

Behind the Scenes

Out-of-Character (OOC) Information and Interviews with the Players

Jerrid Billings' Player

interview conducted by Lt. Cmdr. Durandus

(puts her hand on her chin in an attempt to look serious) So, I have come to realize that although I feel like I know you rather well, that there are still quite a few things I don't know about my valiant Captain. So tell me, how long have you been SIM-ing, with USF or otherwise?

Oh, wow. I've been simming for as long as I can remember. I started in the USF in.... '97, I wanna say, and I was in a few other smaller sim groups before that. So right around 16 years. But what surprises people more than how long I've been simming is how old I was when I started. I was only around 7 or 8.

Wow, you were quite the youngin'! I can only imagine the adventures you had... the trouble you've gotten into during all those years...

I was a royal pain in the butt. I couldn't spell, my grammar was terrible, and I wrote about the most ridiculous things. I honestly don't know how my ship mates put up with me back then. But Captain Tage was a very tolerant woman. She told everyone to basically ignore me and let me do my thing, because I was obviously having fun, and that's what simming is all about. Eventually, I began to mature and learn what I could do, and what I couldn't.

(mumbles under her breath) Well, the royal pain in the butt hasn't changed... **(coughs and smiles)** Well, I'm glad that you had a mentor, so to speak. It's uplifting to hear that our fellow USF-ers are so open-minded and willing to work with others for the sake of fun. Do you know if any of your old ship mates are still active in USF? Do you share old war stories?

Actually, quite a few of them are. Sol Berman remained on Starbase Everest and eventually became her Captain. He constantly reminds me how much I've grown since then. I also served as Captain Jhalen Fjori's XO on the Columbia for a few years. And though Lyra Rose is no longer simming, she still keeps in touch with the host string.

That's amazing! You're more of a veteran than I would have imagined. Sure, I started way back in the late '90s as well, but life and hiatuses happened. What is it you enjoy most about USF that keeps you coming back to us so consistently?

There are many reasons. First, and most important, I really enjoy the people I sim with. On every ship I've served on, there's always been at least one person who's made an effort to make me feel welcome. And the Captain's I've served under were all VERY talented writers. I can't remember a week where I wasn't looking forward to what that sim had to offer, and how I could make myself a part of it.

I really enjoy writing, and Star Trek has always been the greatest passion of my life. Sharing my creativity with my peers is a fulfilling, rewarding experience, and I can't imagine a better way to have



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? 15 years

What brought you to the USF? I don't even remember. I think I stumbled across it surfing the web one day.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? 3 years

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? 16 years

What other genres of role-playing do you do? World of Warcraft (Computer) and Pathfinder (Tabletop)

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? Deep Space Nine

Star Trek movie? The Undiscovered Country

Star Trek game? Star Trek Online

Star Trek book? I.Q.

spent the past 16 years.

(slow claps) Honestly, that's the best USF speech I've ever heard. I believe if I ever continue my marketing campaigns during my convention trips, I am definitely going to quote you on that. That's absolutely terrific.

Well, as a minion of yours for a while now, I can tell you that your experience over the years with talented writers and warm welcomes has definitely rubbed off on you. Quite frankly, I have yet to interview a Hermes crew member that would say otherwise. And what's more, your plots keep the crew talking even outside of SIM time. How do you manage to balance that fine line between insanity and intrigue when it comes to creating your epic plots?

I don't! Haha. But seriously, when it comes to writing a plot, I always ask myself one question: What would make the best story? Often times, the best stories are about the characters themselves, so if there's a crew member I wanna highlight, or a relationship I want to draw attention to, I'll come up with a story to put that character center stage. And all the while, I look for different twists and turns to keep the sim interesting. Cliff hangers and epic plots twists are a specialty of mine, which is good, because those are the kinds of things that keep your simmers coming back for more.

Well, your insight is truly inspirational. I'll be sure to give you full credit when I get a ship of my own to torment... I mean charm. Is there anything else you'd like to add before I let you continue about your business of enticing the masses?

Yes. $3+7=10$. - Just kidding!

(raises an eyebrow) Yes... Well.. Also, very inspiring... Thank you for that. Again, thank you for your time, Captain Billings. I hope to see you around USF for another 16 years!

Trust me. If everybody in the USF retired, I'd still be here writing a plot for anyone who wanted to see it.

Ken Kennesaw's Player

interview conducted by Captain Loriarra

I've got it on good authority that you weren't looking to become the Hermes' XO, but only serve as CMO. **(smirks)** Did Billings charm you into it eventually?

At the time. I You could say that, yes, it's true that I wasn't looking for the XO spot, but the fact is I wasn't even looking for another post at the time. I was asked to come help out and ended up staying

Which means you probably really like the Hermes, hm?

I do. I started out helping out in medical, then ended up being talked into CMO and then XO. Billings is a great conartist.



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? I have been on the Hermes sim for about 3 years.

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? I started simming in 1997.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? I only sim in Star Trek role-playing games.

What is your favorite:
Star Trek series? The Next Generation
Star Trek movie? Star Trek III: The Search for Spock

(chuckles) So I heard! What's the best thing about the Hermes to you?

The folks that play on her. They all take the game seriously, but don't mind getting a few surprises that I or Billings put to them.

It's awesome to have a great crew. Makes being a host really fun, doesn't it?

That it does. This crew seems to have become really close over the past 2 years.

That's wonderful. (smiles) I've also heard that your IC wife has joined and you get to play with her again. You've been writing with her for a long time, haven't you?

We have. I was ecstatic to find out that she would be able to join simming again and then come back to a ship I was on. We have continued our story line from our other ship together.

