

Episode 4.5 International Day of the Girl

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Hannah McGregor: [00:10](#)

Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is Secret Feminist Agenda and gosh, it is proven to be another one of those weeks. You know? Those weeks where you're reminded in urgent visceral ways why feminism super, super matters. Yeah. It's one of those weeks. Wowzers. Between the news that a friend of mine got served in front of her class last night and the work that I've been doing with colleagues at SFU to cancel a transphobic, quote unquote 'gender identity debate' happening at my institution. I am. Yeah. Just really, just really remembering this week how much urgent work we collectively still have to do, and that work feels really tiring sometimes, which is why I'm glad we're going to be talking about survival kits as well. Oh, one other note, off the top. I am on the organizing committee for the Vancouver Podcast Festival again this year. It is running November 7th to 10th and while I'm not doing a live Secret Feminist Agenda, I am going to be doing a Secret Feminist Agenda meetup at our PodFair space, which is in the SFU Woodward's building. That's the downtown SFU campus. It will be on Friday, November 8th probably like 2:00 to 3:00 PM or 3:00 to 4:00 PM. So watch the space for more details about that. But if you're a Vancouver-based person who listens to this podcast and you want to come hang out on Friday, November 8th, you should do that. Also, you should get tickets for the Vancouver Podcast Festival. We have an absolutely amazing lineup this year. We've got Secret Life of Canada doing a live show. We've got Red Man Laughing, we've got the Allusionist, a lot of my favorite podcasts are going to be here. And you can go to vanpodfest.ca and find details. Oh my God. Okay. Also, one more thing, I'm sorry, this is such a newsy beginning. The one more thing is that tickets just went on sale for an evening in conversation with Lindy West hosted by me. I'm gonna be talking to Lindy West, which is very exciting. And that is on Tuesday, December 3rd, happening as part of the extended programming of the Vancouver Writers' Festival. It was originally planned to happen at the Vogue, but it's looking like the venue might change since the Vogue isn't proving to be super accommodating for folks with disabilities and also fat people, which is ironic because, you know, it's an event featuring two fat feminists who are for sure going to talk about being fat. Anyway, you can find tickets for that at writer'sfest.bc.ca.

Sorry that was a lot of ticket sales stuff. So let's stop talking about tickets and let's start talking about what we're talking about today. Which is the International Day of the Girl. Had you heard of this before? I had absolutely not heard of International Day of the Girl and I felt a little bit better when I found out that it was started essentially in 2011 so it's a new day. So we still have time to get really on board with international celebration of girls, which I am wildly on board with. So I got an email a little while ago from Plan International Canada, and Plan International Canada is a global

organization that specifically focuses on children's rights and equality for girls. And they petitioned really hard to get October 11th, that's right, the very day that this episode is going up, declared International Day of the Girl, which it now is. And around that newly created date, newly-ish created day, they're doing some data collection about the status of girls in Canada and globally. And they reached out to me because they wanted to share some of the data that they have gathered. And specifically I found it really interesting what data they have gathered. It's about education and it is about the link between girls' access to education but also youth ability to picture girls as leaders.

So one of the big pieces of data that they're sharing is that in a survey that they did of Canadian youth, only 10% of the youth surveyed picture a woman when they think of a CEO. That's kind of the big pull quote data piece and then asked, you know, what kinds of qualities that people associated with leaders, they all listed confidence as a top trait, but only 55% of the girls and young women surveyed actually described themselves as confident. So, I mean, there's a lot of interesting stuff going on there and probably one of them, one of the obvious ones is the way that language like confidence becomes a stand in for gender. Right? That by confident we mean a man, and women do not feel, women and girls do not feel that they represent those characteristics that they picture in leaders. You know, I'm not usually somebody who's thinking about CEOs and leadership, when I think about feminism, it's a bit on the lean-in side, for me, this sort of equality means we can picture everybody becoming CEOs probably because my feminism's a bit more anticapitalists than this. So I'm like, equality means that we eat the CEOs, sorry, CEOs, but gonna get 'em. But considering that we're in the midst of federal elections in Canada and in the U.S. Gosh, these questions and conversations about what you picture when you picture somebody with the capacity to lead are certainly at the forefront of, I think all of our minds. We're watching women candidates and women politicians in the U.S. get absolutely raked over the coals in terms of how their gender essentially codes them as you know, not good leadership material in a way that is absolutely an echo of what we saw happen with Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump and the last U.S. election.

