

Transcript for #TalkDaredevil Episode 3: The Future of Mature Marvel TV

VOICEOVER: You're listening to #TalkDaredevil, the official podcast of the Save Daredevil campaign.

PHYLLIS: Hey, everybody. Welcome back to a new episode of our new Daredevil podcast, #TalkDaredevil. I am super-stoked to be joined by some different members of our team. I'll start off by introducing myself again. I'm Phyllis. You've heard me on the first two episodes, and I'm going to let the rest of the team introduce themselves now.

KACEY: Hi, I'm Kacey.

RHIANNON: Hey, I'm Rhiannon. You may have heard me before on other podcasts talking about Daredevil and all things Marvel, mostly at Marvel News Desk.

KRISTINA: Hey, I'm Kristina. You might have seen me if you've seen our Team Save Daredevil panel from Save Daredevil Con.

PHYLLIS: And today we are coming together to talk about the future of mature Marvel TV. Obviously, there's been a lot of changes at Disney, at Marvel, and obviously with this whole campaign's existence. We are doing a lot of work to try to figure out what's going to be the best way to see our show come back. But we're going to maybe take a quick break from just talking Daredevil and have a fun discussion about what we all want to see coming from Marvel, specifically with the mature content. So I think a good place for us to start would be looking back at what we did get from the previous age of mature Marvel. Rhiannon, since you are our resident expert. I'd love to throw it to you first.

RHIANNON: Sure. So what we thought we would start with is some look at what mature Marvel has been in the past. Right now everything at Marvel is with Marvel Studios, which is what we think of as the more family-friendly, for everybody type stuff like the Avengers movies. All of the movies, basically. And going on the TV side, it looks like they're following in the footsteps of those movies with Falcon and Winter Soldier and the Loki series and [French accent] WandaVision. [returns to usual accent] Sorry, WandaVision. I like calling it [French accent] WandaVision.

PHYLLIS: I love the French version of the title.

[laughter]

RHIANNON: Yes. Sorry, that was a little inside joke on my other podcast with [French accent] WandaVision. So it looks like all of that is going to be on that family-friendly ... Disney+, we know, is going to be family-friendly. But in the past, Marvel has had adult content, or more mature content, even though they still have had some lines that they would not cross. So what

they have had in the past ... I mean, they still have. Marvel Television still has a few remnants that are out there that are of a much more mature matter. They have Helstrom, which is probably going to only have one season on Hulu. And this is ... and Marvel has kind of taken their name off of it. It's not being advertised as Marvel's Helstrom.

PHYLLIS: Yeah, I find that very interesting.

RHIANNON: Yeah, but it is one of those last remnants of Marvel Television live action. Very dark. A horror show. And from what I'm sort of hearing from folks that have gotten screeners is that it is very horror. It is very dark, and it's probably no coincidence that Marvel took their name off of it. But it is Marvel, and it is the type of stuff that Marvel Television was previously okay with having their name on. There's still some animated series coming. There was the whole Offenders universe that they were creating on Hulu with animated series. So when Marvel Television was dissolved, they seemed to have this limit of if it had been so far into production, they continued and did the whole season. If it was still in the outline stages, if the episodes hadn't been written, if nothing had been filmed, it was scrapped. So two of those four shows are still evidently happening and going to be seen by the world. But those were somewhat adult cartoons. [That] was what they were going for with those. We're going to have M.O.D.O.K. and Hit Monkey, right?

PHYLLIS: Yes. M.O.D.O.K. is the one that's going to be ... They're going to do a panel for that at New York Comic Con, so it must be coming out soon, I would imagine. And then Hit Monkey at the top of this year. When they officially cancelled Dazzler and Tigra, which was one of the ones that did not make the cut, they said that Hit Monkey was still in development, but we haven't heard any updates about it since then.

RHIANNON: OK. And the fourth one that was in that was going to be Howard the Duck, written by Kevin Smith. Just to give you the level ... I think a lot of people can visualize what a Kevin Smith level of maturity is. And that was sort of the level of maturity that those shows were going to have.

PHYLLIS: Actually, I think Dazzler and Tigra was Chelsea Handler. She was involved in that one. So, again, it was this sort of bar, yeah.

RHIANNON: Yeah. It was a little different than bringing Lin-Manuel Miranda on board and just bleeping a few of the more mature words. And then the other Marvel Television mature [shows] -- well, on live action -- there were some that made it on TV. But the one that didn't make it on TV of these recent [shows] was -- and for some reason this fell into Marvel Television, just because of the way the rights were weird as far as who had animated content and who had live action content -- but Marvel Television had actually worked on an animated Deadpool series with Donald Glover. And evidently it was going to be on Adult Swim. It was going to be [the] same tone, sort of, as the Deadpool movie, but you could do far more with cartoons. And that one got scrapped when Marvel Television was still Marvel Television. We

don't entirely know what got it scrapped. But there again, that was a mature direction that Marvel Television was previously heading in. And those are some ideas of ways that we could expect to see Marvel Television. Also, if we want to go into what did make it to the screens, we had Legion on FX. That was Marvel Television.

