long as supplies last. You can visit patreon.com/womenatwarp.

If you're looking for other podcast merch, you can check out our TeePublic store. We just added some intersectional diversity in infinite combinations designs, including some Vulcan calligraphy. You can find it at teepublic.com/stores/womenatwarp.

And last but not least, we have a birthday shoutout.

Sue: Birthday.

Kennedy: Happy birthday to Matt. His birthday is February 15th. We wish you all the pleasant returns on your trips around the suns. Live long and prosper. All of that fun stuff. Happy, happy birthday from all of us to you. We wish it was our birthday so we could sing it too.

Sue: Hey.

Kennedy: [laughs] And now with that being said, ladies and gentlemen, friends of all ages, I give you the mountain [Sue laughs] that is *Section 31*. Both the newly released film and also the organization as a whole. We are going to get our teeth sunk into the meat of *Section 31*.

Sue: Yeah. So, what had happened was we had already had a Section 31 the Organization episode on our schedule when CBS came and announced the premiere date for the movie.

Kennedy: What? What's that? Women at Warp ahead of the curve? No.

Sue: [laughs] So, obviously to preserve our schedule, we had to smush them together.

Kennedy: And also, to help y'all stay looped into the timeline that we are clearly three parsecs ahead of everybody else on. But it's whatever, it's cool. Just glad that it's happening and that we can talk about it as a whole. They almost feel like two separate things, even though they're discussing the same entity.

Sue: Although I will give a spoiler warning now. If you have not seen the film, this is not the episode for you yet.

Kennedy: Yeah, if you've not seen the film or watched several episodes over the course of *Enterprise*, *Deep Space Nine*, *Lower Decks*, *Picard* and or *Discovery*, [laughter] you should probably go do your homework and then come back to this. Okay? Okay. The organization's title, I mean, it has this super cool since its first appearance in *Deep Space Nine* has this edgy, black ops vibe to it. The title itself came from the original Starfleet Charter Article 14, Section 31, which allowed for "Extraordinary measures to be taken in times of extreme threat." I imagine one could argue that being a science exploratory/military-esque space-faring armada is inherent with extreme threats being in space and all, and people we don't like or can't seem to get along with.

But apparently, there needed an entire other subsection of people to be able to move however they chose to, depending on the threat of the day.

Tony: Yeah, yeah, [laughs] definitely the threat of the day.

Kennedy: And it's really, I think, an interesting thread in the tapestry of *Star Trek* as a whole because like the Terrans in the "Mirrorverse," I feel like it's a very polarizing addition to the lore. People are either 100% with it for different reasons, or they're either 100% against it. They feel that Starfleet shouldn't have to have an organization that can operate outside the rules of itself and all that jazz. And it's just really an interesting opportunity to see how people interpret such an entity within the mythos of *Star Trek*. How did you all react to *Section 31* the first time you saw it?

Anna: I would have to say it made a lot of sense both in universe because a lot of the reasoning for Section 31 existing and all of that is so that the people on these starships in Starfleet can have the freedom to do the things that they do, whether that is gallivanting around studying plants on Beta 6933, or being able to wear their little cute, colorful pajamas, and have the freedom to do that. But from a story perspective, it kept it interesting. There was innate conflict with that for the opposing factions. Starfleet trying to either disavow that it ever existed, or you have officers who either get conscripted into it against their will and then have to fight with that moral dilemma of how can we sanction something that goes against everything that we are supposed to stand for. So, it keeps it spicy.

Sue: I think it makes a lot of sense being introduced in *Deep Space Nine*, especially because we're spending so much time outside of Starfleet on that show. But being in the Starfleet charter is a little strange to me. I don't know.

Anna: Yeah, because it's like they want to say that it doesn't exist, but then it's right there in a handbook.

Sue: Right. I remember back in the 90s on the BBS, the people who started screaming about Gene's vision back then. Really, if we remember that this is a story and we all need to calm down. [laughter] It's interesting things to think about, especially, because it was, according to Ira Steven Behr, inspired by Sisko's line that it's easy to be a saint in paradise.

Anna: Exactly.

Sue: So, the idea that there has to be somebody doing the dirty work is an interesting one in a world that is supposed to be a utopia but can also be discouraging when the idea was like, "Hey, we made it to utopia."

Anna: I mean, let's think about it this way. We already have secret spy missions that regular crew members go on. Like, say, for instance, when Picard and crew, Beverly and Worf snuck off and did that Cardassian black ops mission. What's the line where that crosses from that's okay, because they're doing something to keep everyone safe? That is not really going to be, like, if they get caught, Starfleet is going to disavow that they even, had anything to do with them. So, for when people want to complain that Section 31 exists in this world and it's against everything that it's supposed to stand for, I'm like, "Girl, they be going on intelligence missions and getting people killed all the time and going undercover and doing God knows what." And that's just a part of the normal organization.

Sue: Yeah, but then Section 31 created the virus to kill the founders-- [crosstalk]

Anna: Okay, that's different.

Sue: -and wanted to commit genocide. [laughs]

Anna: But then, you also have sitting officers in the front office, like when Julian went to get the cure, because they had it, they basically were blocking him at every turn. So, it's like where does the line stop and start from Section 31 and their entanglement with the normal organization, where does that line stop and start? Because they're basically the same thing, but they want to act like they're not? So, is it Starfleet basically just doing genocide by passing the buck to Section 31?

Sue: Which is part of Starfleet if it's in the Starfleet charter, right?

Anna: Mm-hmm. Exactly. Yeah. They all guilty.

Kennedy: [laughs] Right. I think the biggest thing to pull away from what you all have said here is that if there is to be a utopia and something has to be implemented in order for this ideal way of life to exist, let alone to be preserved, why wouldn't it be dressed in black leather, right?

