

EGSM 20: Strange new worlds (Star Trek)

Content Warnings

- Discussions of: trauma
- Mentions of: violence & death, hospitals, mind control, alcohol

CATHY

The first thing I would do in a holodeck is I would try to break it because I can't help myself.

(Group laughter)

[Show Theme - Intro]

HELEN

Hello friends and fans and welcome to Enthusigasm, the show where we talk about a few of our favourite things. I am your host, Helen Gould, one of the best Rusty Quillers, and today we're talking about Star Trek. And I am, oh, I can't think of a special word for how happy I am that's like Star Trek related.

KARIM

Effulgent.

HELEN

Yeah! I'm, I am effulgently-

KARIM

Dilithium...

HELEN

-delighted to be joined by... [tails off into laughter]

(Group laughter)

HELEN

By Cathy, Karim and Marguerite. I am so smooth, I am totally on the ball today, it is not the end of the week, it is all fine. Right. So. As always we're going to introduce ourselves alphabetically, so Cathy we're starting with you. Can you give us your pronouns and tell us what you do?

CATHY

Hello, my name is Cathy, my pronouns are she/her, and I am one of the audio masterers for Rusty Quill, currently working on Rusty Quill Gaming for what time is left... dun-dun-dun! And Enthusigasm.

HELEN

Wonderful. And next up, Karim. Can you tell us your pronouns and tell us what you do?

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KARIM

Hello, my name is Karim Kronfli, my pronouns are he/him and I'm a voice actor, occasional director, and the voice of Simon Fairchild in the Magnus Archives.

HELEN

Hell yeah. [laughs] Thank you very much. And lastly, Marguerite. Can you give us your pronouns and tell us what you do?

MARGUERITE

Hello everybody, I'm Marguerite Kenner, she/her, I do a lot of things but by day I am a lawyer and by night I do... oh gosh, pretty much anything you can think of that's podcast relating now. Audio drama, I publish short fiction with Escape Artists, and I get involved in just way too many projects with way too many excited, cool people.

HELEN

Right. Let's get started, Trekkies. OK. I would like to hear from each of you how you got into Star Trek and why you like it, which I'm sure will be very short, pithy answers from everybody!

(Group laughter)

CATHY

Sorry.

HELEN

Cathy?

(Group laughter)

CATHY

I got into Star Trek at a young age, a very young age. If we're going to be specific I remember walking into the living room when I was a wee lass and hearing the voice of LeVar Burton on the TV and thinking: "oh! I'm gonna watch Reading Rainbow!" And it was not.

(Group laughter)

CATHY

That was Geordi, and I was very intrigued. And it became a family ritual of watching Star Trek: The Next Generation like every, at least once a week, you know whenever it was on cable. And yeah, just been loving it ever since.

HELEN

Oh Geordi was great, he was absolutely one of my faves.

MARGUERITE

LeVar Burton's one of my favourite people just in humanity as far as I'm concerned. He's a freaking galactic treasure.

(Group laughter)

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

Oh that's such a good turn of phrase: "a galactic treasure"!

MARGUERITE

He is! He absolutely is!

HELEN

Would anyone else like to tell me your Star Trek story?

MARGUERITE

All right Karim, 'Rock Paper Scissors', go!

KARIM

OK!

(Group laughter)

KARIM

I'll leap, I'll leap! I'm somewhat more advanced in years than everyone else on this recording and as a kid growing up in the 70s where TV was slightly less choice-worthy and a bit staid and dull I suppose, but who knows? [laughs] Star Trek was science fiction and I loved science fiction when I was young because it was spaceships and all this kind of like whatever, you know. I was into UFO and Joe 90 and Thunderbirds. You name it, pick one, I'd watch it.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

CATHY

Oh nice.

HELEN

Nice. [laughs]

KARIM

So yeah I started watching Star Trek and watched it a bit then, et cetera, and grew up with it because it was always on. Then come the second coming, the movies started turning up and they were great to watch.

(Group laughter)

KARIM

And then Next Generation, and suddenly I became a full-on frothing nutjob when it came to being a big fan.

(Group laughter)

KARIM

It was...

MARGUERITE

Love it.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

It was that thing like: me like a whole bunch of others, we had this ring of people who would copy VHS cassettes of the episodes, they'd come over from the States and we'd get these really bad like third or fourth generation copies.

[laughs]

MARGUERITE

Nice!

KARIM

And eventually we'd sort of watch them and see what was going on et cetera. But it was, that was the way we did it back then in the 90s, who knew? [laughs] So yeah I, I fell in love again with Next Generation, watched you know, Original Series and then I sort of bought all the VHS's as we went through every series, Voyager and DS9, and have loved it and you know, the whole concept of Star Trek as a vehicle for storytelling for want of a better phrase, because that's the best way to describe it, it's not just sci-fi it's, well like all great sci-fi, sci-fi is merely a genre in which you tell stories about humanity.

CATHY

Yeah.

HELEN

Mm.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

And that's why I love it.

HELEN

Wonderful. Well Marguerite, that leaves you. Can you tell us how you got into Star Trek and why you like it?

MARGUERITE

I am a second generation Trekkie.

ALL

Ooh!

MARGUERITE

So my mom grew up on The Original Series and I grew up on TNG, the Next Generation, and so Trek was just a fact of life, like my mom and I would always watch it together.

HELEN

Yes.