What ship was that?

USS Ares.

Ahh. And how long have you two been writing together?

Four years I believe.

That's pretty cool. I'm glad you get to enjoy continuing that story.

So am I.

So, if Ken wouldn't have gone into Medicine, what do you think he'd be doing now?

Good question. If he hadn't come on board at the Hermes, I guess he would be enjoying his retirement and spending time with his little girl.

But you never saw him doing anything but be a Doctor, hm? He's pretty tall, could have been a Security officer.

He could have been, but he's not one to follow every order, and he can get away with it better in medical than he can in security.

I see. A little bit standoffish?

You can say that. If you read the character profile, the character has been demoted for JUST that more than once.

I saw his little boyish teasing of the dogs. (winks) You think that sort of personality is something an XO needs? Being able to stand up to the CO at times? Seems more like a James Kirk trait.

Not sure, I guess it depends on the person behind the character.

But you and Billings work well together OOC, right? How's the relationship IC?

(laughs) Again, it depends .. but on the situation, Ken has his rebellious side and sometimes it comes through at the wrong time.

(chuckles) Any favorite wrong time you can recall?

When Ken pulled rank and pulled the CO off duty, when he was the CMO.

I think that's a favorite thing to do, or at least threaten to do, of any CMO! (snickers) Mine included.

Yep. *(laughs)* I've even had it done to me, by our current CMO.

Uh huh, it comes back to bite ya. (laughs, too) Alright, so is there anything else you'd like to mention?

Only that if you ever get a chance to come watch, please do so. It's a Hoot. Billings is a wonderful host and a great story writer.

Sara Kelly's and Diana Shapard's Player

interview conducted by Captain Loriaarra



Now, knowing that you play on other USF sims as well, I must ask you about your recurring choice of doing double characters for them. Is that something you like doing? Or just something that happens incidentally?

(laughs) I just like to multitask! No really, it just happens by accident. I never really intend to do two or more at once. However, I enjoy throwing in some NPCs when we need extra people, but it is never my intention to extend the NPCs to playing character... until it happens. In fact that is how Diana came to be.

We had a sim in which we had to create alternate characters that had to save the day because all our main characters were incapacitated..... then I kept Diana on as an NPC after we finished that sim, and I grew to like the character so much I couldn't resist making her an actual playing character. I love to write logs and develop characters... so I guess I just can't help myself.

(chuckles) That was basically my next question, wondering if one is your main character and the other an NPC, or if you switch equally in between them however things happen in sim or for log writing. Do you have a favorite between Sara and Diana? Or do you truly like them equally?

Hmm....I like them both. I can't really say I have a favorite of any characters I play in the USF. Each one is my creation, and each one is fun to develop and grow with throughout the sims. Sara and

Player OOC Stats	
	
How long have you been with the USF? About 3 years.	
What brought you to the USF? My mother was apart of USF for years....I finally joined her and have been hooked ever since!	
How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? About two years with Sara, and a year and a half with Diana. I actually started Diana as a result of one of the sims where we needed to come up with new characters for a period of time because our main characters were incapacitated. I liked the character I created so much I decided to keep her and make her an actual playing character.	
How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? Three years, USF was my first.	
What other genres of role-playing do you do? None.	
What is your favorite: Star Trek series? I love all the series, but my favorites would have to be Voyager and TNG. Star Trek movie? I LOVED the new Star Trek MOVIE! Very well done.	

Diana have different personalities and different lives, and so it's fun to explore both characters. Sara has had a lot of drama during her time on the Hermes, but is very loyal to her friends on the Hermes. Diana has had a rough life, but enjoys what she does, and loves the excitement of the Hermes.

That's cool. You get to explore the same setting from different aspects. Nice. (smiles) So, it doesn't get confusing to you at times playing two characters?

Not really. Sometimes if things are going pretty crazy in sim I accidentally say something from one of the characters that was meant to be said from the other. (shrugs) But that's not too bad, and I try not to have it happen often.

What is interesting though about Sara is that she is the only human character I play in the USF... She's the only character that I play that does not have ANY telepathic or empathic abilities. So it's kind of fun playing her and being completely ignorant of some of the tensions or moods of the other people around her. And what is awesome with having Sara and Diana together is that I can both be ignorant and know what is going on in people's head at the same time! Best of both worlds.

That sounds like something Freud would be all over. (snickers) Anyway, whose sim characters does either of your characters get along well with, and whose do they completely clash with?

Sara absolutely hates MU Ethan Grimms (from the Mirror Universe), she thinks he is egotistical and altogether useless, mainly because he is always thinking of himself more than anything. And he always complains about having to do things... not to mention he has a knack for getting in trouble and bringing everyone else around him down with him. She also doesn't like the fact that he just came from the Mirror Universe and arbitrarily got to be apart of the crew and be used on away missions. She thinks he can't be trusted.... and yet she knows he's knowledgeable and does tend to be useful, which makes her even more bitter about the whole thing. Everyone else Sara pretty much gets along with.... it actually takes a lot to get under her skin... and MU Ethan Grimms tends to cross that threshold often.

Diana just thinks Ethan's antics are funny. She doesn't really care whether he's there or not, as long as he is not putting himself or others in danger. Diana has a natural compassion for everyone, being a physician, and so can get along with pretty much anyone. However, she can be fiesty and she will not let people get away with things in sickbay. She knows how to defend herself and others, especially when it comes to their safety and health. If Diana has found something worth fighting for, she'll not give up until she's won. She gets along the best with Kayshl, and the two pretty much run sickbay. If you ever go up against the two of them--watch out! They're a dynamic duo with similar determination and lack of fear when it comes to fighting for what's right.