[laughter]

But also, the organization exists solely to take extreme measures in times of extreme threat. So, what is that saying about you not always being aware of what the worst is? Just because we know the dark exists and that things go bumping about in it doesn't mean that we are at all in any way, shape or form prepared to interact with whatever is doing the bumping. And when is it appropriate to allot a certain group of people, resources to deal with that rather

than everybody who doesn't know the first thing about dealing with it peacefully, right? It's that gray area that exists.

My personal take is that the fact that folks are so against it when this is not at all the first iteration in science fiction of a black ops subsection of a group doing the ugly but somehow necessary things in order to make sure the collective is okay.

Tony: Needs of the many.

Kennedy: Yeah. And it's like every captain that we interact with over the course of this almost 60-year plot, they all have the ability to make that tough decisions, decisions that folks like me and you all would not ordinarily have to make, let alone prepare ourselves to make these decisions. So, I just think it stands to reason that someone's out there not only aware of what goes bump in the night but also knows how to interact with it in a way that the people who don't know what's going bump in the night don't have to worry about-- Not necessarily don't have to worry about it, if they're in equipped to deal with it, we don't have to worry about them.

Anna: Right. They're not exposed to it.

Kennedy: Right. And also, interacting with it and making things worse. That's what I think. Like, too many hands in the pot type of situation. That was a really long way to go around the block to get-

[laughter]

Sue: I think the resistance to it in fandom comes from the fact that up until this point in at least what had been released, we're just continuously being fed that the Federation, at any rate, has gotten past these things and there isn't anything anymore that goes bump in the night and then that rug is pulled out from under us.

Tony: I don't know. Okay, so the reason I say I don't know to that right is because I feel that everyone in Starfleet is trained to be a spy. The difference is some are better than others because if we go back, everyone at one point or another has to do a covert mission, why? You need to get data samples. You need to check out the people that already live on the planet. You have to hide that you're Starfleet. So, pretty much all of Starfleet is a covert operation. But to everyone outside of it, but to those in the knowledge, it's like, "Oh, yeah, we're peacekeeping scientists who have skills when necessary."

Kennedy: Skills that are required curriculum in Starfleet Academy.

[laughter]

If you don't pass four years of these "skills," you don't get that degree.

Anna: Okay, let me see your skills. [Kennedy laughs]

Tony: Bunch of scientific spies stepping out through the cosmos.

Anna: Riding on rockets with phaser banks strapped to them and torpedoes.

Sue: It's a whole organization full of tendies.

Anna: Yes, yes. Two personalities.

Tony: Reluctant badasses just out in space—[crosstalk]

Kennedy: Huh-huh.

Sue: [laughs] I like that.

Tony: Come join the reluctant badasses of space, Starfleet.

Anna: Okay, every other third Sunday of the month, we get in black uniform and we go kill people.

Tony: Ooh, danger time.

[laughter]

Kennedy: You can't talk about it though. Don't tell nobody.

Tony: Real stuff.

Anna: I would also sometime just thought of is that how in discovery Section 31 was kind of like hidden in plain sight with the black badges and everybody knew they were a thing or at least they found out. But I feel like after the Klingon War and even Starfleet was ready to just put a bomb in the middle of their planet after that got the kibosh, I feel like that's when you can arguably say Section 31 went back underground because they were like, "Okay, if we need to do some crazy stuff next time, we don't need to have nobody checking us, so let's go in hiding."

Kennedy: That's true. My headcanon that Section 31 was so prevalent on *Discovery*, in the very physical sense, on the ship itself, because it was a top-secret science vessel with experimental propulsion systems that nobody needed to know about especially in the beginning of a war with this vast group of extremely pissed off people. [laughs]

Sue: Also, in the first season, you had a captain from the mirror universe.

Anna: Mm. So, he was probably buddy, buddy with the morals of Section 31.

Kennedy: He was like, "Do y'all got some of those Section 31s up in there? Can they come up? I need them." [Sue laughs] They were like, "Section 30, who's who? What? Why would you even say such a. What would you even mean?" No, we don't have an entire ship and fleet dedicated to stealth ops at all with new technology. No. We don't have a penal colony completely [Anna Laughs] remodeled to house whatever type of resources and research facilities they maintain, no."

Anna: What do you mean?

Kennedy: "Heavens no. We wouldn't have a covert operative that's skipping across the construct of space and time to interrogate not only Archer, but also Georgiou and Burnham somehow? No. No way. Daniels isn't a thing."

Anna: What? He's like, "Look over there," and runs.

Kennedy: [laughs] Is that Geordi's VISOR?

Anna: Bye.

Kennedy: [laughs] Beams out. I don't know. I always appreciated if the Romulans can have the Tal Shiar and if the Cardassians have the Obsidian Order, why would we not? Because they don't think of themselves as the antagonists. They think of themselves as the protagonists in their story. If you talk to any given Romulan in that period, they're going to be pretty sure that they're doing the right thing and that it's the Federation that are weird and that the Klingons that aren't to be trusted and these Dominion dudes are worse. But you guys even smell weird, so I don't even want to be in this room right now. Why would we presume that our perspective is the only one that could possibly be correct in the broad scheme of things and, like I said, in the tapestry?

Sue: Well, that's the shift in the storytelling though.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Sue: Right. Because that was the idea in *TOS* and *TNG*. The humans are correct and the Romulans are sneaky and the Cardassians are bad and they're all bad guys who do bad things, but we do right things. And it was *DS9* that started shifting that and giving main perspective to other races, other characters. That's why it makes sense there. But if you're still stuck in that *TOS*, *TNG* ideal of the humans are right, you are going to hate this idea of Section 31.

Anna: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Because it flies in the face of everything that you've been told. And they're not just this polished, perfect set of heroes and they're associated with this grand organization that just does great things across the board. No, there's some dark in there, there's some shades of gray, and they are, if not knowingly, complicit with all of it. So, hate to break it to you, [laughs] I'm not like, oh, my God, no one likes the fact that Section 31 exists.

Tony: I do.

Anna: They do really horrible things. I think that I am like "Girl, I could get it. I understand why."

Tony: No, I am definitely Section 31 through and through.

Anna: Well, we know.