MARGUERITE

My mom and I and my siblings and I would go to Star Trek conventions together. I told this story before we started recording but I spent one summer making Star Trek costumes for various people for like, for pay. So I spent all the time on the bus that summer when I was commuting back and forth to

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

classes like hand-sewing all the chain segments on the flap of the Star Trek 4 movie uniform, and I had all the patterns and all the technical manuals, and you name it, I was involved with it, like nicknames and the novels were a huge part of, and remain a huge part of my Trek experience, the prose specifically.

CATHY

Mm.

HELEN

Wow...

MARGUERITE

Because there's just a huge volume of depth and background that is explored with a lot more, you know, breathing room than you have in a 52 minute produced television episode. So yeah it's, Star Trek is like Karim says, it's science fiction but it's like the core science fiction of like my experience. Many of my friends were Star Wars fans and I have always been the Star Trek fan, like forever.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

Forever! Until like literally yesterday we watched Prodigy season, episode 2. So yeah, very much contemporary. Trek has never not been in my life.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

I also grew up with Star Trek. It was BBC2, it was on before Buffy, I think, and so I would usually have a double bill, I would have Star Trek and then I would have Buffy.

MARGUERITE

Nice.

HELEN

And I can't remember if - or maybe they were on different nights, but I remember it was BBC2 for sure.

KARIM

The 6.30 sci-fi slot.

HELEN

Yes! Exactly! [laughs] And I also, I started with Next Generation and I watched, I watched all of them. Actually no, I watched the Next Generation, I watched Voyager and I watched Deep Space Nine. Genuinely did not know about The Original Series until I was much older. [laughs]

MARGUERITE

Aww!

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

I thought it started with Picard. [laughs]

CATHY

I notice we strategically jumped over Enterprise.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

Well...

KARIM

I - I'll be honest, I haven't, I've watched a couple of episodes, I've just never got round to it. My wife loves Scott Bakula so one day maybe we will. Um... maybe I will at some point again. It's one thing I'd like to do but just my life is too busy these days.

HELEN

I think we all feel you on that.

MARGUERITE

I won't get into my views on why Enterprise happened and everything but yes, you're right. It had a dog. There was a dog in space and we were all very happy about that fact.

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KARIM

I know...

CATHY

[laughs]

HELEN

Aww!

MARGUERITE

Yay the dog.

CATHY

I was just jazzed for Scott Bakula to be, to being in it and hoping to catch a Quantum Leap-related episode, which if there was I never spotted it!

KARIM and HELEN

[laughing]

CATHY

And like-

MARGUERITE

And that was part of the reason Enterprise didn't work I think is they pegged so much on sci-fi crossover potential with a known actor-

CATHY

Yeah.

MARGUERITE

And the - I'm guessing the IP rights - "Hi!" says the IP lawyer - didn't let them play with that the way that they wanted to play with that, and so the fans got disappointed.

CATHY

Yeah. Yeah.

MARGUERITE

And then you compare Enterprise with Scott Bakula to Lower Decks and Lower Decks if you are an older Star Trek fan is Easter egg high heaven.

CATHY

Yes!

MARGUERITE

It is everything you have ever wanted in Star Trek condensed into rapid patter, Steven Universe style comedic animation. It is-

HELEN

[laughs]

MARGUERITE

Oh. It is - people talk about how they don't like - the people who talk about how they don't like Lower Decks are - the analogy I can think of for the Brits especially is people who liked the pre-, the first four or five or six Doctors for Doctor Who.

ALL

Mm-hm.

MARGUERITE

It's that generation of people who are like: but I know what Trek looks like and it's, it's an episode, it's a Western in space and there'll be a bad guy and we'll fight and we'll win at the end.

CATHY

[laughs]

MARGUERITE

Literally that's what, that's what the original title of the Original Series of Star Trek was is "Wagon Train to the Stars", it was Roddenberry attempting to take his Western writing background into science fiction.

KARIM

Yep.

MARGUERITE

As the studios were starting to pivot that way, so that's why it has that episodic nature, it's why it has the very clear-cut for the day morality, and then when it didn't and why there was just such a big reaction to it. But Lower Decks is - I used Steven Universe as a specific analogy because it is the entry point for a new generation of Trek fans.

ALL

Mm hm.

MARGUERITE

It is Star Trek very cleverly and very intentionally talking to new audiences in their ways, in their delivery and their presentation style, but it's taking everything that is the heart of Trek with it. And so if you are someone like me who is approaching an old, and who has all of that like deep Trek lore in my veins, then you see the Lower Decks episodes where they're having the Mirror Mirror simulators or where, you know, they're prank calling the tar pit guy that nobody remembers that had me dying on the floor.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

You know it's, it's that Pixar principle. It's that entertainment that speaks both to its target and the generation behind its target that is just - [does a chef's kiss]. It's just chef's kiss. It is just, just, just distilled, crystallised mainline Trek.

CATHY

Can I interject real quick on that topic of those Easter eggs. I cannot get over like, I've only seen season 1 so far, but getting near the end of season 1, you start to not just see like the throwbacks of trivia, but also stylistic portions of Star Trek they put in there. It's like the cinematic shots of our two main protagonists going across like a large crevasse. It's the, it's the action sequences of like the, the er, traditional somersault into your phaser shot and then you know, getting the guy off screen kind of thing and the classic punches and everything. Like I didn't even realise that those were common tropes in Star Trek because I never bothered to pay attention to it until I saw Lower Decks and realised - oh yeah! This is like super-cool seeing that reflected in this.