PHYLLIS: Yes, it was in a league of its own.

RHIANNON: Yeah, Marvel was involved -- no, sorry, that was a Marvel property, but it was still owned by Fox then. So it wasn't Marvel Television, but it was an adult show. It was completely unaffiliated with anything, no interconnectivity, which we'll talk about later. What we are all familiar with, if you're listening to this podcast, is the Defenders-verse on Netflix.

[chuckling]

PHYLLIS: That's the reason why we're all here.

[laughter]

KACEY: Yes!

RHIANNON: If you haven't watched yet, yeah, you should probably check it out. And why are you even listening to this podcast?

KACEY: You should check it out, sign the petition, then listen to us.

KRISTINA: That's right. In that order.

PHYLLIS: But, yeah, it's interesting to hear you recount all these things, Rhi, because it's a really interesting range. I think when I think about -- and we'll get into this further down the line -- but when I think about what Marvel seems to be moving forward with now, it's a certain flavor that is associated with the MCU and what you think about when you think about the MCU. So, just hearing all these different types of shows and all the different types of characters and teams they were able to bring on, even if it never happened, even if it never got out of development, it shows more of a range and maybe not risk-taking necessarily, but there was just room. There was room to explore and be creative with Marvel properties. And let's face it, Marvel has ... God, it's a candy store of ideas and characters and things that you can do. From here, we can maybe talk about just the dearth of mature Marvel live action other than Helstrom and these two animated shows. [It] feels like there is just a considerable lack of Marvel presence when it comes to this mature area of the superhero genre. And this is an area where we see all these brands just running into this corner. Obviously DC is up there, but the other platforms are making huge bets on superhero shows. We can talk a little bit more about that.

KRISTINA: Yeah. If you look at shows like Preacher, you look at shows like The Boys, these are shows that, yeah, maybe they cater to a niche audience, but people ate them up and they wanted more. And it's interesting that right now, except for Helstrom, we don't see anything coming out in that kind of vein from Marvel. And when you were talking about mature Marvel TV, I know that these shows didn't have a TV-MA rating, but I feel like The Runaways and Cloak and Dagger both went darker, certainly, than what we saw on the big screen. And Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D., every time they got a later time slot, they got darker. Again, never to the level that we saw in The Defenders, but it seemed like they were kind of dipping their toes in the water a little bit over there.

KACEY: Yeah, I never realized that until you just said that, Kristina, about S.H.I.E.L.D. You're absolutely right, now that I'm thinking about it. I think it got a little darker.

PHYLLIS: Was that season four, the Ghost Rider season?

KRISTINA: They are all mixed up in my mind.

RHIANNON: They're all mixed up in my mind. That sounds around the right time period?

PHYLLIS: Yeah. Because that was the first time they moved the time slot back, right?

KRISTINA: Yeah, and then all of a sudden you had Ghost Rider. He was out there and talking about how he killed a teacher because he was a pedophile. They started going into things that you just did not see on the big screen.

RHIANNON: However, when we look at the future of Marvel movies, Marvel Studios on Disney+, there is some hint of them going in these darker directions. Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness is going to go into the multiverse, and supposedly was going to have more of a horror vibe. Though the director left that, so it's possible that it was a change in tone or creative differences. But I think also that dearth ... We are never gonna get ... What we are currently seeing is nothing on the slate is going to be a Joker movie. Nothing on the slate is going to be even as dark as a Batman movie. We were talking Batman when we looked over at what DC is doing. You are never gonna have a Batman property that isn't a little dark. And I think that's super relevant to Daredevil fans because Daredevil and Batman are very closely related. They're very similar characters.

KACEY: Yeah. Even the Batman cartoon, the animated series from the early 90s, was dark, not only just visually, but the content. I just rewatched it over quarantine, just because we needed something to do, and I was chatting with a friend. She's like, "Oh, no! I still can't watch it! It scares me." And it's a kid's cartoon that is not scary, but the tone of it is very Batman.

RHIANNON: Yeah. You can't have Batman and not be a little scary.

KACEY: Right. [chuckles] He can't really be super duper friendly, because then it just kind of ruins the aura of Batman.