Tony: I have--

[laughter]

Sue: Tell us, Tony.

Tony: I love the idea of Section 31. People who are chosen because of their skillset. Not necessarily they're dedicated to anarchy or overthrowing things. More like, "No, no, no. This needs to happen for this reason," and then it is that logic that prevails.

Anna: And that's what this movie exemplifies.

Tony: Mm-hmm. I feel that way too.

Anna: Everybody gets recruited specifically for the individual skillset, like you said.

Tony: Mm-hmm. Because to have a great team, everyone needs to have a little bit of this, a little bit of that, and a little bit of their own thing. And so, that's what makes them gel so well. I think that they are absolutely necessary because you always need people who have a little

bit of this, a little bit of that, and then their own thing in order to make the missions fly. Like, there's no way that anything could move forward because, like Sue had said previously, everyone else had their own black ops team. Why wouldn't we? Why wouldn't we be the ones trying to counteract their black ops teams to make sure that everything, if not necessarily is better, continues on the streamlined course that we have so far?

Anna: I mean, I'm a firm believer that whenever they refer to Starfleet Intelligence, I'm like, "That's low-key alluding to Section 31," you know what I mean? Like, "Oh, we got this information from Starfleet Intelligence office," girl, that's Section 31. [Tony laughs] Because what did they have to do to get that? You know what I'm saying? Like, girl.

Kennedy: See, I would think that Starfleet Intelligence is the umbrella organization. And like Section 31 are the kids in the basement. You know what I'm saying?

[laughter]

They're the ones in the basement with all the new gadgetry that nobody likes to interact with because they're a little weird. They're not weird because they came in there weird. They're weird because they have seen too much. You know what I'm saying? And now, they're weird.

[laughter]

Anna: They've been rattled one too many times.

Tony: You didn't even react to that explosion. Yeah, it was like the 50th one.

Kennedy: What explosion? That firecracker? Wait till you've seen a brain disruptor. Then talk to me about explosions. Worried about your little Vulcan pea shooter. Vulcan pea shooters are probably pretty lethal though. I can't even hold you. They're going to be logically efficient, so. [laughs]

Anna: [laughs] Logically efficient.

Kennedy: Logically efficient.

Anna: That sounds like a serial slogan.

[laughter]

Tony: They're logically efficient.

[laughter]

Kennedy: So, since we already breached the film, here's your second chance to pause this and then go watch it. So, *Section 31*, aka Georgiou Resurrection. I don't know how else to think of that movie. Did I miss something? Did you all see something that I did not. Was that not the Philippa Georgiou show?

Anna: I mean, that's what I was here for.

Tony: That's what I tuned in for too.

Anna: That's why I bought my ticket. I mean, that I didn't buy.

[laughter]

Sue: This wasn't about the organization whatsoever.

Anna: Yeah, this was for me to see her do martial arts and wear wigs and be sassy.

Sue: That rhinestone dress? Damn.

Anna: Oh, my God. With the blue wig. Let's just say right at the top, this movie was made for the gays, the girls and the theys. It was camp down. It was camp rock. It was just camp-tastic. And they knew what they were doing and they were serving it up to us on a gay ass rainbow platter.

Sue: Well, the intro in my head was like a YA fantasy book. I was like, "What is happening?" [Anna laughs] But we got into it, and after--[crosstalk]

Anna: The dossier.

Sue: Yeah, after a few minutes of-- Yeah, the dossier, really, I was like, "Oh, this is a campy heist film."

Anna: This is a campy heist film from the 90s.

Sue: As soon as that clicked, my perspective on it totally shifted.

Anna: Totally shifted, yep.

Sue: I get it now. I understand. [laughs]

Anna: Yep. It brought me into the movie really quickly because it gave me the exact flavor of movie it was going for. They were like, "Girl, this is going to be for fun. This is not-- Don't think too much. Enjoy yourself. Buckle up."

Sue: Well, yeah. And I had heard from other people that it was terrible, that they really hated it. And yeah, I think some lines were a little clunky, but once it clicked what they were doing, I was able to just let myself get into it.

Anna: Yeah, I had fun with it overall. I honestly, at the end of it, wanted to watch it again because I just had so much fun with it.

Kennedy: As brief, overall synopsis, what can I say? Georgiou remains to be a badass who gets recruited by undeniably sexy people to do a thing.

Anna: Also, the cast was so horny. Watching this movie, I was turned on. They were all beautiful. And I'm not even talking about the Delta. She was gorgeous. But like, everybody, I was just like, "Oh, my God."

Tony: I wanted more of the Delta.

Anna: Her getting vaporized at the bar?

Kennedy: That felt a lot like watching Ash Tyler murder Hugh Culber.

Anna: Yes. It was a shock. And I think from that point on, it put the stakes on high alert for me because I was like, "Even though this is a campy, silly movie, people are going to get taken out at any point and you don't know."

Kennedy: Yeah. I did not expect the eye candy. The advertised eye candy.

Anna: Right. I even knew who was in it. But then when I actually started seeing them move around and say lines, I was like “Mm-hmm.” [laughs]

Kennedy: Can we talk about the costuming for Omari Hardwick and how it looks like All of Me and Tony's concept art for *Section 31*?

Anna: Harness leather daddy, get it to me. Put me on the train. Choo-choo.

Kennedy: What?

[laughter]

Tony: I was sitting there trying, I was like, “How did they?” Now, I understand how they made it. And I was like, “Is this from my closet? I would wear this. Do I need to make a Section 31 collection?”

Kennedy: Yes. And whoever is listening to this, if you don't know, now you know. You need to hire us because we've been doing this since 18 boo-bop. Where you at? Where you coming from? What's the deal?

Anna: The fashion was fashioning.

Kennedy: It was like half over and somewhat in, ah.

Tony: It was in and out, actually. The bottom piece wrapped all the way around the top piece, connected at the top and the back. Yeah, listen, beautiful.

Kennedy: Absolutely beautiful.