HELEN

I want to then - we touched on it a little bit earlier so I want to explore it now which is: what is everyone's favourite series of the Star Trek...serie-i?

KARIM

Does it have to be a series or does it have to be - can it be an entity?

HELEN

We'll do entity, we can do entities, we can-

CATHY

[laughs]

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

We can go with the flow! Alright, we've got The Original Series, we've got Next Generation, we've got Voyager, we've got Deep Space Nine, we've got Discovery, we've got Lower Decks, we've got the books that I now, I didn't know there were books, but now I know there are books...

MARGUERITE

[almost helpless with laughter] We skipped Enterprise again!

(Group laughter and applause)

CATHY

It's so unmemorable everyone just has a complete memory skip, I love it!

(Group laughter)

KARIM

Hands up who's actually watched all of Enterprise.

CATHY

Oh wait, all of Enterprise or some of Enterprise?

KARIM

OK, the majority.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

Again I did not know that Enterprise existed until relatively recently.

KARIM

I really want to watch it because there's some really great actors in there I just, I don't know, I've just never got round to it. So the fact that the majority haven't, I think there's your problem there.

(Group laughter)

KARIM

It's like - I've yet to see Discovery to the point where Jason Isaacs turns up, and you know, if I haven't seen Jason Isaacs then I consider myself a complete failure so I am almost there, so-

HELEN

Jason Isaacs is in Discovery? Ooh now I've gotta, now I've gotta look-

MARGUERITE

Yes he is! I have a fascinating story for you about that if you'd like.

KARIM

Ooh...

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

About Jason Isaacs in Discovery?

MARGUERITE

Yes.

HELEN

Ooh!

MARGUERITE

So. There are two known main characters in season 1 and season 2 of Discovery. In season 1 it's played by Jason Isaacs and in season 2 it's played by Anson Mount. Both actors originally auditioned for the opposite role and were cross-cast.

HELEN

Ooh!

MARGUERITE

Anson was supposed to play a... oh gosh I can't remember. Isaacs' character's name. Captain whatshisname. And instead was cast in season 2 as someone you will recognise because I'm trying very hard not to spoil this for Karim.

KARIM

OK.

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HELEN

OK.

KARIM

That's fine! That'll do!

HELEN

Very nice.

MARGUERITE

I'm happy to go first with what is my favourite Trek.

KARIM

Go on then.

HELEN

Yes, please do.

MARGUERITE

The best Star Trek movie is Star Trek 4.

KARIM

Yes! Absolutely!

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

MARGUERITE

The second best Star Trek movie is Galaxy Quest. Don't @ me!

(Group laughter)

CATHY

(gasps) Yes!

KARIM

Absolutely!

CATHY

Yes! Sorry, the only argument I have is that the-

KARIM

And having played Peter in the audio version I agree with you!

(Group laughter)

KARIM

Commander Taggart.

MARGUERITE

But if I have to pick a series it's DS9. DS9 owns my heart for so many reasons. One for finally casting a black man in the main role, and that actor Avery

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Brooks is, oh look him up some time, he is like all of Star Trek condensed into a human being, his heart is so huge and wonderful. It finally gave us an angry female lead character who was allowed to be physically competent and angry and display that anger and be justified in that anger.

ALL

Mm hm.

MARGUERITE

DS9 turned the corner from Trek being the Wagon Train to the Stars to being contemporary television drama in, of a science fiction flavour.

KARIM

Mm hm. Inspired by Babylon 5.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

Well and also competing with, I mean completely. Because, I mean all of a sudden sci-fi was cool to put on TV, right?

KARIM

Yeah.

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MARGUERITE

So everybody had more eyes, more flexibility, more studio buy-in, more creative leeway.

KARIM

And the CGI was getting a lot cheaper.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

Yeah, very much so.

KARIM

Or more capable, you know, that was the thing. Although B5 did it on Amigas and DS9 did it on sort of Industrial Light & Magic stuff.

MARGUERITE

Do you know how they did the original teleporter effect, that shimmering light?

KARIM

Oh, I probably did 20 years ago.

MARGUERITE

It's literally glitter in a jar that they stirred.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

Oh yes, yes, yes.

HELEN

Oh that's so good, that's so good!

(Group laughter)

CATHY

Nice.

KARIM

Yeah and cross - crossing the film streams.

MARGUERITE

Yeah.

KARIM

For want of a better phrase!

HELEN

Cathy, what about you? What's your favourite Trek property?

CATHY

I probably will have to lean back on Next Generation, though Lower Decks is slowly grabbing my heart, you know, as is probably obvious after our last conversation. Yeah, I unfortunately didn't really get into DS9 or Voyager that much. Because at the times they came out I think there was something about the cinematic style that didn't flow with me. It felt like - because it went actually what you said before, with it becoming more of a drama.

MARGUERITE

Yeah.

CATHY

My younger brain wasn't ready to go down that route...

KARIM

Mm hm.

CATHY

...because of all the time spent in Next Gen. Now that I'm older I'm looking back at those episodes, I was like checking in on some of them before this, I was like – oh, man, DS9 has got some really heavy stuff when you get into like season 5, season 6.

MARGUERITE

Yeah!

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KARIM

Oh yeah!

CATHY

Like: oh right, OK. I'm gonna put this back on my list now. So I'm excited.

KARIM

I mean some of the characters in DS9 were utterly gorgeous and the acting was fantastic as well. I mean, Garak was such a wonderful character!