Well, that's a short list of antagonists. So, what type of setting do you like playing out in sim or logs best, the dramatic, or the peaceful, or maybe even comedic stories?

Yes! I enjoy all of it. Although the drama makes for good writing, you have to have some peaceful and some comedic stuff in there, too.... or it'd be too tiring. Really it's like life... a little bit of everything... sometimes more drama than fun... sometimes more fun than drama. It's what makes simming and developing characters so awesome! You get to create and experience whole lives... the best thing is that the story never ends--you simply get to have unlimited adventures as you grow and discover new things about your character and everyone else's characters.

Well said. Last question. What is it you like best about the Hermes sim?

The people. There are a lot of wonderful simmers on the Hermes. The player of Ethan Grimms being one of them. He always makes the plots interesting (and gives Sara something to be angry about, or Diana something to laugh about).... And Kayshl. I LOVE to JL with Kayshl. She is amazingly creative and between the two of us--we can throw in some twists and turns to the sim plots ourselves!

I can see why you say that. It seems like they're a really great bunch from what I've seen.

I also enjoy when we get to contribute to what plots we do. Billings allows us to come up with ideas for the sim plots and will give us the reigns to the sim if we want it. Although often time there are like four or more subplots going on at the same time so it can get kind of crazy. The sim definitely keeps you on your toes!

Olsen Jaraq's Player

interview conducted by Lt. Cmdr. Solik

What sort of things can you tell us about Olson, that's not in his bio or the IC intro?

Nothing really, I tried to cram everything into the bio when I updated it last time.

Ok, fair enough. Force people to read that then, eh? (winks)

It's a little bit long I'll admit, but there was a lot I had to fit into it. (smiles)

Ah. So, what do you like about portraying a Security officer? Would that be your first choice if you could join Starfleet?

Actually I think my first choice would be Engineering, but I went for Security in the sims for the action.

Interesting. What's the appeal to engineering?

I have an almost morbid fascination with the warp drive as a means of faster-than-lightspeed travel.

Aw, can't be that bad.

Not obsessive, but it still intrigues me since it is actually a theoretical possibility.

Ah. What would you consider to be some of Olson's strengths and weaknesses?

One of his main weaknesses would be that he isn't very social, he prefers solitude. I think his strengths are that he's very resourceful and great at thinking on his feet.

Well, those strengths are certainly good qualities for being in Security. And Engineering, for that matter. So, what sort of things do you like about the Hermes?



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? It's closing in on 2 years now I think, I joined in the latter half of the summer of 2010.

What brought you to the USF? I was looking for a way to convert stardates to regular dates when I stumbled upon the USF site and after browsing around on it for while, I decided to join.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? For as long as I've been in the USF.

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? The USF is the first one I've tried and the only one I'm in.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? Not counting skyrim. This is the only one.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? It's a tie between Voyager and TNG.

Star Trek movie? First Contact

Star Trek game? I've only tried two, Bridge Commander and STO and Bridge Commander is, well to be honest, crap, so it would have to be STO.

Well, it's a very active and light-hearted crew, they joke around a lot. It's fantastic simming with them and there's always an exciting plot being played out.

Cool. Back in 2009, the Agamemnon did a small joint-sim plot with them. They seemed to be a pretty good group.

Yes, they are.

Well, I thank you for your time, and I'm sure our readers appreciate it as well.

I hope they do, look forward to seeing the next issue.

Andrew Carmello's Player

interview conducted by Lt. Cmdr. Durandus

So, I hear you found USF via the assistance of Google. What prompted the search that brought you to USF those 5 years ago?

Actually, it started with a video game. I love *Star Trek: Bridge Commander*, it's my favorite Star Trek game ever. I wanted to do more games like that, but there were no simulation games like it. Therefore, I searched Star Trek Simulations and found the STSF, then USF after leaving STSF.

I assume by STSF you mean the "Star Trek Simulation Forum" over at www.stsf.net?

Yes. I didn't like the way they simmed, so I found USF.

Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? 5 years.

What brought you to the USF? Google search.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? 4 years.

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? 6 years.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? Beside video games? None.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? Star Trek: Voyager

Star Trek movie? Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan

Star Trek game? Star Trek: Bridge Commander

Star Trek book? Star Trek: Voyager series books.

Not that I mean to downplay any Star Trek RPG out there, because by all means the more the merrier, but what was it that drew you to USF? Was it something specific, or just the draw of something new?

The idea that I didn't need to go to the Academy and I loved the logging system.

Interesting! Well I'm sure happy you moved. (winks)

Yes, very. I'm happy.

So do you have a favorite log you've written, perhaps a plot that is epically memorable?

The very long relationship plot between Tapal and I, and our battle with the Mara... it's a very long log series written when we were on the Independence and transferred to Hermes.

Is Tapal another character of yours or another player in USF?

Another player. She used to be on the Hermes, but eventually had to back down due to time constraints. We were married before that happened, so we now have the plot set so that she is now off duty, at home, taking care of the kids.

(nods) I see. I like that you were able to integrate her absence so well into both character's story-lines.

Yes, it worked out so nicely.

So, having served on two different ships with one character, do you see any major differences between the two?

I really can't tell a true difference. Plot wise, they are both a great sim as the captains always come up with such excellent plots. I see nothing wrong with either sim. No real major differences, besides the people.

I notice you haven't done any other RPGs outside of Star Trek, any particular reason?