KRISTINA: I also think that there are some characters in the Marvel world, as well, [that are] just not going to work with a lighter touch, with a PG-13 or tamer rating. I was just having this conversation with someone. They were saying, "Well you know, you could do a PG-13 Heroes For Hire," and you probably could. And, as we heard about during Save Daredevil Con, with the fabulous Discussing Daredevil panel, there are runs in the Daredevil comics where Matt is happy and things are not all dark and dreary, where he's, I think, swinging on his way to work, just smiling and being happy. But there are some properties that just aren't going to work. You cannot have a PG-13 Jessica Jones. We've seen what happens when you try to make a PG-13 Punisher; it is not pretty. That's something to think about, too: the fact that some characters just won't work in that kind of smiley, happy, light-hearted vein.

KACEY: I'm interested why ... I mean I know why Marvel is very much trying to go in this family-friendly direction. They're owned by Disney and that's going to get them the most money. But the Netflix series is what brought me to comics, for example, and some [other] people as well. I watched all the MCU movies. I thought they were cool, yeah. And then I moved on with my life. And then I watched Daredevil, and now it owns my pocketbook.

[laughter]

KACEY: And now I'm with you guys, trying to fight to save this show. So obviously, a more mature [rating] can bring in a different audience, and it can be on a different streaming service, and it can be different. And I think that that'll bring in the bucks, too.

RHIANNON: So, also looking over at what DC has, because we could compare the Marvel movies to Joker and Batman and the stuff that DC has put in theaters [like] Justice League. And I don't think that's a very fair comparison in general; they're two completely different universes. And that can be a whole world of conversation. But I think also the important thing is to look at what you can explore in a TV show. And I think part of what you're saying as far as how invested we are in this world, yes, you can go and enjoy a movie and be invested in that world. Especially when you create 20 plus movies (I think 24 movies) that are all in the same world and connect and bring this along. But we've had 42 hours of Daredevil? I mean, we've had 36 episodes of Daredevil ... Wait, no. 39. This is what I get trying to do math off the top of my head. But anyways --

PHYLLIS: Don't look at me, I'm bad at math. [laughs]

RHIANNON: Yeah. We have --

PHYLLIS: That sounds good. 39.

RHIANNON: Three seasons. We have three full seasons of Daredevil, and then the full season of The Defenders, all with this character. We know him, we can get into his dark places, we can see these side characters and get to know them very well, and it makes us more invested in that world. Now, Marvel Studios is going over on Disney+ ... Like I said, they have these series that they're gonna do. They're still gonna be rather short series. And we will probably get more invested in those characters as we watch them. But on the DC side, they've gone that way as well. If you haven't watched the stuff on DC Universe, or now on HBO Max, like Doom Patrol, that show is very mature. I mean very mature. I mean, they have transgendered inanimate objects [laughs] that they go into. They have people exploring homosexuality, they have people exploring ruined relationships, they dive into who was chosen to be a mortal and who wasn't. There's abortion, there's demon ... I don't know, it just goes so many mature places that, really, if you're just trying to throw it in a movie, it would be ... I think sometimes those more mature subjects, they need time for you to see the reasons why you need to see the complexities, or else it is just crass. It is just doing things for shock value and moving along. I mean, that isn't to say ... I mean, the Joker movie was very much a widely acclaimed [movie]. [It] got Oscar nominations, it got an Oscar win, but I didn't enjoy it. I know a lot of people that didn't enjoy it. I feel that it's the type of thing that if the character, if we'd really gotten to know them through a slow burn series, it would have been stronger. So I think I touched on a couple subjects there. But I just wanted to go on ... I think the mature content deserves television rather than a dark movie here or there.

PHYLLIS: Yeah, absolutely. Actually, this is a bit of a tangent, but I do remember, I don't know who it was (maybe one of those insider accounts?), they were maybe talking about Loki or WandaVision probably, but they were remarking at just how excited they were for how the show was unfolding behind the scenes, and just the world-building: "It's incredible! It's amazing! It's nothing you've ever seen before from Marvel Studios in a film," which reminds me of this point. Yes, that's what you get from television. That's what you got from the three seasons of Daredevil, from all the seasons. You know, whether or not you loved each of the Netflix Marvel shows, you can't deny that it [came] with a sense of character-building and world-building that you just cannot get in a two-hour movie. So this might be a good place to transition into what's our wish list? What do we actually want to see from Marvel? This has been just a really interesting time of shifts, obviously. With the acquisition of Fox, they have a lot more of their toys back in their toy box to play with. Marvel TV being shut down and now it's Marvel TV Studios, I believe, is technically the television branch of Marvel Studios. We don't really know if [that's] going to be its own thing or if it's still just the Marvel Studio shows, right? And we know that Kevin Feige is Chief Creative Officer and he is ... I don't know if he's the be-all-end-all -- [chuckles] probably the-be-all-end-all -- about what they're going to move forward with.

KACEY: Probably.

PHYLLIS: So yeah, let's hear what do we want to see if Marvel were to tackle more mature content again?