Sue: Haven't the two of you had the actors and costume designers compliment your Section 31 outfits at conventions? I think you have.

Kennedy: Shoutout.

Sue: It's true. It has happened.

Tony: Yes.

Anna: Yeah. Not the humble, it's true. It is true.

Kennedy: It's true. It's interesting to see how people react to someone wearing what I perceive to be goth club kid gear [laughs] in sci fi settings. Because they look like, “Oh, official. Don't make eye contact,” but the details.

Tony: They look at us like, were they hired by Paramount?

Anna: And you tell them, yes.

Kennedy: [laughs] Oh, my goodness. But overall, yeah, I feel the same way you all do. Like, as soon as I realized it was a campy heist film, I knew immediately why some people were upset. Like, oh, you don't know how to not take yourself too seriously. You don't know how to have fun. Apparently, all of the Bashir as Not-007 on *DS9* episodes didn't quite connect with

you. None of the Dixon Hill vignettes from *TNG* really-- Those are okay. All of those clear and obvious holodeck camp fests are acceptable, but this real thing with Michelle motherfuckin' Yeoh is not acceptable? Okay.

Anna: Yep, yep. And speaking of the camp, one thing that this movie I feel like, in my opinion, handled really well was oscillating-- Because one thing they don't do is shy away from who she is, and that's actually a part of the plot and who she used to be. And them oscillating between her dark backstory and how she got here was handled, I think, really well. And like, them juggling those two tones and how her past influences the plot going on in this movie, for my money, I thought it was very successful how they did that. I thought the plot was quick, it was easy to understand, it wasn't too convoluted because sometimes, that can get crazy. But yeah, it was a fun action movie. Girl, she was running through walls and shit wearing purple spandex. Like, what's not to love?

Tony: Oh, yeah, I loved that. The tech too.

Anna: Yes.

Kennedy: I had three issues overall with the film, and I'm curious to hear if any of you had any outstanding issues that you were unable to let slide or if it was just me, because it's usually just me. I just wanted to know. I felt the villain, although inherently it being Georgiou herself, her antagonist, her homie from the way back, I felt was really anticlimactic, and the character didn't have enough weight behind it. I feel like for me to really have given any shit about how it ended, you know what I mean?

I felt like if they had just left it in her having to be a better human, a better Terran, I guess, than herself, and just the internal conflict a la what Michael Burnham had to go through in that Labyrinth library, maybe I'd be like, "All right, there's some heavy shit. We wouldn't expect it. I was expecting heist. Now, she got to think about stuff. Cool." But no, there's a dude, he didn't really have much to say, really. So, we didn't have a chance to connect with him outside of just someone who was on the other side of your blade. Like, that's a lot of people.

Sorry. I hate to be insensitive about it, but that's what happens when you put a Terran badass in front of us who has been running people through since *Discovery* Season 1. You know what I'm saying? I felt that the immediate antagonist was a little anticlimactic. I feel like if you can't do an Irish accent, you shouldn't do [sue laughs] an Irish accent.

Sue: Oh, but that's Star Trek tradition, doing accents you can't do. [laughs]

Kennedy: Hearing a bad Irish accent is almost as bad as hearing somebody do a bad Philly accent. It's like nails against the-- What do you--? Stop talking. Please stop talking. Like, that immediately tipped me off as to what that character was going to be doing, that immediately. I was like, there's nothing more sus than a bad Irish accent. I have questions, concerns, and comments.

Anna: Not his bad accent was the clue.

Kennedy: Chow, listen. That's what tipped me off. I don't know if that was intentional or no, but that's what I figured out. And my final issue, which is very selfish, admittedly, is how you going to have a Section 31 movie without Ash, Voq, Tyler, when were told specifically that he was going to be in charge in Section 31. You didn't even put up a hologram at the end with him being like, "Hello, Philippa. I see you're back to your old tricks." She'd be like, "Blah, blah, blah. I'm sick of you. I'm the best. I can do whatever I want." He's like "You, right? Tyler out."

Anna: Beep deep, deep.

Sue: There's answer for that, and it's because she didn't go all the way back to where she came from because the Rachel Garrett gives us a time. Because Rachel Garrett ends up captaining the Enterprise C. So, she's not all the way back to Ash Tyler time. She's like 50 years before *Next Gen*.

Kennedy: Oh. What? Argh.

Anna: To Kennedy's point, before it became a movie, it was supposed to be a show, and it was supposed to feature both of them. And I don't know what happened between back then and now, and how he got lost in the sauce, but he did.

Sue: Well, what happened is Michelle Yeoh won an Oscar. [laughs]

Anna: Exactly. That's the main culprit. She got famous and busy. Well, she's always been famous, but she got more famous. I guess either they had scheduling conflicts. We don't know. I don't think I've heard from him or seen anything about him making any statements about the movie or why he wasn't involved. So, who's to say?

Kennedy: Yes, yes, I know. I've been looking. You don't have to put salt in the wound. Thank you.

[laughter]

It was more of a rhetorical question, I suppose. It's just, you know.

Anna: But I'm curious. I do want to know why wasn't he involved? Like, was it the studio's decision? Was it a scheduling conflict? You know what I mean? Because they could have put her anywhere in the time stream if they wanted to.

Kennedy: Like, I didn't see Ash Tyler's salt and pepper, beard for a for while. Why though, why?

Anna: Could you imagine if we had Omari Hardwick and Ash Tyler?

Kennedy: No.

[laughter]

I would have to immediately remove the expected parts and send them away, because I simply cannot.

Anna: The screen would not be big enough.

Kennedy: Send it-- Argh.

Sue: So, I had some issues, but they were not the same issues.

Kennedy: Okay, I'd love to hear them.

Sue: Why is the emperor of the Terran Empire being chosen by the Hunger Games?

Anna: Oh, my God. I wrote in my notes, Hunger Games, evil Hunger Games, even more evil, evil.

Sue: And who's the lady who decides that Georgiou's the winner? Was she the old emperor? Why doesn't she just choos--? So many questions about this setup.