I didn't know really what that question meant when I answered it... did it mean video game RPGs, or things like our Slimming? If the first, then I've played many, if the latter, because nothing else has interested me.

Well I took the question to mean both when I answered, you know, MMOs, D&D, etc etc...

Ok, then I've played lots.

One last question, any reason why you always play Engineering characters?

In real life, I'm a very stagnant person. I do like to try new things, but in this case, I just love engineering. I've never gotten tired of it. I'm not a big tactical person and I'm nowhere near a science or medical person, so I settled for engineering because helm and OPS seem too boring for me.

I like getting into the meat of the ship. I like to act like I'm repairing ships and I also love the technobabble and the technical aspects of every starship that has been created, canon and non-canon. I love every bit of engineering and never get tired of it.

Well, is there anything else you'd like to add, before I let you go for the evening?

I just want to say that I love simming with a passion. I'm on 5 different sims, currently on LOA for some because of school work, but I'm on 5 sims because I love to sim. Over the summer, I did nothing and would get bored, waiting for Friday, the Lothlorien, my first USF sim, to come so that I could play. I started looking for other sims for that reason.

Now, I have started so many sims that I love and cannot bare to leave without great heartbreak. I love to sim and think every time of a canon Starfleet Officer as my role model for each sim I do.

I am glad that you do! It's nice to see players so passionate about SIMming. Thank you so much for you time and have a wonderful evening, Mr. Carmello.

Thank you you too!

Malcolm Sarif's Player

interview conducted by Captain Billings

So I know you haven't been simming for very long. What do you think so far?

It's definitely something new and exciting for me. The crew keeps things fresh, and I enjoy it a lot.

How did you get interested in simming?

That's all thanks to you of course! I watched it from the sidelines for about three weeks... and after that I was just ready to dive in. Haven't looked back since.

Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? Been on the Hermes for roughly 2 months.

What brought you to the USF? The captain, my friend, recruited me.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? This is my first sim.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? I don't do any role-playing besides some anime cosplay. I'm actually a Firefly fan, thus my character's heavy influence from Malcolm Reynolds (as well as Adam Jensen from Deus Ex).

That must have been a fascinating experience, watching that from the sidelines for the first time. What interested you the most?

I've never seen simming before, and it reminded me a lot of improv comedy! Just instead of crackin jokes, people were improv'ing *everything*... the action, the plot, the reactions, the conversations... everything that happened was fresh and never rushed. So that aspect was really appealing to me, and it's still a big part of why I continue to show up every Tuesday night.

Good to hear! Now, let's talk about Malcolm. I was very impressed with his bio. You've created a very rich character for yourself. Why don't you tell us a little bit about him?

Mal is definitely a "shoot from the hip" kind of guy. His past isn't too shiny, he's had a few run ins with people he'd rather not associate with. But for now he has his things in order, and tries to stay laid back. He's got a mechanical arm prosthetic. Kind of gives a steampunk feel to a futuristic character.

He worked for a criminal organization, didn't he?

That he did. Turns out Mal had a very unsettling, life threatening altercation on a planet with some undesirables. He had no money, and the only person willing to give him a surgical procedure was the local crime lord. Without Mal's knowledge, him being in a critical state and all, the crime lord gave him his mechanical arm to replace the one he had lost. He used this instead of a biosynthetic prosthetic because the body would rely on an expensive drug called Neuropozyne to prevent the body from rejecting the implant.

So, long story short, Mal was in his pocket because it was the only way Mal could acquire the drug. If he goes without it longer than two weeks, the arm believes the user is trying to remove the implant, at which time it will shut down the entire nervous system. Luckily, Mal was able to eventually steal a shipment of the drug and escape.

That's such a rich story for someone who's never simmed before. Where do you get inspiration?

It's actually a combination of two separate characters. Mal's personality, appearance and first name are inspirations from Malcolm Reynolds of the late *Firefly* series. The mechanical arm and backstory are influences from Adam Jensen of *Deus Ex: Human Revolution*.

Sounds like you have a keen interest in science fiction.

Yeah, I've always been enthralled with sci fi in general. Firefly, Starcraft and Mass Effect stand out to me as my most avid passions in sci fi. I enjoyed the Star Wars movies as well. But the only time I was exposed to Star Trek was when my dad used to watch *The Next Generation*. I like to dip into everything, so I'm glad I took the opportunity to learn more about Star Trek and interact with the fans of sci fi in a way I've never done before, through simming.

What's your favorite part of simming so far?

I can tell every person on the ship has unique relationships with each crew member, so I love the interesting and often hilarious interactions between people. Someone like Ethan is gonna provoke Kay or Tanok into rolling their eyes at his actions, while Olson is often likely to join and cause further shenanigans to ensue. I'm looking forward to establishing those sorts of relationships on individual levels.

Sounds like you'll be doing this for awhile. Do you have any plans for your character's future?

I've got a couple things in mind, of course. But I'm definitely willing to just sit back and see how things unfold as a crew. We'll see how it goes. In any case, I'm definitely looking forward to it.

Last question. Being a new simmer must be an exciting and overwhelming experience for you. What advice would you offer future simmers who have never simmed before?

Oooh. Tough question. I would say that your backstory is very important, but don't try to rush and get your character at the center of attention when you immediately join. I found it was better that I've developed gradually into my position. Now everybody is comfortable with me and I'm starting to form those unique relationships with people like I talked about earlier.

Tanok's and Satak's Player


interview conducted by Captain Billings

So first thing's first. How did you get interested in Star Trek?