KRISTINA: I think one of the things that drew me to the Netflix universe was the interconnectivity within those shows, but not necessarily a connection to the films on screen. I felt like it was just a different corner of the same universe and I really loved that. I know a lot of people have talked about tone and how the tone of the Netflix shows just don't mesh with the tone of the films in the MCU. And my answer to that is: right now in my town somewhere, there is someone struggling to figure out how they're going to feed their kids, and next door, there is someone playing with their toddler and laughing and singing funny Elmo songs. Life is complicated. The actual universe is complicated, and has all of these different facets. So why can't the MCU? I don't see a problem with that, and I think one of the reasons that the Defenders shows -- with varying degrees of success -- but I think one of the reasons why the storytelling was so strong was they did not handcuff themselves to what was going on on the big screen. They were able to say, "Yeah OK, so the Avengers happened and that was interesting, but anyway here's my story." Because that is how life works.

KACEY: It felt very human. Like I could walk out of my house, and I could -- you know, if I lived in New York and I lived in that particular part of town -- Luke Cage could walk down the street. Jessica Jones could punch me in the face. I mean, it felt very real and human and I could actually relate to these characters in some way. I love a good blockbuster. Who doesn't like it? But I feel like, in a weird way, the Defenders-verse characters could be my friends. I could have a beer with the Punisher. Maybe. I don't know; he kind of still scares me. [laughs] But I loved the down-to-earth quality of these characters and the way that they were brought to the screen. Yeah, there's still some superhero, magicky elements. It happens in comics and you just have to suspend reality for that moment. I would really love to see that again in a more mature Marvel Television series.

RHIANNON: I think on that same note, Kacey, there's also, when you look at ... After watching a lot of Netflix series, especially the Defenders-verse, and then I go and I watch the Marvel movies, to me the women characters are so much more real. They have so much more natural makeup. They're not --

KACEY: Preach it, Rhi! Preach it!

RHIANNON: You don't have, like, 15 year olds with false eyelashes. Whenever I go from watching these series to watching either network television or Marvel movies, there's just an element of realness in the women. Not that there isn't work that still could be done in the Defenders-verse and in making the women a little more real. But I think there is just something about the makeup and all of that and showing people having flaws. I think, overall, showing people have flaws, but women in practical shoes and practical makeup are a big thing.

KRISTINA: You know, I'm thinking about the very first moment we met Karen Page, and Deborah Ann Woll is a beautiful woman. She is absolutely gorgeous, OK? But when she was sitting in that police station, her eyes were red rimmed, she looked like crap, and I love the fact

that they were willing to go there. Yeah, she's just been arrested for killing someone, she's been drugged. She is not going to have her hair looking great, and I really applauded that, and that made me feel much more like this is really happening.

KACEY: I really liked that the women on the show didn't seem like they were put on a pedestal and goddess-like. They were very down-to-earth and real, and they weren't all damsels in distress. They had distressing moments, yes, but they weren't, [desperate, dramatic voice] "Help me! Oh, how could I ever ... What will ever happen to me?"

RHIANNON: So maybe you need a mature universe for people to accept that women aren't ... to push those boundaries in women. And I think, also, the other side, just to sort of segway that into the other area is television is the only place that we've gotten true LGBTQIA+ representation in Marvel. I mean, there was one gay side character in Endgame, but --

PHYLLIS: Was it really a gay side character if he only shows up for, like, two minutes?

[chuckling]

RHIANNON: How about a gay cameo?

PHYLLIS: A gay cameo. I think that might be --

RHIANNON: A gay one-liner? [laughs]

PHYLLIS: That would be a more fair assessment.

RHIANNON: There was a gay one-liner. [laughs] There was, like, the brush-passing of homosexuality in Endgame.

KACEY: I applauded Jessica Jones with her transgendered assistant.

PHYLLIS: Yes, that was huge.

KACEY: That was wonderful.

PHYLLIS: I think it kind of gets a little bit overlooked just because, at that point, everyone knew the show was cancelled, so I think it just didn't really make it as big a splat, but yeah, I mean, they were definitely heading ... Again, if you want to judge Marvel Netflix as a whole, obviously over ... There were definitely moments where there could have been more work put in, but as a whole, and as you saw them progress through more seasons of the show, you could see them trying more things and really making a bigger push to have these types of characters repped. And so, it's a little bit unfortunate that that got cut short.

KACEY: Yeah.

PHYLLIS: But obviously, I think ... That is a criticism I hear a lot when it comes to Marvel, and to go back to comparing to DC (even though, I'll say now that I don't watch a lot of the DC TV shows) I know that that is one area that they seem to have always done better about. They've always foregrounded underrepresented types of characters. Maybe someone can correct me if I'm wrong, though. That's kind of just the impression I get when I read up on those shows or I see those shows being talked about.