MARGUERITE

Ohh!

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

Oh, I remember reading an interview with - oh I can't remember his name!

KARIM

Andrew.

MARGUERITE

Yeah, and Bashir. How they-

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KARIM

Siddig El Fadil as he was at the time and now Alexander Siddig.

MARGUERITE

Yeah...

KARIM

And there was me going: an Arabic actor! Hurray! [laughs]

MARGUERITE

They played the two of them as a desperately in love gay couple from the jump and were-

KARIM

[laughs]

MARGUERITE

-never talked about it but it just-

HELEN

[laughs]

MARGUERITE

Never, never dared to let the studio vet it, and it just oozes from their every scene to the point now where it's like-

HELEN

Yeah.

MARGUERITE

It's gay canon trope that the two of them were a thing.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

It's glorious.

HELEN

Karim, what would you say your favourite is?

KARIM

Oh, so many.

HELEN

Mm.

KARIM

Yeah I, I agree with Marguerite, Star Trek 4 is by far and away the best film because it's, it's funny, it's touching, it's powerful with what it's saying etc. etc.

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and it just has the best gags. Other than that, my favourite episode from pure acting I suppose as much as anything else is "Family".

MARGUERITE

Yeah!

CATHY

Mm.

KARIM

Which is the episode after Kirk got turned into a Borg and he went back to his brother's um, er, vineyard and has to recover and basically has a complete-

MARGUERITE

[whispers] Picard!

KARIM

-emotional breakdown trying to, you know, cope with what he's done whilst as a Borg et cetera.

HELEN

Wait, Kirk got turned into a Borg?

KARIM

Oh yes, spoilers!

HELEN

I only thou...I thought the Borg was a - was just a Next Generation thing, I didn't realise they were on the Original-

KARIM

Yes - sorry, not Kirk, not Kirk, Picard! My apologies!

HELEN

Oh OK! Oh my god, I was like WHAT?!

KARIM

Yeah, no, sorry, Picard. My apologies, yes.

HELEN

Imagine Shatner playing a Borg. [laughs]

KARIM

Episode 2, season 4 I think? Because it's after um Best of Both Worlds or whatever?

CATHY

Mm hm.

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KARIM

I can't remember the specific number but that - it ripped my heart to shreds because I thought that, that, that's - yeah, actually showing what happens after something like that happens to somebody in his position.

HELEN

Mm.

MARGUERITE

Yeah, the recovery. And it's Patrick Stewart in full chops, it's really good.

KARIM

Yeah so those are my two favourites I suppose one can say. Although if you want to, cross-generational, the Tribbles series.

(Group laughter)

KARIM

The Trouble with Tribbles, More Trouble with Tribbles, Trials and Tribble-ations.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

And the Short Trek! Have you seen the Short Trek about Tribbles?

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KARIM

Ooh no, I've missed that one.

HELEN

No...

MARGUERITE

OK, so the Short Treks were a series of really short video clips, I think they're all about 10, 15 minutes long, there were two seasons of them, and they were released between I believe like season 2 of Discovery and season 1 of Picard. And they are, one of them is a little prequel set up to Picard, and some of them are side stories that set up a bit more about Discovery. There's one involving, er, I won't spoil any of it, but there is a Tribbles Short Trek. I will say the words to you: H. John Benjamin, i.e. the voice of Archer from Archer.

HELEN

Ahh!

CATHY

OK.

KARIM

Mm hm.

MARGUERITE

It is some of - it is 15 minutes of Trek you don't want to miss.

KARIM

OK.

MARGUERITE

If you have Netflix in the UK they buried the Short Treks under like the "extras" section so you have to kind of dig around to look for them under Discovery, but there's, I think there's a total of 8 of them now, and some of them are animated.

HELEN

Lovely.

MARGUERITE

But yeah there is another, a lovely other Tribbles episode. [laughs]

KARIM

One of the many lovely things about the whole Tribbles thing was if you watch the first one you can see that the guys in the brown coats, you know the set guys, are chucking the Tribbles at Kirk, obviously trying to hit him on the head.

(Group laughter)

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KARIM

When you go to Trials and Tribble-ations, they're doing the same thing as the characters.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Fantastic.

KARIM

It's beautifully stitched.

HELEN

On that, I think we're going to go to a break and we will see you in just a minute.

[BREAK]

HELEN

And welcome back. OK, so, I want to start digging into things. I would like to know who we think is like, the best captain.

MARGUERITE

[sharp intake of breath]

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KARIM

Oooh...

CATHY

Course. Course you had to ask us that!

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

Oooh!

KARIM

Well naturally it's Captain Archer.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

When we remember his show exists...

HELEN

Yes!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Because one thing that's always interested me about Star Trek is that they all have to make really tough, sometimes morally questionable decisions and are left to deal with the consequences. I do remember one particular Twitter account which is "Picard Management Tips".

(Group laughter)

HELEN

And it gives actually really good people management advice if anyone wants to look that up! [laughs] I would hesitate to name who I think is the best captain because for me, because it was such a formative part of my childhood and teenager-hood, all of Star Trek has merged into one, and it's only with difficulty that I can separate out - oh right, that person is in Voyager and that person is in DS9.

KARIM

Mm hm.

HELEN

So I've got no idea. But I feel like Captain Janeway was cool.

KARIM

Oooh...

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HELEN

I remember thinking that she was cool. Am I incorrect?