Anna: Crazy. And killing your own family, that was crazy for me. I mean, that immediately hooked me in because before it was happening, I was like, "No, she not. No, she not. Yes, she is. She did it. All right. This chick crazy." And to go back to one of Kennedy's points, how she said she felt like the villain reveal was anticlimactic to a point, I do agree, because he didn't have a lot of scenes where he wasn't wearing that mask and not just fighting.

Tony: I was like, "Is anyone else feeling like they're watching, *The Princess Bride*?"

Sue: Yeah, I got that vibe.

Tony: That moment with that reveal. And to tie into your Hunger Games moment real quick, that was supposed to be your hook, like in the beginning, that is the hook. Because she loved him and she renounced that love to sit on the throne, but she never stopped loving him. So, this is to tug the young adult audience as well, like in case they're casually tuning in and was like, "Oh, this is like the Hunger Games. Maybe I'll sit down and watch it."

Sue: There wasn't enough for me to believe it. We've previously been given nothing in her history to indicate that she had this long-lasting love, that she was mourning. That's what is unbelievable to me.

Anna: Okay, I have a question. So, there is a scene I can't remember where in *Discovery*, where she's back in the mirror universe and she's crying over a man's body. And I'm trying to remember and I can't remember the name, but it sounded like the same guy's name in this movie. Do y'all know what I'm talking about? I thought she was saying son, but she was saying like Zahn or something like that.

Kennedy: Sin?

Anna: Yeah, Sin or Zahn. I don't know. But I felt like that was supposed to be the same character. And I was like, "Am I picking up on a thread that they never really followed up on?" So, for me, they were in love. She burned his face to accept her throne. She subjugated him into slavery all of his life. And when he fake-took his life, I was like, okay, I can understand, even though some of these things happen off screen, but I feel like I had enough to know why this man would be doing the things that he was doing. He was pissed off and when she tried to hug him at the end, I was like, "Girl, that was not the time."

[laughter]

So, I get his motivations. Yes, there definitely could have been more. He could have definitely had more scenes and more dialogue, but I understood it.

Sue: I don't recall that scene from *Discovery*, but I'm going to have to go look for it now.

Anna: Yeah, I'm going to have to look for it too because I feel crazy.

Sue: [laughs] But my other big question from this, to totally change tracks, is like why Rachel Garrett?

Kennedy: That is a detail I didn't even pick up on. Please elaborate.

Sue: I mean we've only seen her once. We saw her in *Yesterday's Enterprise*. Right when the Enterprise C jumps forward and the Tasha Yar comes back and it's all alternate universe. And my question the whole time was like, "Does this change how we think of this Captain when we see her in *Yesterday's Enterprise*, knowing that she was part of Section 31 in her younger years?" And I meant to rewatch *Yesterday's Enterprise* to try and answer that question for myself and I ran out of time. [laughs] So, it's just open ended at this point. But in the film itself, I don't think there is a reason to choose her other than it'll ping something in *Next Generation* fans heads.

Anna: Yeah, it's name recognition and I feel like Rachel Garrett has been popping up a lot in current *Star Trek* by name or by reference. She was referenced in *Picard* Season 3. In one episode, there was a statue of her that was destroyed or something, right?

Sue: Oh, yeah, outside the Academy recruitment center or something.

Anna: Yeah. So, I feel like somebody either on the production team or a producer, somebody is really into Rachel Garrett at the moment.

[laughter]

Because like you said, it was like, why her? It could have been anybody but I'm like, is this like some kind of thing? Like, somebody really likes this character and wants to flush her out? I guess it seems that way because they keep using her. It's weird.

Sue: I think my biggest problem was the line, "Chaos is my friends with benefits."

Anna: Oh, my God, that was so funny.

Sue: I was like, because what the hell?

Tony: They had some really good one-liners.

Anna: She was so awkward. I feel like that was just showing how awkward she was in relation to these bad people.

Sue: There was that line and then I think Control at the beginning says like, "This dog bites" and it's like, what is this?

Kennedy: You can tell certain lines were written by a drag queen.

[laughter]

Anna: Yeah, yeah, definitely they were written by that alien with the black and white face. He wrote all the lines, baby.

Tony: What are you doing here?

Anna: Baby, that was me. They should give that role to me. I want to play him. [Sue laughs] I'm obsessed. I just want to meet this actor. I'm like, "What were your motivations? Just be gay as hell?" [laughter] That's when I knew I was like, "All right, this is for me, locking in."

Sue: Why are they speaking French also, by the way.

Anna: Wait, what?

Sue: On that space station-

Anna: Were they.

Sue: -they're speaking French? Yes.

Anna: Oh, yes. What? Yeah, you're right.

Kennedy: Is French the European language, lingua franca, spoken in Malaysia? I'm assuming, because Georgiou is her last name.

Sue: Oh.

Anna: And prime Georgiou was from Malaysia, just like I believe Michelle Yeoh is.

Tony: All right, personnel files.

[laughter]

Anna: I got my dossier ready.

Sue: So, not specifically about this movie, but I have heard some fans complain about the focus on Mirror Georgiou and Emperor Georgiou because they essentially made her Space Hitler. And the complaint has been like, "Why are we trying to redeem this character?"

Kennedy: Period.

Sue: Yeah, why are we spending so much time with this horrible murderer, genocidal emperor?

Anna: I think the easy answer is it's Michelle Yeoh. That's honestly-- Take yourself out of the universe and just for a second, from a production standpoint, she won an Oscar, she wanted to come back and so they're going to do things with her at any chance they can get to do things with her to get people's eyes on a product. Now, from a story standpoint, yes. It don't make no sense.