My parents had always made a big deal about it. They have collected every Star Trek Christmas ornament since they were first released in the late 80's. But I kind of blew it off as an "adult thing". But then my best friend sat me down, when we were about 15 or 16, and had me watch a few episodes of TNG, and I was pretty much hooked immediately.

What did you like about it?

I liked the balance of story and action. Almost every episode seemed to play a relevant part in the overall plot line, and there was always some sort of action, be it a fight scene or some very interesting science phenomena. And, the

Player OOC Stats	
	
How long have you been with the USF?	I have been with the USF for 3 years.
What brought you to the USF?	My best friend became Captain of the Hermes.
How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character?	For 3 years, as long as I have been with the USF.
How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether?	Again, 3 years.
What other genres of role-playing do you do?	I am into table top games as well as this.
What is your favorite:	
Star Trek series?	The Next Generation
Star Trek movie?	The new Star Trek release.
Star Trek game?	Star Trek Online

deal was sealed when I was introduced to Q, one of my favorite characters across all of the shows.

Ah, yes. I can't imagine anyone not liking Q. So I hear you run two different characters on the Hermes. Is that true?

That is correct. After developing my first character, Tanok, to nearly the limit of his capabilities, I decided he needed a cohort, someone starting off to follow in his steps, and that someone needed to be in my control. The two characters compliment themselves greatly, if I do say so myself. *(winks)*

Let's talk about Tanok for a second. He's a Vulcan, right? With a few special abilities?

That is true. Tanok was developed to have telekinetic and telepathic abilities inherited from his father. Of the course, of the two years that I have played him I have progressively built his abilities, but managed to keep things realistic and manageable, so that he is not a "broken" character.

And what about Satak? What's he all about?

Satak required an entirely unique characterization from Tanok. A simply copy paste wouldn't work. I wanted him to be a Vulcan as well, but he needed something to make him unique. So to go along with the usual mass of scientific knowledge, I have had him trained in advanced thrown weapons combat, which has proven very useful in multiple SIMs.

That sounds like a pretty handy team. Now, is simming with two characters difficult? Would you recommend the experience to anyone else?

I'd only recommend it if the simmer is almost 100% focused on the sim at all times. It requires a lot of switching back and forth between IM windows, and you need to make sure your speaking or acting for the right character or people can get confused. If you can do this, it's incredibly handy and helpful. Even I make a few mistakes sometimes and it all works out ok. But if you can't handle the amount of focus required, I'd stick to a single character.

So you've been simming on the Hermes for a couple years ago. Whats your favorite simming story so far?

I'd have to say the SIM that I wrote myself and lead was lots of fun.

You wrote a sim? What was it about?

Imagine if you will a species that feeds on all living things, sometimes even converting them into hideous beasts that are slaves to a hive mind. Some would call it a Borg sort of species. I say, take the Borg, combine them with the flood from the Halo video game series, and multiply the evil and terror by 50 and you have the Brood. And the Hermes had a pretty terrifying run in with them.

That sounds exciting! What was it like, running a sim?

It was very intense. You try to plan everything in advance. As a logical thinker I find that I can easily cover a lot of story holes and plan for some of the unexpected. But it always seemed that someone was creative enough to come up with something I could no plan for. It was very exciting and fun!

Sounds like you had a good time! Last question - What advice would you give someone who wanted to try and write a sim?

My advice would be to sit down and really consider the possibly of the SIM playing out. What is

the goal? What effect do you want the plot to have on the simmers, and write out an actual plot line to see if it's really plausible and if you need to fill in story holes. If you can do all of that and answer those questions, you'll be well on your way to writing an excellent SIM.

Sounds like a plan! Thank you for taking the time to sit down with me. (smiles)

You are very welcome. Thank you for the interview.

Katelin Troi's Player

interview conducted by Cadet Styles

What was your main influence in creating this character?

My convention friendship with Majel Barrett Roddenberry and Marina Sirtis as Troi.

Now that is definitely a awesome influence. You are personal friends with them, or were in Majel's case?

Majel, at conventions, only. But she would ask my husband and I to bring our poodles to come see her every time she saw us.

(smiles) That is pretty awesome.

She owned poodles when Rod was little. We found that out when we went to her memorial service.

Now, I see you mention that Troi is extremely religious. Do you include that in the sims?

My religion is like the Bajoran religion, and yes. That is why I am not at some sims. Holy Days are going on for us right now. When Troi has time she goes to the temple.

Well, I meant more do you do anything special DURING the sims because of this?

Yes. She does say prayers. My character's sister is a Vedek.

Nice. Now. Her dog on the ship is telepathic? Where does he originate from?

Now he is. He was not in the beginning. He bit the Captain and got a nano bot. He is just starting to speak to her, but he is not that strong mentally yet.

(raises a brow) A nano-bot, from the captain?



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? About three years or so.

What brought you to the USF? I met Fleet Captain Tia Ryan at the big Las Vegas convention.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? 3 years

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? I think more than 15 years.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? None; pure grade AA Star Trek fan.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? Star Trek: The Next Generation; that's because of my dogs: Data, Tasha, and Will Riker, the Star Trek Poodles.

Star Trek movie? Star Trek: Generations

Star Trek game? Any.

Star Trek book? Any of the Mirror Universe ones.

He has them in his blood. He's a Trill.

Well, that should be interesting to read about. So, Will was a normal dog before biting the captain?

Yep, in every way.

What made you decide to have him become telepathic?

He is empathic, he can sense when I am happy or sad. He will come to me and sit in my lap. He waits to be hugged.

(smiles) I actually think all dogs are like that.

Mine is worse, We had a picture done with Majel, right before she died. She held him in the picture.