MARGUERITE

I think the answer to that question depends a lot on who you ask.

KARIM

Yeah.

HELEN

Ooh...

MARGUERITE

Karim, you want to start?

KARIM

[laughs] I think, I think Janeway was hampered by the series and the writing, which was weak.

HELEN

Oh yeah, hm.

KARIM

Or weaker, shall we say. I mean I was wondering why I was buying the VHS tapes every month just because I loved Trek and therefore it was Trek I was

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buying them. Because it was, there were, every long-running series has weak episodes and strong episodes.

HELEN

Sure.

KARIM

Voyager had a larger proportion of weak episodes and some fairly dodgy character interactions that didn't really make much sense. And some very ham-fisted "how are we going to get ourselves out of this story this week?" Lots of technobabble, lots of characters dying and coming back and stuff and it's like - what?! Just, no.

HELEN

Really? The main thing - the main thing I remember is Captain Janeway being very determined and very decisive all the time.

KARIM

Yes.

HELEN

And me being like a little bit of an anxiety-ridden child being: "Wow, wow, imagine being certain of things."

KARIM

I will put my hand up that being a man I am probably coloured in that respect as well. Especially being a man of a certain age. Not that I disagree with it, because I, you know, I'm really happy with strong female characters and stuff like this, you know, cover me in Babylon 5 and I'll talk you through all of that lot, but-

(Group laughter)

KARIM

But I think she was not well-served by the scripts and so she didn't get a chance to shine. Her acting, she was always very stand-offish and stuff like this, and any of the more emotional episodes, that which I remember, were very... less well-handled shall we say, and so she didn't get to show her range as well as I would hope her to. I think that...

HELEN

Hm. So who would you pick, Karim?

KARIM

It has to be Picard, sadly.

HELEN

OK!

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KARIM

I say sadly, but no - because-

CATHY

Sadly?

KARIM

He had a great deal of range, he went through a hell of a lot of tough stuff as a character as well.

ALL

Mm.

KARIM

The fact that we got another series with him is fantastic.

MARGUERITE

Yeah.

KARIM

So, I mean I love all - I don't like picking favourites generally so-

HELEN

Oh OK, sorry, sorry!

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KARIM

Well no, no, no it's a perfectly valid question in this scenario!

HELEN

[laughs]

KARIM

Because each captain and each crew member and each episode and each series brings something to the canon, and that's lovely, and I love all of them but in their own ways. There are just weaker parts than others, so. [laughs] So yeah, if I had to pick a favourite I'll pick Picard, but they all had fantastic episodes, they all had weak episodes, but Picard just had the greater range over the nine series and the films in my place.

HELEN

Cathy, what about you? Who would you choose?

CATHY

I would have to go the Picard route as well.

HELEN

OK.

CATHY

With notable nods to Janeway and maybe some to Kirk. I mean I appreciated Kirk for being the hotshot of sci-fi at the time-

HELEN

[laughs]

CATHY

Which I think was, was good to have, I mean especially coming off the earlier science fiction like space jock-y type, you know, er...

MARGUERITE

Buck Rogers and all of that...

CATHY

Rocket to the Moon type thing, space exploration type thing.

KARIM

He was - he was very much of his time.

CATHY

Yeah, yeah. Definitely. And the strides that they made through the series with him as captain and the decisions that he made were...I really enjoyed seeing that, but Picard in Next Gen resonated with me so much more because he has a style of leadership that was not what I was used to seeing.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

Mmm.

CATHY

I was not used to seeing somebody who was not, you know, the young, the person in their young 20s calling all the shots.

KARIM

Mmhm.

HELEN

Yeah.

CATHY

I was not used to seeing a leader who put diplomacy first.

KARIM

Yeah.

MARGUERITE

Mm, fair.

CATHY

Which I think we need more of!

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Oh yeah.

CATHY

A leader who, you know, emphatically says in one of the episodes: sometimes you do everything right and you still lose.

KARIM

Yeah.

CATHY

That's called life.

HELEN

Yes.

MARGUERITE

Yeah.

CATHY

I mean that's a lot of good messages that Picard as a captain kind of put out there that I think was very, very much needed then and now. And Janeway,

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

I'm in the same boat, like I really wanted to like her character. The times that I did catch Voyager I think she just was done a disservice.

MARGUERITE

Absolutely.

CATHY

Like I did appreciate that she was kick-ass captain and I love her just for the sake of being a female captain in the Star Trek universe. But yeah.

KARIM

Can I put a pin in the ground here for the new cast of the films?

CATHY

Oh yeah.

KARIM

Because I think they did a phenomenal job, particularly Karl Urban who I will watch, you know, read the phone book as far as I'm concerned.

CATHY

[laughs]

KARIM

I thought he did a fantastic job as Bones.

MARGUERITE

The Kelvin-verse Kirk is so much more enjoyable to me than Shatner was as Kirk.

KARIM

Well once again, men of their time, I mean-

MARGUERITE

And that's not just because- yeah. And that's not just because they used the Beastie Boys in one of those shows.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

We haven't even talked about the soundtracks, oh my gosh Giacchino's track titles could fill an entire two hours, that man is a genius!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

All right, we will come back to the more recent films I think-

MARGUERITE

Yes.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

But Marguerite I want to hear who your favourite captain...?

MARGUERITE

I have two favourite...leaders. The first is, is definitely Sisko.

HELEN

Mm hm.

MARGUERITE

And the reason for that is because Picard and Kirk were both white men in charge of a military structured command system.