KRISTINA: I haven't seen everything in the DC television universe, but I've seen a bunch, and that was one of the things that stuck out to me. It's like, OK, on The Flash, on Arrow, on Legends of Tomorrow, you have gay characters, and it's never made a big thing: "Oh my God, they're gay!" It's never a thing. It's just, casually, Barry is talking to the police captain, and the police captain says, "Oh, my fiance won't let me eat burgers at home. He says it's bad for me." And then you meet the fiance, and it's never shown as weird. It's just, yeah, this is just life. And I really appreciated that. Now in our own show, we really didn't get that.

RHIANNON: I don't remember [unintelligible].

KRISTINA: But in the rest of The Defenders ... There was a one-off kind of joke line with the pervy pawn shop broker saying, "with this police scanner, you could pick up the mayor banging his boyfriend." That is the absolute only thing that I can remember in our show, but --

RHIANNON: Which is almost derogatory.

KRISTINA: Yeah, it is. It isn't really a great example. So yeah, our show could have done better on that. But certainly, Jessica Jones ... Just the decision to gender-bend Jeri Hogarth and make her out, and the casting for ... is her name Jillian (in season three of Jessica Jones)? I think it was Jillian.

PHYLLIS: That sounds like it.

RHIANNON: And that's the type of representation that I've been hearing is important. And I mean, I say this as a white cis woman, but what I've been hearing is that the goal is to get to that point where you have a random role of a receptionist that could be played by anybody, and you choose to fill it with somebody that provides representation and not make a big deal of it, and it not be something that's called out and, it not be that whatever makes that person a marginalized community is their whole identity, and I think that was a wonderful job that they did with that character. [It] was just a normalization of that that they did a lot of in Jessica Jones. I mean, Jessica Jones had a very progressive showrunner [whose] career just took off because of ... I mean, after Jessica Jones, the reason we knew season three was the finale of that was that she had this huge deal elsewhere to produce material, and hopefully some of her role in promoting these marginalized communities was part of that.

KRISTINA: And you know, I think it's interesting even with The Defenders-verse, as the shows went on, they started daring to do more and more. And something we learned with our Save Daredevil Con conversation with Steven DeKnight and Erik Olsen was that Netflix was pretty cool with pushing the boundaries, and it was Marvel who was kind of reining them in. Because, you know, we did get that word that Jessica Jones was not allowed to say, we got The Punisher saying it. We got some male nudity in both The Punisher and Luke Cage. We got some pretty brutal violence on pretty much all the shows. I guess Iron Fist didn't have that much that was exceptionally brutal, but on the rest of them we've got some pretty brutal violence. And I feel like I should say, just for myself personally, it's not that I'm not gonna watch the show unless it's brutally violent. That's not the point. The point to me is the violence was such an important facet of Matt's character -- he was struggling with it himself -- and so we had to see it in order to see what his internal struggle was about it.

KACEY: And the violence wasn't over the top. I mean, you could say The Punisher was a little bit over the top with the violence, but you have to with The Punisher. It's ingrained with the character. But the violence felt real and realistic in Daredevil, for example.

KRISTINA: Well something that's interesting, Kacey, you just talked about how the violence seemed realistic. We've also seen what happens in superhero films [and] TV shows, when the violence isn't realistic, when it is over the top, where it borders on goofy or weird, or for shock value. We see that with Deadpool, we see that with Preacher, we see that a little bit with The Boys, where it is definitely not supposed to be taken all that seriously, so a mature rating doesn't necessarily mean just one tone. I mean, the Howard the Duck show that was being planned, that was not going to feel like Daredevil, that was not going to feel like The Punisher. That was going to feel very much like its own thing. So even within this mature TV we want to see, it doesn't have to be just one tone.

PHYLLIS: Yeah that's a great point, and that's really something ... I just really want to see Marvel Studios and Feige take some chances there. I think we can acknowledge that he has done an incredible job creating something that's very one-of-a-kind, but when I think about what's coming up on Disney+ ... I'm a parent, I have two kids, I have Disney+, we use it fairly often. I am following their social media accounts so I kind of know what new stuff they have coming up here and there, and whenever I hear about the new stuff coming out on that platform, it's just like... I don't know, it's just very blah to me. It's very one-note, because most of it's meant for kids. A lot of it is meant for families. I know there are these shows that are going to come from Marvel Studios with Falcon and Winter Soldier, Wandavision, Loki, and then the other stuff they have planned on the other side of that with Ms. Marvel, Moon Knight, etc, but it all still feels like this is all gonna be that same feeling I get when I think about the MCU, when I think about PG-13, something that the whole family can watch together. I think about the two things that come to mind when I think about what's been popular on Disney+, and I guess it's been The Mandalorian, which --

KACEY: [whispers] Baby Yoda.

[chuckling]

PHYLLIS: We gave Kacey a shout out in the previous episode, and she gets to come here and talk all about Baby Yoda. Just kidding.