[laughter]

I mean, in this movie specifically, like I kind of said earlier, they don't really go out of their way-- They talk about redemption and things like that, but can you really redeem someone like that? I don't think so. And also, another good *Star Trek* series that talks about redemption of people who used to do shady things is *DS9*, the OG Section 31. She was the girl who brought that into the series. So, I feel like *DS9*, being a longform show can obviously have that discussion a lot better. And this movie kind of races through that discussion. But they don't go out of their way to not show her being awful and terrible and reminding you, yeah, she's campy and fun and all of that on the surface, but she's a horrible human being and has done horrible things in the past.

Tony: And can go back anytime.

Anna: And can go back at any time. And even the characters, they joke about it and stuff like that. And I think that they kept her on this tenuous leash because Omari, one, being augmented human, I think was the only one that could stand toe to toe her, both physically and mentally because he's like, "Look, you sitting out here, you riding on this space station,

you did all these horrible things, but you have the skills that I need. So, I need you to come on or I can just make your life a living hell. Even if you were by somehow able to kill me, more people will come and harass you, throw you in jail, etc. So, you might as well toe the line [unintelligible [00:42:00]] So, that's how we get the movie. That's how it starts. But for me, it didn't really shy away from saying, "You know what? Just forget everything that she ever did. She's new and fun now." It didn't do that, in my opinion.

Kennedy: I mean, the same people who claim to be Trek fans and complain about the fact that *Star Trek* is too woke now and maybe the franchises should be separate but equal, those are the same people who-- Yeah, and I'm talking to you. [laughs] You know who you are because you clearly listen, boo bop. Those are the same people who love the *Mirror, Mirror* episode. They love bearded Spock, they love Terrence, Terra Firma, the dudes that is their only production level costume in their closet. It's got all the terran and bips and boobabs and daggers and all that stuff. You love to be contrarian when it suits you, but when you find out that you're not the baddest in the room, all of a sudden you want things to be kept separate? Mm, sorry. Not sorry actually. That's not how it works.

You can't get the goose without the gander. Actually, no, still not sorry I had to get that off my chest.

Tony: I love the Chameloids. Side note.

Anna: Oh, my God, I have a note here. Venom, when they were in the tunnel and Omari, I forgot what his character's name was, but he got thrown off the little floating platform while they were racing through the tunnel and he jumped to save him and he had turned into almost this black, webby, stretchy thing. And I was like, "Oh, my God, it's Venom."

Kennedy: Oh, yeah, the shapeshifter bull.

Anna: Yeah, yeah, yeah. He was great.

Tony: Yeah. The Chameleons were first shown on *DS9* when--[crosstalk]

Anna: No, I thought that was Iman in her character in the--[crosstalk].

Kennedy: Oh, in *Star Trek VI*.

Anna: Yeah. She was a Chameloid, wasn't she?

Sue: I think so.

Tony: She was. Yes, you're right. It is *Star Trek VI*.

Kennedy: So, wait, are all Chameloids black people? That's what I've heard. These are the only two I've seen.

Anna: That's what they choose to be.

Tony: So far, they choose to be black with beautiful yellow eyes.

Anna: With yellow eyes, baby. They know what's up.

Kennedy: Asking questions, that's all.

Tony: I also love their ability to see possibilities, and they've got to figure out which one they got to do before too many overwhelm them.

Anna: Oh, yeah, with the button pressing.

Sue: That was very relatable. [laughs]

Anna: I was sitting there, and I was like, Oh, is this me? I feel a little seen right now. There are seven different ways this could play out. What is the most ideal? How do I get there? Give me two seconds. And I've done this before in front of Kennedy, where she was like, "Oh, we need to do the thing." "All right, so if we do this now, we should do--" "Okay, I've got the answer. Let's go." And she was standing there looking at me talk to myself out loud, sorting out whatever's going on. She's like, "Hmm, I see." So, I felt very seen there, which is very funny. [laughs]

Kennedy: I mean, we've both done that around each other, I'd say. I think that's probably why the team works. We'll just pose questions, and then before the other gets to even think of an answer, the other just answers their own question. I'm sure it's hilarious to watch. It's kind of maddening in the moment though. [laughs]

Anna: Oh, what was her enemy? The villain? His name? His ship? Okay. I don't know if y'all noticed this, but I felt like this was left over. What do you call it? Like, illustrations for the La Sirena. I felt like this was some pre final production--[crosstalk]

Kennedy: Concept art?

Anna: Concept art. That's what I'm trying to say. It was concept art. I felt like it was concept art for the La Sirena because it looks so similar in shape and silhouette.

Sue: I was thinking the same thing.

Anna: Just a little more, it looked like it had some money. [laughs] It looked like it cost a lot of money or a lot of credits or what have you. I love the design, but I could not shake the feeling. I was like, "Is this the La Sirena?" The set was gorgeous. But that brings me to another point. One of my, I guess, negative things, the movie felt very small. There are some really nice sets, but overall, it doesn't look like there was a lot of money spent on the set and everything. Like, you're in a ship a couple of times, a space station, a ship. You're out in the woods. And then-- [crosstalk]

Sue: We don't see space at all.

Anna: You really don't see space until like the very end. And that's it. It feels very small and self-contained to a certain degree. And I guess that's not really necessarily a bad thing. But it definitely is something that I noticed. It definitely felt like a made for TV movie and not a movie that you would expect to see in theaters. And that's what it was. But it didn't need to feel that way, I guess. I don't know, it just felt--[crosstalk]

Kennedy: No, I agree.

Anna: It felt like a TV budget. Because the budgets that they do now for these *Star Trek* shows are really big on a TV scale. But it didn't feel like a theatrical release. It felt like what it was.

Kennedy: Yeah. To your point about it feeling like a made for TV film, it could have been a little mini-series, you know what I mean? You didn't have to try and stretch it out into a full 10

episodes if the story didn't progress that way. Quick little three-parter, boom, bing bang bop, you know.

Anna: And I remember you saying something about that, how it felt, you could see the segments and those little chapter titles. I don't know why they felt they needed those. I don't think they really added anything. If anything, it just reminded me that this used to be a TV show in concept. So, I just felt like they strung the first three scripts together and said let's make them mesh a little bit better in between and that's it. Which is fine if you had the scripts, but you didn't need to put those chapter titles, for what? Like, "Girl, the movie's still going."