The story that's been all over my Twitter feed recently has been some, you know, shit conservative rag making fun of Alexandria Ocasio Cortez for getting a haircut and what almost every woman I've seen on Twitter has responded to that is like her haircut costs \$80 that's how much women's haircuts costs in major cities. Sorry dudes. I know that you don't know anything about women because you don't think we're real, but we have to pay more for haircuts. It's called the pink tax, it's a real thing. Meanwhile, in Canada, an article came out a little while ago asking whether Canada was ready for a federal leader who wears a turban. They were of course referring to Jagmeet Singh the leader of the NDP and then almost immediately after that the news came out and the photos came out

of Justin Trudeau in blackface and is Canada ready to forgive a white man for actively participating in white supremacy? Oh yeah. Undeniably. Somehow a white guy in black face can be pictured as a leader but an actual person of colour? No, no, absolutely not. So these conversations about who do I picture when I picture a leader are conversations that are urgent and that, as I think this data really interestingly reveals, are not only urgent in terms of the kinds of political decisions that we make in terms of the kinds of internalized bias we have about who we consider to be leaders in our communities and our countries, but also how we think about ourselves and our own capacities to take on leadership roles wherever we are.

I was chatting recently with a colleague at UBC about impostor syndrome, which is a big topic in academia and probably everywhere and this, this colleague and I were agreeing that what is often called imposter syndrome, which is a sort of internalized fear that at some point people will realize that you're not actually qualified to do the thing that you're doing and they'll kick you out. Which is, like, a hilarious and also very real fear that for a lot of folks that's not so much some like internalized inferiority complex as it is trying to survive in an institution or a world that is literally telling you at every turn that it was not made for you and doesn't really want you here. So do I have imposter syndrome or am I aware that the exact behavior that male colleagues enact would be completely unacceptable coming from me that if I put myself forward in the same way that my male colleagues did, I would, in many scenarios, be punished for it in a way that they would not. That girls don't just say that they don't feel confident because, like, girls innately lack confidence, it's because girls are socialized not to be confident and are punished for putting themselves forward.

So obviously the world is a garbage fire. We all knew that. What can we do? Well, Plan International is doing some fundraising around international day of the girl and it's good fundraising that I think is super worth getting behind. The fundraising that they're doing is focused on education on an international scale. Specifically, they are raising money to send South Sudanese refugee girls to school in Uganda to access quality education. So this is their call to action from October 10th to 12th. You can text 'power' to 30333 to donate \$10 towards that cause. So if you are listening to this episode on the day that it comes out or the day after it, consider doing that. I don't know, for some of you it won't be accessible, but for some of you, you know, it's a couple of coffees and education makes a huge fucking difference on a global scale. And in the meantime, take a look at this data. They've got it up at plancanada.ca and I'll link to it in the show notes obviously, but take a look at it and use it as an opportunity to think a little bit for yourself, what you picture when you picture a leader who you think is and is not qualified to take on leadership roles and why. You know, how much internalized understanding of authority are we enacting without even thinking about it.

Okay. If you're anything like me, you are in need of some help surviving this week. So let's take a peek in our killjoy survival kits. So I want to dedicate the segment this week to a really fantastic blog post that a listener shared with me. That listener is Claire, that's clarifications on Twitter, which is great cause that's a pun I use about the name Claire all the time. Good job, Claire. And Claire has this great blog post called A Killjoy Survival Kit for the Secret Feminist Agenda that they have posted explicitly as a response to my call to talk about our own killjoy survival kits. They've included some really wonderful books in their survival kit. They've included podcasts, which are definitely part of mine as well. I was delighted to see a note here about a new podcast called Archive Fever, which is going to be hosted by Yves Rees and Claire Wright, which sounds dope because archives are dope and we've already established in the last episode that I love talking about archives. There's also a reference here to the Gayly Prophet, which is a delightful intersectional queer feminist Harry Potter podcast with a lot of connections to Which Please that I'm actually going to be on an episode of coming up. So lots of connections to me, I guess. Oh, also on this list are humor and puns and animals and of course clothes. Hard same on that one. I'll link to the blog post in the show notes if you want to check it out. It's lovely and I just love hearing from folks about what's going into their survival kits. So thank you Claire for sharing. And this is a call for more of you to tweet or write in and share what's in your killjoy survival kit. You're all rad. And I guess since I have promised to share something that is in my own survival kit, I will tell you that the thing that is helping me survive this week is the advance reader's copy of Lindy West's new book, *The Witches are Coming*. Seriously. This book just has so much good healing medicine in it. It is making me feel so much better every time I sit down and read an essay, it's coming out on November 5th so everybody go preorder it because God damn this book is exactly when I needed my life right now. Alright, close that kit.

As always, you can find show notes and the rest of the episodes of Secret Feminist Agenda on secretfeministagenda.com you can follow on Twitter [@HKPMcGregor](https://twitter.com/HKPMcGregor) and you can tweet about the podcast using the [#secretfeministagenda](https://twitter.com/hashtag/secretfeministagenda) and you can rate and review the show. Oh my God, I forgot to look up if there were new ratings and reviews. One sec. Oh, look at that. There is from the Netherlands, from Tamar28, a lovely review. Thank you so much. Oh wow. This has been a real roller coaster of an episode, huh? Okay.

The podcast theme song is Mesh Shirt by Mom Jeans, off their album, Chub Rub. You can download the entire album on freemusicarchive.org or follow them on Facebook.

Secret Feminist Agenda is recorded on the traditional and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations. I am grateful to live and work here.

This has been Secret Feminist Agenda. Pass it on