KACEY: This is now the Baby Yoda podcast.

[laughter]

RHIANNON: But I think it is worth it to talk about The Mandalorian a little later.

PHYLLIS: Yeah. I remember all the hype surrounding The Mandalorian came from this idea that this is gonna be some gritty, more mature Star Wars, you know?

KACEY: And, in a way, it was.

PHYLLIS: In a way it was, but within the ... but would we ever --

KACEY: In its own way.

PHYLLIS: In its own way, but it's still very much Disney+, and that's something we talked about in a previous episode. The Disney+ brand will always go for the broadest appeal. But again, to kind of go back to the point I was trying to make, The Mandalorian was a huge one, and again, it felt like it was trying to be pushed toward the slightly older audience. And, in its own way, Hamilton was this show that also has a family appeal, but was kind of directed toward the adults. It wasn't just for the kids. It shouldn't just be for the kids. If Disney wants to be competitive, if Marvel wants to be competitive with DC, if Disney wants to be competitive with Netflix, HBO, and Amazon Prime, they are going to have to expand their content slate. They're going to have to expand into mature. From a business standpoint, I don't entirely understand why you would ignore such a lucrative segment of the audience. The parents that are paying for Disney+ for their kids (they probably pay for Hulu, too, if they got the bundle), they want to get content, too. I want to get content that's targeted to me and not just to my kids, and so I will pay more money to add a platform. If Disney were to add stuff on Hulu, I would pay for a Hulu platform to watch mature Marvel shows. I would watch mature shows that come from Disney elsewhere.

KACEY: I feel the same way, Phyllis.

PHYLLIS: Just just from a business standpoint, I feel like that's where I really want to see Marvel take some risks, because there's money to be made there.

RHIANNON: Well, and I feel like today when we're comparing all of these mature, comic-based shows like Preacher ... I feel like in the past week, I've compared The Umbrella academy to The Boys so many times, but when Daredevil season one came out, they were comparing it to The Wire. They were comparing it to these very mature cable network shows that you would find on AMC, FX, these cable providers which --

PHYLLIS: HBO.

RHIANNON: Yeah, HBO. Yeah, it wasn't being compared to other comic-based shows, and I think if Marvel could take some of these darker, more adult properties -- the Marvel Knights properties and stuff -- and turn them into adult shows, they could go back to being where people don't even realize they're based on comics until maybe somebody shows these outrageous powers. That market is still there. After season 11 of the Walking Dead, it's gonna finally go away, and I mean they still have all these spin-offs that are gonna be going, but I think there is a current dearth of shows like Breaking Bad, The Wire, these shows that people can watch and get invested [in], and are definitely mature even without using the f-word over and over, even without full frontal nudity. You can be mature without crossing all those lines, and now that Disney owns FX, which also goes direct to Hulu, that is a perfect place for them to branch out and do that.

KRISTINA: And if Disney is thinking about not only audience, but critical acclaim, if you look at shows that win Emmys, they're mature. Yes, you will occasionally get a drama that is not rated TV-MA winning for best series, but you are mentioning Breaking Bad, and The Wire, and Game of Thrones and The Handmaid's Tale. What do all of those shows have in common? They're all mature. This isn't to say that Emmy winners are all like that. I know The Mandalorian is nominated, and I'm still a little bit confused about that. I liked that show a lot. I did not think it was a masterpiece, so it is really interesting that those shows tend to get nominated and tend to win, so if that's something that matters to Disney, they have to look at that. For the record, I enjoy the PG-13 Marvel films. I've enjoyed most of the other shows that they've put out that did not have a hard rating. It's not like I feel like it has to have a hard rating or I'm not going to watch it. I love that I can take my daughter to the movies to see Captain Marvel. I took her to the movies to see Guardians, I love that I can share that with her, and I also love that when she's upstairs at night, my husband and I can put on something harder and enjoy something that makes us think, that really makes us a little bit uncomfortable, because we live in an uncomfortable world and it's really great to be able to explore those themes without any kind of danger to our actual selves. So I'm looking for both, and we deserve both. That's it. We deserve both.

KACEY: My credit card can pay for both.

RHIANNON: Well, your credit card, but I think an important thing is, to make these 100 million dollar movies, 200 million dollar movies, they have to make that money back worldwide. And I think when you get offensive, that limits the number of people that are going to watch it. There

again, [it] goes to lower budget markets. Yes, you're not going to dominate the world and make billions of dollars on something that's mature and edgy, but there are markets for it. You can win Emmys with it. You can go that direction with it.

