

Watching Whedon: A Glimpse into One Family's Prolific Consumption and Dynamic Discussion of the Whedonverse (A Multi-generational Roundtable): Dreama Pritt, Bill Pritt, Jack Pritt, Grace Pritt, Julia Pritt

This multi-generational roundtable session promises to be an engaging and enlightening look into the responses—both scholarly and fannish—from a geek-filled household. From 15 to just a smidge over 50, the five members of the Pritt family are aficionados of every corner of the Whedonverse. Unlike Joyce and Giles in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*—who, as parental figures, display what Cynthia Bowers in *Slayage* called “adult lapses and irresponsibility”—the Pritt parents continue to guide their offspring into critical thought, along with the connoisseurship of science fiction and fantasy in general and of Joss Whedon’s work specifically.

Dreama Pritt, AKA “Mom,” who is a full-time Marshall University English Department faculty member (where she teaches several sections of ENG 201 Advanced Composition based on the works of Whedon), will be facilitating the roundtable. She is currently researching how the strong, sassy, smart-mouthed female characters in Whedon’s work mirror the strong, sassy, smart-mouthed female characters in Shakespearean comedies, with a particular interest in how those characters reflect the writers’ mothers. Bill Pritt, AKA “Dad,” is a US Army veteran who is still sad that his mother threw out his comic book collection when he went to college; he will be investigating both links to and subversions of classical mythology found in Whedon’s projects. (Be assured that references to heroes and quests will make an appearance.) Jack is a twentysomething lightsaber combat instructor with a gift for impressions who will present his examination on parallels in paranormal private investigations, which focuses on the intersections of Joss Whedon’s *Angel* and Jim Butcher’s *The Dresden Files*. (*Angel* and Harry have more in common than just vampires and demons.) Grace is a college freshman and world traveler who spent a gap year between high school and college doing missions work on three continents; she will consider connections between Whedon’s activism and his writing, particularly in terms of gender roles and diversity. Are “strong female characters” enough to garner Whedon a Social Justice Warrior badge? High school freshman Julia has watched Whedon on repeat even more than the rest of the family, and she plans to analyze the vastly different approaches to sexualities throughout the Whedonverse, including treatment of heterosexuality, homosexuality, and bisexuality, as well as expectations of consent in *Buffy*, *Dollhouse*, and *Firefly*.

While the witty and clever contributors in the roundtable will prepare remarks, a good portion of the discussion will be audience-driven, with questions and lively participation encouraged.