So, you decided to take it a step further with him and make him able to communicate telepathically?

Yes, because he looks at me and when I say something to him, like "go get Mr. Cow," he gets it. We were told by a trainer that he was a little too smart. You tell him get a lighty ball, and he comes back with it.

(smiles) I have a toy poodle, and she knows the difference between her toys. She will go after what you specifically say.

He knows color. Dogs are suppose to be color blind.

In the sim, will the dog talk only to Troi, or will he communicate with others on the ship?

Only to Troi. We have to build the bond and the link.

(nods) One more question. One that I ask everyone... What do you see as the future of the type of simming that we do in the USF?

Mmmm, I would like to see a StarFleet Corps of Engineers Sim for one, I would also like to see more people like me. This is not just for younger fans. I am one of the seniors in the group. I started simming with AOL 3.0.

Thank you for your answers.

(Note: For more information on Katelin Troi's player's real life connection to the Roddenberry family and many different Star Trek actors, see the interview about the Star Trek Poodles with her other character, Maggie Grayson, in the [February 2011 USF PADD](#) under the "Behind the Scenes" section for the USS Independence.)

Kayshl Durandus' Player

interview conducted by Captain Lorianra

I have to tell you, I'm actually rather flattered that it was the PADD that drew you back into the USF. (smiles) And I'm glad you help out as much as you do.

I don't recall ever knowing of a chat-based RPG with a publication, so the mere fact that it existed was intriguing. When I found out it actually had some riveting content, too, I just couldn't resist myself. Having designed things like that all my conscious life I just couldn't help but join in on the awesomeness.

(chuckles) Anyways, now that I'm done blowing my own horn. (smirks) Betazoid. Why? I've noticed you play her very flirty and forthright, like I've only seen one other person play a Betazoid character before. Is that the fun about it?

(grins) Honestly, your horn playing is luring...

(laughs) Flattery won't get you nowhere.

(flutters her eyelashes) Flattery usually gets me everywhere.

As for the Betazoid question... I can get pretty deep and philosophical with that response. I suppose it depends on how much you want to know about the player. I guess the short answer is that I wanted a character that could be flirty and fiery and sarcastic, but caring and empathic.

Betazoid characters always seemed a bit more.. risque to me. Troi's mother, Roxanna, comes to mind. I also enjoyed their religions beliefs and their openness. As you may note, from some of Kayshl's logs, she does take advantage of the Betazoid's openness to nudity.

Actually I have to confess I haven't read many of them. But I can tell from her intro she's some-thing else, dragging my camera guy off like that.

But in general, I've just noticed that a lot of people who play Betazoids, which notably in USF it most often seems to be a Betazoid hybrid, do it only for the reason that they'll have the ability of



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? I have been active on the Hermes since 1/19/11. I was actively assisting with the USF PADD for a few months before that. Technically, I'm fairly confident I was active in this group back in the late 90s (maybe around 1997-1999), using a Vulcan character, but I'm not entirely sure it was USF. However, it's the only explanation I could come up with for being subscribed to the USF PADD.

What brought you to the USF? The USF PADD actually. I started just wanting to help with the PADD after I saw the Photoshop tutorial sections. After I did an interview with Ens. Maggie Grayson (i.e. Counselor Katelin Troi), I decided to join the Hermes and get back into my old vice. I've been addicted ever since, and I slap myself for ever leaving.

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? I've been on the Hermes with Kayshl Durandus since I started, so about 14-15 months now. ~Wow... it's been over a year! Seems like I've spent a lifetime with the crew of the Hermes. The almost feel like family now.~

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? Well I started back in the good-old-days of AOL Chat rooms and all their dial-up glory. I know I was actively role-playing online since junior high, so maybe as early as 1996. I went on an ELOA for awhile through college, but I've been doing some sort of role-playing since then.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? Well, I started with Star Trek chat-based online RPGs. From there I have gone to MMORPGs (i.e. Worlds of Warcraft and Star Trek Online), and even tried my hand at a Fantasy-style forum-based RPG in 2007 with an elemental character I created. I had a short stint with D&D last year, but it was short lived. I am primarily active in USF and STO now.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? Star Trek: The Original Series

Star Trek movie? Either Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan or Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country

Star Trek game? Probably Star Trek Online, but I haven't played many others. There was one other one I enjoyed, a First-Person-Shooter involving the TNG timeline, but I can't remember what it was called.

telepathy and yet still look Human.

Honestly, and I suppose obviously after my previous admission, I never thought about picking a character based on ability. I knew the personality I wanted to portray, and that was the best fit for me. *(gives a playful grin)* I can tell you Kayshl's first off-duty experience on the Hermes was... interesting... *(recalls images of boxers waving outside the mess hall windows)*

***(laughs)* Do tell.**

(gives a devilish smile) Well, I'm not exactly proud of the outcome of the shenanigans in question... it led to quite a bit of a mess, and the Captain wasn't at all pleased. *(her grin doesn't fade)* However... he did get to know me quite well after that. *(revels in some internal joke)*

In a nutshell... Carissa, a former Hermes crewmember, and I had a bit too much wine in the Holodeck and decided to find an answer to a debate we were having... *(pauses for dramatic effect)* Boxers or briefs.

We found out for ourselves and sent them out into space on a sensor probe for all to see. *(her eyes glisten)* That inadvertently caused the entire ship to swap bodies and our litter prank ended up causing a lot more grief than intended. As luck would have in, the Captain ended up in my drunk, high-heel wearing body.