Kennedy: Oh. So, on a scale of one to five tribbles, one being the worst tribble, five being the best tribble, what do we give *Section 31*?

Anna: I would give it four and a half. Because I really enjoyed it overall. And the little problems that I have are not breaking. I think it was entertaining. The action was pretty decent. Because sometimes, the action be edited a fool. And I had fun with the camera work. It was quick and the story was easy. It had some heart to it. It had fun characters. It had just enough stakes. Yeah, I hope they keep making these, not necessarily *Section 31* films, but I hope that they can use this format to tell different types of stories. We don't need to see another movie stuck on a starship with people in uniform doing the same old thing. Like, that's great too but also throw in a little difference. This world they created has so much going on in the background. Let's see what's going on in the background and spend some time over there and do something different but in the same universe. It's okay to have a little bit of difference.

Tony: I dig it. I would give it four tribbles. One because it was a good film in the sense that it pulled me in the beginning and kept me going. It was tech heavy, which I love because I like to watch things on *Trek* and slightly try to reverse engineer them because that phase device, I've already sat there and I was like, "Okay, three lights, honeycomb, semi kind of thing." So, I'm already working on that. But just watching all of the technology that they've brought in from the mirror universe, brought it into the main universe and all of the things that they use to do their job, we all know that's not standard issue because where is somebody going to get a phase shifter from just because they need to steal a device or who just randomly has all these skills on tap? "Oh, I need to pretend to be someone else." "Cool. I got it."

And they're not a changeling because I wouldn't have been surprised if they would have brought in a changeling because, it's *Section 31*. They know about a lot, but they ain't saying nothing. Yeah. So, that's where I sit. Also, it gives it room for improvement, that if they want to do another one, they can build from what they've already done and then make it better, so they have room to earn that full fifth tribbles.

Sue: I think I'd go closer to three and a half.

Kennedy: Ooh.

Sue: But that's still like on the better side. Yeah. I think I'm left with a lot of questions. I certainly enjoyed it more than I thought I would, based on what I was hearing from other people who had watched it before I did. But what makes me hesitate in my rating is that I don't know how often I want to go back to rewatch it. Like, given all of the *Star Trek* there is out there, I think I would go somewhere else before I'd go back to *Section 31*. But really, that's the biggest ding right now, other than all my remaining questions.

Kennedy: Yeah, that's a good factor that I didn't consider. How many times would I actually go back and rewatch it? Because I've only watched it once. [laughs] I thought I was going to

be able to carve out enough time for myself to do a second run through, and I was just like, no, I pretty much remember everything that happened and everything that I don't remember, I probably don't remember on purpose, so maybe I should leave that alone.

[laughter]

Anna: But I think that also is a good sign that you retained most of it.

Kennedy: True. I want to give it three tribbles because of reasons, but specifically to spite those who gave it such unnecessarily awful reviews before the rest of us had gotten to see it, I'm going to throw in a fourth tribble for spite.

Anna: Okay.

Sue: The spite tribble. Okay.

Kennedy: Wanted to add another spite tribble just to make sure we get more Section 31. So be it, doesn't necessarily have to be this iteration of it, but I don't want this to be the last we hear of this questionable organization because all the Trek bros were kerfuffled enough that we probably won't see Klingons ever again.

Anna: Oh, my God. Right?

Tony: Ugh.

Kennedy: So, I just don't want them to be the dictator of what is appropriate in tracking what isn't, because they don't even want to sit at the same table as us. They just want to go sit in their little crotchety, old, funky, dusty, musty, ugly ass corner and watch the same things they've been watching for the past 60 years and be upset when people who don't fit that narrative have the audacity to exist.

Sue: But look, what people say on the internet is not going to affect what *Star Trek* does. The number of streams it gets and therefore money it makes is going to affect what *Star Trek* does.

Kennedy: Well, everybody go ahead and watch this. And then, everybody go watch seasons 1 and 2 of *Discovery* so we can get some Klingons in the fandom going forward because-- [crosstalk]

Anna: Yeah. Because I feel like the only place I've seen Klingons show up recently is in *Strange New Worlds* and they went back to the *TNG* makeup.

Sue: There is another thing that I was bringing my tribble rating down for in my head, and I did not say out loud, which is that I don't love Control.

Anna: Oh, the AI system?

Sue: After that whole storyline, like, we need to send this AI monster far into the future, we're still seeing Section 31 being controlled by an AI.

Anna: Yes, that's what I thought, because that's who gives the dossier. Right?

Sue: Yeah. That's unsettling to me that we're still-

Anna: After all we went through?

Sue: Yeah, exactly.

Kennedy: That's what made me a little confused as to what point in the timeframe this story was taking place.

Anna: It's way after *Discovery* though.

Kennedy: But that's what I'm saying. Don't we know that Control equals bad? Like, didn't we yeet it. Didn't Michael throw herself into the vortex of time and space specifically to avoid this? What are we doing? What are we doing?

Sue: Control became the Sphere, right? Or, did the Sphere take over control or were they able to separate them? Like, again the questions.

Anna: They wanted to merge with the Sphere data so they could gain true intelligence.

Kennedy: Right? But the Sphere data merged with Zora on *Discovery*. So, the whole point of *Disco* going to the future was to prevent Control from being able to have access to the ship itself.

Sue: I'm not into *Control* controlling things, [laughs] but I'm not going to be mad at Jamie Lee Curtis.

Anna: So that was so random. [Sue laughs] I forgot about that.

Tony: You knew what that was. That was everything everywhere all at once reminding us that they are connected everywhere.

Kennedy: I'll have to watch the rest of that movie.

Anna: Also, wasn't there a *Star Trek* reference in that movie? I swear.

Sue: There's a *Star Trek* reference in every movie.

Anna: I swear. I felt like it was directly referencing her as Georgiou, but I could be wrong. I need to watch it again because all those quick clips of her different lives, I felt like one of them was hinting at Georgiou but could be misremembering.