PHYLLIS: Yeah, absolutely. And I think ultimately, the bottom line is Disney's not doing this to have fun. They want to eventually command the market. We did have this whole conversation in a previous episode about how everyone is catching up to Netflix right now, and one way Disney can catch up is to broaden the range of content they're creating, and taking advantage of the fact that they have Marvel as one of their brands. Even thinking about ... There was a whole conversation about Blade and Moon Knight. I don't know if Moon Knight's supposed to be Phase 4 or Phase 5, but Blade is definitely supposed to be Phase 5. I think they are introducing characters that, I think, most people initially thought would have been more appropriate as mature properties, and knowing Marvel Studios' approach to things right now is not mature, there is a bit of a disconnect there. I would love to see maybe some reworking of those plans if there is enough time to make some shifts. That's the thing. There's been so many unexpected changes this year. Without coronavirus happening, I think it would have already been a little bit tumultuous for Disney and Marvel just because of all the changes at the top levels. But with the coronavirus and everything happening with COVID specifically, I think there is kind of an opportunity to hopefully take a quick break and maybe reassess what some of those plans were. I saw a tweet that was shared by someone on the team about ... I'm gonna quote it because I don't want to mess it up. This person says: "It's interesting how the MCU's biggest strength, interconnected sequential cross-platform storytelling, is now its biggest weakness. And in the pandemic, delaying one project has a ripple effect narratively throughout the MCU." And we've heard rumors that they might just need to push all of Phase 4 into next year, which we don't know if that's actually true or not. This ripple effect on the storytelling, and just everything being so tied together, why not allow your world to breathe and have stories that can just be adjacent to the MCU universe and plug into that universe when it needs to and then plug back out when it doesn't? And why not consider a Marvel Knights level of that universe where you can bring Blade and Moon Knight and, hopefully when the rights of The Defenders comes back, bring some of those guys in and and create sort of that mature echelon of programming, and movies, and TV shows that can be happening around that core MCU world? I just think this is a great opportunity for them to just kind of look at... We know these guys plan out their slates years in advance. Why not use it as an excuse to just find a slightly different way of doing things, just a way that -- again, selfishly for me -- would include Marvel mature content again? I believe I talked about this specifically, but I really believe that people's loyalty right now, it's not to platforms. People are not necessarily loyal to Netflix or to Amazon or even to Disney+. They are loyal to the brand IP, and Marvel has a ton of amazing IP, and if they make that content people will come and watch it.

KACEY: I love a good reference every now and again. It's fun to go, "Oh, that's from that movie! And I'm slow, so it takes me, like, three times of watching it. But yeah, we don't need an exact play-by-play of another movie in the Defenders-verse, or any of it. A reference is great, but as you stated, Phyllis, very eloquently, it kind of messed things up this time.

KRISTINA: It's so funny, Disneyland has a meet-and-greet where you can meet Spider-Man, and I don't know if it's still there (I haven't been since November, clearly), but they had a little newspaper machine with a copy of the Daily Bugle, and it had different headlines on the Daily Bugle. One of those headlines was, "Hell's Kitchen Lawyers Help Harlem Hero." And there were no names. That was it. It was just the headline, but that was just this wonderful way where those of us who get it were thrilled and excited and so happy to see it, and people who didn't get it just walked on by. And those are the kind of references I think can be done easily and cheaply without messing up any kind of continuity. You could still have this little level of connectivity without being handcuffed to another narrative.

PHYLLIS: I know it's a slightly controversial topic, I think, in the fandom about what's canon and what not, and how connected it needs to be. I can only say again, as my own opinion, as an individual fan, I don't need this interconnectivity with every single thing feeding into each other.

RHIANNON: I think that's also true for the people that Marvel has not yet reached. I mean, when we talk about reaching into these mature markets, when we talk about going after the Breaking Bad-type markets, the folks that watch these darker cable television shows, they're not the same people. They're not always the same people. There's always going to be overlaps in this. I'm not going to say everybody that watches The Wire never watched the Marvel movies, but there is still an untapped market. There are people out there that haven't watched these movies that haven't followed this universe, and they will not care. So yeah, you can throw in the references to "The Incident", and you can throw in things that matter in the overarching universe. You can have somebody in Greenwich Village that has mysterious magical powers without ruining it for all of them, without them feeling like, "Oh, if I haven't watched those 24 other movies I'm never going to catch up. I'm never going to know what's going on." So a lack of interconnectivity does help them reach that new market that they haven't yet been able to grasp.

KRISTINA: And speaking of that guy in Greenwich Village with the magical powers, his next movie has "in the Multiverse of Madness" in the title. They have an opportunity to do this right. They could, if they wanted to -- we don't know if they want to, we don't know if they will -- but they could take advantage of it and set up other stories that don't necessarily work in the main timeline, and say, "OK, it's part of the multiverse."

PHYLLIS: This is maybe a little bit of a tangent, but I am kind of curious, because that reminds me that that's literally what DC's strategy is right now. It's literally [the] opposite, like "Push as hard into the multiverse as possible and let's give you guys like 10 different Batmans." And I'm sort of curious, Rhiannon, since you are part of Marvel News Desk, and you're a little bit more plugged into that side of things, are there any rumbles about Marvel having any actual interest in building out a multiverse in the MCU?