***(chuckles)* I remember reading some of those logs. That was actually along my next question. Do you actually manage to embarrass Billings? I mean in any sim, not just that one.**

(pauses to think about that one) I did in a free SIM once, not sure if that counts.

He's not easily embarrassed, hm?

He's not easily bested or embarrassed. He's also a very busy person; it's not easy to joint-log with him. Thus why most of my personal logs involve other ... confederates...

That doesn't seem to diminish the enthusiasm of the crew, though. *(smiles)* I've done one JL with him when he was on the Loth, before he left for the Columbia, and I was the counselor there at the time. *(smirks)* I remember something about foot odor...

Oh yeah! He came in and took his shoes off and put his stinky feet on my desk.

(jots down a note about the Captain having stinky feet)

And the entire crew is "Overly Enthusiastic". *(puts emphasis on the words as if it's some huge inside joke)* One of the many things I love about it.

It's great to have a crew with enthusiasm. Makes simming so much more fun. *(smiles)* So, if there would be anything at all you could change about your character, what would it be?

Nothing, honestly. I want to have a character that seems real, and is relatable. So I would hope that any imperfections would be benefits. But if I had to change something it would probably be to develop her family history and relationships more. I've touched on it lightly in logs before, but haven't done anything in depth. Nothing a few more personal logs can't solve though.

Well, get to writing. *(winks)* Planning on becoming a host, someday?

(grins, flattered at the mere suggestion) Is that an invitation, Ms. Editor-in-Chief?

***(chuckles)* Maybe. We definitely need more.**

As always, I'm usually up to no good. So there may or may not be some evil plans afoot for future "leadership" positions...

I was going to ask you if you had a special plot in mind you're just itching to play out if you became a host.

Yes, actually, but I'd hate to ruin the surprise. Let's just say I couldn't have thought of it without the support of the Hermes' crew and the Captain's exasperatingly entertaining plots. So you'd have to offer me a position and a crew first to find out any more details. *(winks)*

In fact... if you have any volunteers... *(looks around for stray PADD workers)*

(chuckles)* Well, unfortunately I don't have the power to grant you a ship or a crew. But maybe someone from HC will read this. *(smirks)

(grins excitedly and fluffs her hair) Oh well, excellent. I'm glad you got a good profile picture then.

So, lastely, aside from your support for the PADD and your lively involvement with the Hermes, you've also taken initiative to do some advertising for the USF, care to tell us about it?

Well, I was invited to go to Dragon Con with some friends this past August. I was extremely excited to go, as Leonard Nimoy was scheduled to attend and I just ordered a shiny new uniform to wear to the event. I had heard from Billings that he had done some recruiting at a few conventions he's gone to in the past, and I know a few people that have doen the same at the Vegas con. So I decided to design a business card to take with me and recruit a few people.

And did you get to hand out a lot of them? How were they received?

I gave out most of them. I sent a few to Billings, though. Overall, they were very well received. People loved the design and the idea of USF.

I suppose you don't know first hand if anyone actually checked out Sector001?

I know a few people did. A few classmates I tried to recruit and a friend I ran into at MegaCon.



"Business Card" Kayshl designed for advertising the USF

Nice. Maybe this will inspire some other USFers to come up with ideas on how to advertise Sector001. It would be great to get more new blood. *(smiles)*

Well, if they need any advertising assistance, or a pretty little Star Trek model, they know where to find me. *(gives her best Vogue pose)*

So, thanks for your time, Kayshl. Very enlightening and fun.

Always a pleasure.

Ethan Grimms' Player

interview conducted by Lieutenant J.G. Brott

So it appears I'm not interviewing the real Ethan Grimms at all? If he got sucked into your universe and died, how did you get into our universe? What do you miss the most about your universe?

Well... "real" is a relative term. I'm as real as anyone else. I just happened to come from another dimension.

Doesn't that cause dizziness or cramps?

As to how I ended up here? It was all that "other" Ethan's fault. He accidentally opened up a tear in space/time and got sucked into my universe... the one you all so affectionately call the Mirror Universe. And then got himself captured.

The Hermes came after him and got themselves into trouble. I reluctantly helped the other Ethan and some of his crew mates escape. But Ethan was killed. My vessel - the ISS Hermes - was destroyed shortly thereafter. My home was lost.

Were you part of the Terran Empire?

Yes, I was an officer of the Terran Empire, newly rebuilt after winning our freedom from the terrible Alliance.

The mirror universe is known for housing evil versions of us from this universe. Would you say that's a fair statement?

Not at all. Though, don't ask any member of the USS Hermes' crew that question. They'd likely have a different answer.

They don't like you I presume? Lack of trust?

I feel like I've earned their trust and respect. Or, at least, I should have. I have saved their collective butts a number of times since I took up residency aboard the Hermes.

Well, that is something. Now for more questions. I see you have been simming sporadically for 15 years. What made you go back and forth and now finally stay put?

Honestly it's still a little sporadic. I've been simming semi-regularly with the Hermes for several years but I have taken breaks from the sim a couple of times. In fact, I left the sim (and the character of Lt Cdr Grimms) and initially was not going to come back permanently.

In a land of Xbox and online games, what brings you back?



Player OOC Stats

How long have you been with the USF? I've been serving sporadically for about 15 years. I've simmed as multiple characters on various sims. I've even hosted more than once.

What brought you to the USF? A friend of mine was recruited and told me about it. They didn't last, but I did!

How long have you been on the Hermes sim with this character? I joined the Hermes and created the character of Ethan Grimms in June 2008. I've been playing the mirror-universe doppelganger of Grimms since May 2010.