Sue: With everything we're dealing with right now. Can we be like anti AI in *Star Trek* for a little bit please?

Anna: Thank you, please. It used to be like that was one of the core messages.

Kennedy: That was one of the core points of contention. Right? The *Measure of a Man*, is Data really a Starfleet officer or is he a tool?

Anna: And bringing up Data, we see that Starfleet is definitely willing to like say something one day and then years down the line be actually like "Mm, actually, we are going to create a race of robot slaves." So, it is not out of the realm of possibility for them to be like, "Even though Control tried to murder everybody in the galaxy, actually, we really like this AI system."

Kennedy: This is Control version 3.0.

Anna: We fixed it. We fixed it, girl.

Kennedy: The bugs out, guys.

Anna: Girl. I put in three new fans to cool it off.

Kennedy: Everything's great. It doesn't even know what obsessive compulsive dictator means, okay? We're going to be fine. Everything's fine.

Sue: Don't worry about the CrowdStrike software. Yeah.

Tony: That wasn't a crash. That was just a blip. [Sue laughs]

Anna: What do you mean it has the missile codes?

Sue: Oh, boy. [Tony laughs]

Kennedy: Why does it know where every officer lives? That's so bizarre.

Tony: Did we just write the next version of *Section 31* where they have to take it out?

Anna: Literally, this happens all the time. I remember, I don't know what we were watching. We were watching *Disco* when it came out, season 5. And we were like, "Ship, ship, ship." And they crashed the ship into the sand.

Kennedy: Oh, yeah. Yep. We figured out the mission before-

Anna: Yep.

Kennedy: -the writers could get to it.

Anna: Just a bunch of nerds.

Kennedy: So, the average rating of *Section 31* is what, three and a half tribbles? Four tribbles? Four out of five tribbles. That's not bad. There have been worse.

Anna: I really went into this movie because we heard that people were hating on it and all of that before I saw it, I was like, "Okay, I'm ready to hate this movie or feel like it's going to be weird and make me cringe." And when it didn't really do that and I had fun with it, I was just kind of like, "Oh, it's just them being hateful people again. Got it."

Kennedy: It's almost like everything that they hate, I'm sure I'll love.

Anna: For real.

Kennedy: For all of the reasons that they hate it.

Anna: Is it a little bit queer? Going to love it.

Kennedy: [laughs] Oh, are there nonwhite people in positions of power? Definitely going to love it. What? There's only two men? Two, three.

Sue: I truly think for some people, they just don't get it.

Anna: There was actually quite a bit of men on this team.

Kennedy: It's true, there were.

Anna: Now that I think about it. But there was also a good amount of like female energy as well, like women crew members. So, everybody I felt should feel seen. Okay, you got your man in the cyborg suit for like 10 minutes.

Tony: Deltans.

Sue: But *Star Trek* is campy, but it hasn't really done this kind of camp before.

Anna: You're right. Because you know what this reminds me of? *Charlie's Angels*.

Sue: I almost like even for a little bit was getting *Knives Out* vibe and maybe it's just because I watched that recently, but it's so different from the-- genre is not right, mood of so much other *Star Trek*.

Kennedy: It's not ship captain crew forward, it's mission forward.

Anna: We're not afraid to be a little sassy. It's just sass out of everybody's mouth.

Tony: Felt like *Get Smart*. You're all secret agents and shenanigans happen every three minutes.

Anna: There were some good chases in this movie too. There was a lot of chase scenes, now that I think about it. You had the first chase scene through the station.

Tony: The casino.

Anna: The casino. You had the chase scene in the tunnel. You had the chasing in space. There was chasing.

Kennedy: Yeah.

Tony: I also love their use of this gal, the garbage gal.

Anna: That was really cool. That was really cool.

Tony: Who are you telling?

Kennedy: I was like, set it on fire. [laughs]

Anna: Which one was this?

Tony: The little toy?

Sue: It wasn't Vulcan. It was some non-Federation planet.

Kennedy: Oh, okay.

Sue: The creepy doll.

Anna: We're all going to die. Oh, the thing with the spinning head. Oh, that was hilarious. I couldn't believe they did that.

Kennedy: Just off the rails.

Anna: Why did she say that, though [laughs] Why did she say that though? Like, why was she programmed to say. We're all going to die?

Tony: Well, remember, that's probably the existence of other species. That's just how they feel about life. They're excited for death. That was the way no one thought to look at it. Oh, maybe they are excited for death. Okay, not our cup of tea. [Sue laughs]

Anna: It was funny because Luis watched it with me and he was like, "We're all going to die down here." And then she said that right next to it, and we lost it. [laughs]

Kennedy: Once again, the Starfleet machine is in our windows watching us think. [laughs]

Tony: Literally.

Kennedy: Well, folks, that's about all the time we have today. Sue, where can folks find you on the internet?

Sue: You can't really because social media is a dumpster fire. [laughs] So, just head to the show website if you want to hear more from me.

Kennedy: Cool, cool, cool, cool. Anna Rozay, where can folks find you on the Internet?

Anna: Depending on what sites are banned or not, you can find me on [@anna_rozay](#) on Instagram and just Google me, baby, Anna Rozay. And you should find everything you need to find. There are no feet pics. Sorry.

[laughter]

Tony: We're good.

Kennedy: And, Tony, where can folks find you on the Internet?

Tony: On the Internet, I probably use Instagram the most, so [@kaldur](#). I have other things, but I probably do not update them as I probably should because social media is a dumpster fire.

[laughter]

Kennedy: It's true, true, true. In fact, you can't even find me on social media anymore. [laughs] But if you'd like to get in touch with me, you can email me at kennedy@womenatwarp.com. To learn more about our show or to contact us, you can visit womenatwarp.com, email the crew @crew@womenatwarp.com or find us on Facebook or Instagram [@womenatwarp](#). Thanks so much for listening.

[Women at Warp theme]

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