RHIANNON: I haven't heard. There has been somewhat of a confirmation that there will be a multiverse. There was an audition tape -- as much as you can take audition tapes -- that floated around of somebody actually explaining the multiverse in Doctor Strange, so they're going to go into setting this up. I think they've already sort of touched on it with the different streams created by the Infinity Stones when they traveled in Endgame. But I haven't heard anything, at this point, of them branching out and having these different universes, and having shows that exist in completely different universes, but I think that is definitely a great way for them to go. Maybe in this world, maybe in this universe, the New York City that we're seeing, it's dark and gritty because somebody came and stole one of the Infinity Stones long ago and it didn't get put back the right way. But it's more related to what we can see and what we understand New York City to be, if we even understand what New York City is after 2020 (I say, having just gone on my afternoon walk down Fifth Avenue. So, for those that don't know me, I live in New York City. I still don't know what New York City is in 2020). I haven't heard anything about that being definitive yet.

PHYLLIS: But again, this is woven into the fabric of comic books, right? I remember there were so many theories before Endgame came out, and that was one of the theories I was putting some money on, like, "Oh, surely there's gonna be some confirmation, right?" And I guess not. They hint at it, but not really. But again, maybe not to the degree that DC has been doing it, but there is a logical-for-the-universe way of allowing stories to exist just slightly outside of the main narrative.

KRISTINA: And DC has used it to make their fans very happy. I'm just thinking about The Flash incident where they had The Flash from the film show up on The Flash TV show saying, "What are you talking about? I'm Barry Allen," because he was from another universe. The fans flipped out.

KACEY: That was great.

KRISTINA: They were so excited about it. And yeah, I don't want Marvel to necessarily pander to the fans. I don't want to say that. I think it can go wrong in so many ways when they listen too much to the fans -- especially when it comes to ships and things like that, it gets a little weird -- and I think we should let the writers write. They're generally good at what they do. But that was a moment where DC really made the fans super happy, and it was with this multiverse concept.

RHIANNON: I want them to pander to me.

[chuckling]

KRISTINA: Specifically to Rhi.

RHIANNON: To me. I want them to give me what I want.

PHYLLIS: Just as a reminder, we are the Save Daredevil campaign.

[laughter]

PHYLLIS: We do have a list of wants, here. Most of 'em Marvel. Just, you know, we got some ideas for you.

KRISTINA: We have some ideas, but we have never gone as far as to say, “And the first scene of season one, episode ...” You know?

RHIANNON: Oh, you haven't. [emphasis on “you”]

[laughter]

KRISTINA: But you know what? Seriously, this is a true story. Before season three dropped, I had this whole laundry list of things in my head that had to happen. I had to see them. They had to happen. And right before the season dropped, I had a talk with myself, like, “OK, you have to let this go and just enjoy the season.” I did not get half of what I wanted in season three, and I don't care because it was brilliant. Again, as fans, yes, we feel like we have ownership here, but in general these writers know what they're doing.

PHYLLIS: Marvel, Daredevil was amazing! We guarantee you there are a lot of people out there that would be thrilled for you to pick that property back up, bring back Charlie Cox, make some magic happen again. Maybe that's a good place for us to end this conversation. And yeah, we are going to keep meeting up. We're going to keep talking about all the things that we nerd-out about when it comes to Daredevil in this situation when it comes to Marvel. We'd love to hear ideas and questions from you guys, so if you do want to reach out to us, you can do that through any of our social media accounts. We are @RenewDaredevil on Twitter, and we are SaveDaredevil on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. And, by this point, when you're listening to this episode, we might have some cool stuff going on on our social media, including some weekly challenges to get the petition numbers up on our Save Daredevil petition. So, if you haven't signed it yet, please go to [SaveDaredevil.com/petition](https://www.savedaredevil.com/petition), and that will send you straight to our Change.org petition. Follow us on social media because we're going to be doing really cool stuff from now to the end of November and beyond. Any other thoughts, guys?

RHIANNON: If you really like talking about this stuff, we have a great community on our Discord as well.

PHYLLIS: Yes, there should be a link if you go to our website. In the “More” menu, [there] will be a direct link to the Discord server. So if you're not a part of it yet, if you click on that link, it will send you straight in and you can join the conversation there. OK? All right, well thanks for coming out and to talk, guys. This was fun and we're gonna definitely do it again.

KACEY: Thank you!

VOICEOVER: Thank you thank you for listening to #TalkDaredevil: the official podcast of the Save Daredevil campaign. For more information on Save Daredevil, please visit our website at SaveDaredevil.com. Remember, Murdocks always get back up.