How long have you been simming/role-playing altogether? USF was my first experience, so about 15 years.

What other genres of role-playing do you do? None.

What is your favorite:

Star Trek series? The Next Generation

Star Trek movie? The Wrath of Khan

Star Trek game? Voyager: Elite Force

Star Trek book? The Destiny trilogy by David Mack

Characters and relationships. Playing a video game is cool... that's fine... but it lacks depth. And you're playing a story that's already been pre-written. In USF, you can create and develop your character however you see fit. You can write logs to fill in their backstory and give them personal growth. You can create relationships with the crew.

The primary reason why I came back - and have stayed back - on the Hermes for the past couple of years is that I was really excited about the idea of killing off my character and then coming back as his doppelganger. It just opens up so many story ideas, and allows me to play a totally different character. Captain Billings asked if he could get me back on the sim as a "guest star." It was only going to be temporary, for one story. But then we introduced Mirror Grimms and things just escalated.

What personality traits do you bring to Grimms from your real self and what is clearly not you?

I'm incredibly sarcastic. It's just engrained in my personality. I use it at work. I use it in my personal life. And I definitely incorporated it into Grimms, only I turned it up to 11. Mirror Grimms is incredibly selfish. He doesn't care about others' well beings as much as his own. His number one priority is himself. I'd say that's only sometimes true with me IRL!

So if Grimms is a civilian on the USS Hermes how can he be in a position to save the ship, single handedly, each and every sim?

Well, I mean, I shouldn't have to. Let's be honest. The ship should have a capable crew. And they are... most of the time. Sometimes they just take too much time talking, or thinking. They don't act! Alien at your door? Shoot it. Don't spend an hour trying to talk to it. They're just so damned optimistic.

So people from your old universe were a little more action rather than reaction. The old explore vs. exploit debate.

Exploitation really isn't a part of the Hermes crew's vocabulary. I, on the other hand, have no problem with taking advantage if a situation presents itself.

When did you come to realize that our universe was the correct one?

Who says I have? I've.... grown accustomed to it. And there's nothing left for me back where I came from. Everything I had.... everyone I cared about... is gone.

Oh come now Mr. Grimms surely ever fiber of your being tells you we have it pretty good here.. well, if you skip the Dominion War.. and the Borg.

Yeah, see! I didn't know anything about the Dominion or the Borg until I came here. In fact, the Hermes found itself sucked back in time a few months ago and we ended up at Deep Space 9 at the start of the war. It's not all sunshine and roses here, ya know.

If a rift opened up to the old mirror universe, would you go back?

I.... I don't know if I would go back. I would need a reason to, I guess. There was someone... who I cared deeply for back home. But as far as I know, he is dead. If I knew... I mean, if I had proof that he was alive.... I dunno. That was a couple of years ago. I... I don't know if I could just go back like that.

How would the mirror universe receive a visit from the USS Hermes? Try to capture? Would you help save the ship despite being 'home'?

I suspect that the Terran Empire would see the Hermes as a threat, should it enter their universe. I wouldn't recommend vacationing there. And I don't wish any ill will on the Hermes crew. I mean, I

don't want them to die. I guess I'd do my part to try and help them if I had to. Maybe. *(shrugs)*

That's very... commendable of you. *(grimaces)*

See! Another example of me having to save them when I shouldn't have to.

Does the Hermes bring in a lot of elements from TNG, your favorite series, into their plots? Also do you get the chance to write any plots?

The Hermes brings in elements from all over the Trek universe, and TNG is definitely included in that. In fact, the Enterprise-E worked its way into a supporting role in a plot not too long ago.

I am very grateful that the Hermes' CO, Captain Billings, is open receiving ideas and feedback from the crew. I don't normally come up with my own plot, but I might brainstorm with Billings or offer up suggestions if he is suffering from writers' block. Sometimes I will introduce my own B-plot that can run concurrent with his A-plot. I've definitely contributed to some of the story direction in the past.

What do you hope for the future for Mr. Grimms, the USS Hermes and simming in general?

Well, as far as Ethan Grimms goes... I am not sure where I'd like him to end up. I love the character. I will not kill him off (been there, done that). I'd like for him to become a useful member of Federation society in his own special way.

I adore the Hermes crew. They're just great people. I hope that they all stick around for a long time, and that the sim will prosper and thrive. The same is true for simming and the USF. There are times when I am genuinely surprised that the organization has survived for so long! Trek is in such a weird place right now. It's suffered a downward spiral, then went dormant until JJ Abrams did the reboot. There's no Trek on TV these days. Things are kinda quiet. But it's great to see the USF still going.

That leads me to my last question. You now are in charge of creating the next Star Trek TV series. What's it going to be all about?

Oh geez... there are so many options. I think that, from a business perspective, the smartest thing would be to build off of the success of the Abramsverse. ST2009 was a critical and box office success. They're filming the sequel now. I would probably work with Team Abrams to develop a series set in this new universe. New characters. New setting. But tie it in with this new film franchise.

Would certainly raise the production values even further.

Don't get me wrong... I still love the 'prime' universe very much! I just don't think that you could do another TV series set there right now. I'll just keep reading the novels to get my fix.

Yes, those have slowed down a bit. I'm reading "Watching the Clock" temporal investigations novel now. So any last words for the readers of The PADD, or I mean The Grimms?

I prefer my statue be made out of white gold. A national holiday in my honor is fine. Please, no parades. I find them tacky.

I will forward that to the people most likely to push those agendas through committee. Thanks for taking the time to answer some questions. Any time I look in the mirror I'll think of you.

Fantastic. Thanks for the interview!