KARIM

Yep.

HELEN

Yep.

MARGUERITE

And - talk about the lowest difficulty setting.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

Whereas you take - well you take Benjamin Sisko who is a parent, a single parent.

KARIM

Yep.

MARGUERITE

A man of colour. In charge of a civilian station, so where he's managing a militaristic crew and a civilian liaison and civilian concerns.

HELEN

Mm.

MARGUERITE

Ben had so much more to deal with.

KARIM

Oh yeah.

MARGUERITE

On an interpersonal level than Kirk for sure ever did.

HELEN

Mm hm.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

Or at least on-screen with Kirk...

MARGUERITE

Picard close to, and I think, I really loved the crossover episode where Sisko and Picard, still wearing his implant removal scars, converse.

KARIM

Yeah.

HELEN

Mm.

MARGUERITE

Because it really is that wonderful juxtaposition of the impact these two men have had on each other's emotional lives. And so I think, I think Sisko had so much more to deal with than Kirk or Picard ever did.

HELEN

Speaking of films, let's do the talk about the Star Trek, the latest Star Trek movies, the ones with Chris Pine and Zach - Zachary-

KARIM

Quinto.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

Quinto.

HELEN

And er-

KARIM

Karl Urban.

HELEN

Karl Urban.

MARGUERITE

The Kelvin-verse.

KARIM

Yeah. The J.J. Abrams "oh god stop him doing it again again again again please".

(Group laughter)

HELEN

What do we think of them?

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

[sighs] How to mess up really good ingredients...

(Group laughter)

KARIM

It's the J.J. Abrams template. Remake a film badly or well, remake a film not quite as good as the first one, then try and do something else that's even worse to completely change the plot, and then try and have it rescued by other people.

HELEN

Oh dear!

CATHY

[laughs]

MARGUERITE

Even a great chef can ruin brilliant ingredients.

KARIM

Yes.

HELEN

[laughs] See I think that was why I have such mixed feelings on it as well because I was - when I watched those films I was like: this feels like something I should be enjoying more and I'm not sure entirely why I'm not. Cathy, what did you think of them?

CATHY

I'm middle ground.

HELEN

OK.

CATHY

Like, I appreciate them for the candy that it is. But, I mean-

HELEN

[laughs]

MARGUERITE

I love that! That's great!

CATHY

Like there's some good stuff in there, there's-

Rusty Quill - Enthusigasm – Star Trek

KARIM

Yeah, yeah.

CATHY

There's um, there's er, Easter eggs in there, it's nice to see Nimoy back on the screen.

KARIM

Yep.

CATHY

Yeah, the plot is convoluted...

KARIM

Well yes and no.

CATHY

Beyond, yeah. [laughs]

KARIM

I mean let's be honest, the second film was a bad remake of a previous one.

CATHY

[laughs] Yes!

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

(Group laughter)

KARIM

And it's like... you had all this opportunity to make another fresh story and you badly remade one from the previous crew.

CATHY

Yeah. Right.

KARIM

Why? You had all this - you had - argh!

CATHY

I mean, I mean I suppose that's an easy out for Hollywood if that works, just take every single Star Trek movie and remake it as a new series movie with a twist. But yeah. It's not, they're not selling it especially when it's nothing but lens flares like every five seconds.

HELEN

[laughs]

KARIM

As a dyed-in-the-wool fan I, I want new stories, I don't want them remaking the old ones, it's just lazy scriptwriting.

HELEN & CATHY

Yeah.

MARGUERITE

It's intellectual property rights, that's what it is!

KARIM

Exactly! It's just lazy! And the last thing I want from somebody with a couple of hundred million budget is lazy scriptwriting.

MARGUERITE

If you're gonna get Idris Elba, USE THE MAN! I mean come on!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Urgh, yeah!

KARIM

Benedict Cumberbatch as well, you know?

CATHY

Yeah.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

MARGUERITE

Oh don't get me started on that casting, that was A Choice.

KARIM

Yes, that was like...why? Not really Khan as far as I can confirm from you know, canon really.

HELEN

No!

MARGUERITE

That's the whitest Corinthian I've ever seen!

KARIM

Yes, exactly. It's like - how many Asian actors could you have actually got into that role?

MARGUERITE

And especially with a brilliant character like Khan, if you've read the novels he is an interesting guy.

KARIM

Oh yes!

MARGUERITE

He makes horrible choices with horrible decision, with horrible circumstances but you can establish a base of empathy with him if not sympathy.

KARIM

Yep.

HELEN

Mm.

MARGUERITE

And instead we have an elven prince in a clear box.

KARIM

Yes.

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

And I don't understand how we got there!

CATHY

[still laughing]

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

Exactly. It's, it was just such a shame, and I mean I'm glad Simon Pegg took to helming the next film because at least he, at least he made an original story.

MARGUERITE

He's the best part we got!

KARIM

And it was so much better but I think unfortunately the whole franchise had been holed below the waterline at that point which was sad.

MARGUERITE

I don't think the Kelvin-verse is going to go much further.

KARIM

No.

MARGUERITE

I mean I agree with you completely, there are some fantastic performances, some wonderful Easter eggs and cameos. I will go to the bat for Giacchino soundtracks and just their creativity, like you can hear the main theme, which is called "Enterprising Young Men"-

HELEN

[laughs]

CATHY

Yes, yes, oh I love that track so much!

MARGUERITE

In the season 2 - in the season 2 finale of Lower Decks.

KARIM

[laughs]

CATHY

Ohhhh!

MARGUERITE

That's how well they have been tied together. So - oh I've made Cathy very excited!

CATHY

I'm so excited now!

KARIM

But then from a perspective of creatives as we are, isn't it great to see that someone can spend a whole lot of money and still mess it up?

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

Oh I know, right? Talk about freeing? It's like - whew! At least I didn't do that!

OK!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

We are coming to time on this episode, so I would like to round us off with um-

KARIM

I'd say we could carry on talking for about three hours at this point!

CATHY

Yeah!

HELEN

Oh yeah! This happens a lot! This happens a lot!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

I'd like to round us off with like a bit of a fun question.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

OK.

HELEN

Now, for those who may not be as familiar with Star Trek as we are, on, I think on all of the ships there's a holodeck.

KARIM

Mm hm.

HELEN

Which is a-

KARIM

The newer ships.

MARGUERITE

The bigger ones.

HELEN

The newer ships, the advanced tech ships. There is a room where you can make it show whatever scene you like and it's very realistic, and you just go in, you can make it be a nice restaurant, you can go in and sit down and interact with people and it's all computer animated and you can do whatever you like in it. And I'd like to know what all of you - like what would be your ideal thing

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

to make the holodeck create and like walk around in? Because I think at this point in time I would just like it to be a really nice beach and a really nice sunset and one of those deckchairs with the umbrella over it.

(Group laughter)

HELEN

And some endless nice drinks.

KARIM

Yes!

HELEN

And then I would stay locked in the holodeck for a week.

MARGUERITE

You'd become Commander Barclay and we'd have to drag you outta there!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

What about the rest of you? What do you think would be interesting to make the holodeck do?

CATHY

We're all stuck in our thoughts now!

MARGUERITE

Yeah!

KARIM

That's a tricky one.

MARGUERITE

Like what wouldn't we want it to do, right? It's literally you have all of Star Trek creation at your fingertips that you can recreate.

CATHY

OK so, to an idea I probably, the first thing I would do in a holodeck is I would try to break it because I can't help myself.

(Group laughter)

CATHY

So probably what I would do is go in there and key up a recreation of the TARDIS, and then go inside the TARDIS...

(Group laughter)

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

CATHY

And see if I could create some sort of feedback loop of “it's larger on the inside than it is on the outside.” Just over and over again, let's see how far we can take it!

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

IP lawyer brain breaking!

HELEN

I love that Cathy. Very inventive.

KARIM

Spinning me into a potential conversation about Doctor Who which would last five hours, sorry!

(Group laughter)

KARIM

I suppose I'd love to join them in The Big Goodbye in the jazz club.

HELEN

Aww!

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

CATHY

Oh yeah! Yeah, that'd be fun. Go on one of the noir investigative detective stories.

MARGUERITE

Like every Trek-

KARIM

Yeah. Dixon Hill wasn't it? The character that Picard liked playing?

CATHY

Mm yeah, think so, yeah.

MARGUERITE

Every Trek has its like "Historical Re-enactment Society of Starfleet Officers" theme!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Love it - holodeck is just high-tech LARP-ing!

MARGUERITE

Like I think it was like full-on silver age to the point where it was filmed in black and white?

KARIM

Yeah.

MARGUERITE

For Voyager?

KARIM

Oh yes, I remember that one, yeah.

MARGUERITE

You know they did lots of like Sherlock Holmes stuff and Victorian murder mystery type stuff in Next Generation, yeah.

KARIM

I love the one when Sisko went back and was the comic book writer.

HELEN

Ooh!

MARGUERITE

Oh, that was so good.

KARIM

That was such a good episode.

CATHY

I gotta find that, so cool.

MARGUERITE

That was really sweet, I liked that a lot. I think if I actually had access to holodeck technology that I'd want to like explore more of that universe that we don't get to spend so much time with.

KARIM

Yeah.

MARGUERITE

Like we get flyover shots of the Vulcan homeworld or the Klingon homeworld, you know, we don't get to go and walk through it, sit with it. I mean you wanna talk about an opportunity, as VR is starting to develop. You know those great slow movies that they did for Star Wars where you could just literally sit and watch an hour's worth of a drone flying over Tatooine or whatever.

HELEN

Mm hm.

MARGUERITE

Give me that for Trek, right? Give me that for Kahless and for like um, er, I can't remember what his species is called, yeah, anyway, pick any alien species

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

and their home planet and let me do the slow beauty pass through it for a couple of hours.

KARIM

Mm hm.

HELEN

So you'd want holodeck Google Planet, like?

MARGUERITE

Well yeah because, I mean think about it. Star Trek suffers from one of those classic issues of science fiction which is: every planet is a monoculture.

KARIM

Yeah.

HELEN

Yes.

MARGUERITE

The idea that when you go there all of our people, all seven million of us on this one planet have this one culture and do this one thing and wear this one cloth, and like, let me get into the nitty gritty, I mean let me get into the, the Drell politics of who gets to have a symbiont and who doesn't and what the planet looks like and what our government system looks like or-

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

The Drell or the Trill?

MARGUERITE

-show me a - the Trill, you're right. I'm thinking-

HELEN

I was gonna say, because Drell are Mass Effect.

MARGUERITE

It's Mass Effect. Well, tell me Picard season one isn't Mass Effect? Tell me!

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

I dare you!

HELEN

I'll have to watch it first!

MARGUERITE

But like - show me a season on Kahless that isn't volcanoes at night, right?
Give me, get out of that monoculture per alien species and let me actually
experience the diversity of this universe.

KARIM

Yeah.

HELEN

Aww, those are all really, really good answers! Aww, I'm so glad, that was-
[incoherent delight] I'm so, I love doing this! I love doing these episodes, it's so
good!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

You're all so good!

MARGUERITE

Well great! Now that we're warmed up...

KARIM

Yes!

(Group laughter)

CATHY

Yeah, yeah, we're ready now!

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

Let's crack out the brandy and have some more conversation!

CATHY

Yeah!

MARGUERITE

Let's get into Starfleet politics!

KARIM

Romulan Ale anyone?

CATHY

Mm, yes please!

HELEN

No, no, I have to take command of this ship and say that that is the end of the episode.

MARGUERITE

Can I tell you just one thing really quick, what my ultimate - can we answer like one more short question and then you can cut us off really really fast?

HELEN

Oh yeah?

MARGUERITE

Which is - what is the one thing we want most out of a new Star Trek series?

Like if we could write a Star Trek series, what would we want?

KARIM

Good question.

HELEN

Ooh.

MARGUERITE

And I will happily go first. I want JAG. I want the political fallout and the legal ramifications of Starfleet's decisions.

KARIM

[laughs]

CATHY

Ohhhh...

MARGUERITE

Put me in the United Federation of Planets courtrooms, let me see us wrangle with those decisions to allow genocide or first contact. I'm such a law nerd but let me get my law nerd in your Star Trek!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

Do you know what? I would absolutely be on board with that but I would go even further, I would say like legal, law court drama, but dealing with space disputes.

MARGUERITE

Yeah.

HELEN

Absolutely. And like - what are the actual laws?

MARGUERITE

Let me have it.

HELEN

Who vaults over the, into the- what do you call the little bit where the judge is? Because I know you're not meant to go in there.

MARGUERITE

[laughs]

HELEN

Um... but yeah. Who gets dragged out for contempt?

MARGUERITE

Like what does the UFP courtroom look like? How do you build a courtroom environment? How do you have a jury of fair trial if you're the last member of your species?

KARIM

Mm hm.

HELEN

Yeah!

MARGUERITE

You know, I could do this forever. That is what I want. I want JAG in Star Trek.

HELEN

You're right, that would be great. Cathy, what do you reckon you'd like to see?

CATHY

Oh gosh. I mean now that you mention that, I'm thinking like Star Trek: CSI.

KARIM

[laughs]

MARGUERITE

Oh!

HELEN

Ohh!

CATHY

I mean, that might just be Torchwood, I don't know how we're, you know, we're managing all that but I, it could still be fascinating.

MARGUERITE

Or like the corps of engineers. Like who's the crew who comes along after you've poked the thing and you've survived and you run away? Who shows up next to put that thing in containment, to scan it, to get its diagnostics, to try and drag it back home, to make some poor graduate students break it apart and figure it out.

CATHY

Right, yeah, yeah!

MARGUERITE

You know, I frickin' love that!

CATHY

I would love to see so much more of like the science of that, that happens instead of just accepting the technobabble as it is. Let's go into like, a scenario where there's engineering of the warp core itself and trying to improve upon it or science discoveries that go wrong, or just even a closer, something like "House" but Star Trek, you know. Taking a closer look at all the medical procedures. It would be, that would be-

MARGUERITE

Oh like Mercy Hospital, like, I mean - that's a whole show right there, right?

CATHY

Yeah!

MARGUERITE

OK - run a hospital for every known species. Go! Right?

CATHY

[laughs]

HELEN

Yeah!

KARIM

They had that in Babylon 5!

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

HELEN

What about you Karim?

(Group laughter)

KARIM

Just saying!

MARGUERITE

Bless you Karim!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

He really is obsessed with Babylon 5! OK.

KARIM

I'm sorry! OK, I'll do mine then which is actually different - I'll say Section 31.

HELEN

Ooh.

Rusty Quill - Enthusiasm – Star Trek

KARIM

The guys who the dirty work to make the Federation work to be nice on the outside.

MARGUERITE

Hold that thouuuught! It's coming!

KARIM

I know! [laughs]

CATHY

Yeah!

(Group laughter)

MARGUERITE

I can't wait! Um - go watch the Tribble Short Trek. That's all I'm gonna say.

KARIM

OK!

HELEN

[laughs]

KARIM

I'm looking forward to it it's, as a, that's, there's got to be some guys that do the dirty work and there's so much potential intrigue and stuff in there. It's like that's one of the weaknesses in TNG, they had so many of those background stories, like when the aliens were infecting a whole bunch of guys, I think it was season 2 or season 3, with the little tail at the back of the neck?

ALL

Mm hm.

KARIM

That storyline died and that would have been a brilliant one to take across seasons of that sort of insurrection stroke invasion, and that never went anywhere and I was like - that, that story I want to see finished. I want to see the consequences and how that came out.

HELEN

OK. Now it's definitely time to end the episode!

MARGUERITE

Sorry Helen!

(Group laughter)

HELEN

I'm very sorry! I will see everyone in the next episode of Enthusigasm, but for now it's goodbye from me - goodbye. And it's goodbye from everyone else, do you all want to say goodbye?

ALL

Goodbye!

[Show Theme - Outro]

HELEN

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[Show Theme – Outro Ends]

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