

Episode 4.14 #Mood with Hilary Atleo

February 21, 2020

Hannah McGregor: [00:00:00](#) [Theme Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda* and I'm coming to you from the tail end of reading week, just about recovered from this head cold, almost in time to go back to work, which is exactly how we like it.

I want to take a minute at the beginning of this episode to draw attention to something that actually we're going to talk about in the episode, but we recorded this a little while ago and things have changed a little bit and I want to just sort of underline the importance of this, which is the protests and blockades and solidarity actions that have been happening across Canada right now in solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en Nation whose territory is currently being illegally occupied by the RCMP in an attempt on the part of the Canadian government to use our militarized police force to violently push through a natural gas pipeline. What's been really remarkable about what's been going on with the solidarity actions is the fact that they show no sign right now of slowing down, nor is media attention leaving what's going on in Wet'suwet'en, which means that this is a really important opportunity for all of us to keep this media attention going, to participate in these actions as much as we can, and to send as strong of a message as possible to the Canadian government that its current actions are not acceptable.

Whether or not you're a Canadian listener, I really encourage you to click through, there's a bunch of links in the show notes to get a sense of what's going on and a sense of how you can offer your support. Whether that's participating in a protest or a march or a rally in your city or if that kind of action doesn't happen in your city or if you're not in Canada, you can do things like donate to the legal fund. A lot of people are getting arrested. There's going to be a lot of financial assistance needed for legal support.

Hannah McGregor: [00:02:10](#) In the last minisode, I talked about hopepunk and finding possibilities for hope in the face of really overwhelming things like climate change. And if there is anything in the world that's going to give us any hope, it is the remarkable acts of resistance being led by Indigenous nations who are trying to stop us from burning the whole world down. And if we could all do everything in our power right now to support these actions that

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feels, that feels like a really hopeful thing to do, to me. And on that note, let's meet Hilary.

- Hannah McGregor: [00:02:50](#) Hilary Atleo is the co-owner of Iron Dog Books, Metro Vancouver's only bookshop on wheels and now an immobile storefront located in Hastings-Sunrise. Hilary is Anishinaabe from Curve Lake, Ontario, but spends more time in her husband Cliff Atleo's Nuu-chah-nulth territories on the west coast of Vancouver Island. After working for several years at Russell Books in Victoria, Hilary moved to Vancouver for her husband's work and to pursue her dream of owning her own bookshop. Hilary's business model is a direct response to Vancouver's affordability crisis and her desire to keep books present in our communities. She believes books should be available and accessible and that bookshops are fundamentally placemaking.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:03:43](#) [Hilary's Theme Music: "North Side Gal" by J.D. McPherson] Here's the fun thing about this podcast: do I mention feminism explicitly in most episodes? No. [Laughs] It started really early on when... So like I started the podcast and gave it that name because I owned the URL 'cause I had bought it as a joke--
- Hilary Atleo: [00:04:03](#) Mhm.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:04:04](#) --years earlier. And then really early on in the podcast—like midway through the first season—I interviewed Alicia Elliot and was like, okay, you know, here's my podcast *Secret Feminist Agenda*. And she was like, I don't really feel comfortable identifying with feminism because of its like colonial histories. And because--
- Hilary Atleo: [00:04:25](#) Yeah!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:04:25](#) --there were like these other like understandings of like radical gender politics that come out of my traditions and I don't like the way that feminism has mostly been like white women appropriating those ideas.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:04:35](#) Yep.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:04:35](#) And I was like, cool, we don't have to talk about feminism, we can talk about whatever. And that's what the podcast has become like, it's a secret feminist agenda because it is about people like women and non-binary people doing radical and interesting work.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:04:50](#) Yeah.

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:04:50](#) And I just think the actual feminist agenda is that like women and non-binary people do radical and interesting world-changing work.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:04:57](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:04:57](#) And like that's what feminism means to me.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:04:59](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:04:59](#) But like we often do not talk about feminism.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:05:02](#) [Laughs] Yeah, I think that... I actually think I really identify with this, this sense that just existing and doing the things that you do is, is radical.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:14](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:05:15](#) I've been really feeling it the last few days 'cause I'm just... Oh, this is, this is a terrible thing to say when you're being recorded, but I tend to go to a place of sort of bleakness when really terrible things happen with the Canadian government and Indigenous folks. And I don't, I don't know. I don't know if it's just where I'm at, like working so much with the store. So I'm, maybe I'm just tired in general, but I just feel like there's so much point in all of the fight and we just, I just feel so hopeless.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:45](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:05:46](#) You know, like this weird bleak sense that we just have so little leverage with our ability to do anything.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:52](#) Yep.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:05:53](#) So I do think that like the feminism is also just existing.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:58](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:05:58](#) And fighting. [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:05:58](#) Yeah! [Laughs] Continuing to exist in a world that like actively does not want you to.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:06:03](#) Yes. It doesn't want you to, it doesn't want you to be the person who you are. And that is true for a whole host of things. You know, like it's true for being a feminine woman. It's been true

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- for being a non-binary folk. It's true for being a person of color, like...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:06:20](#) Yup.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:06:21](#) Yep. It's true for being a cis gendered white dude who doesn't want to conform, you know, [Laughs] like it's--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:06:26](#) Yeah! It's true for being a cis gender straight white dude who like wants to have a feeling.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:06:31](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:06:32](#) Oh, nope, stop that right now. That is also not okay. There are so few things that are okay it turns out.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:06:39](#) [Laughs] Turns out. Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:06:39](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:06:40](#) They...I was really laughing because Clifford, who is my husband, he has...we have staff recommended shelves and he came in and was like quite affronted because there was a mystery book that he has not read and wasn't a fan of that had been put on his staff recommended shelf, which I am, you know, relatively positive was just like a customer putting it there because they just didn't want it or something like that. You know, I don't think it was like an insidious plot--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:07:05](#) [Laughs] --to make it look like he likes books he doesn't?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:07:05](#) [Laughs] Yeah! So he like, was kind of like marching around the store, like re-putting it into the mystery section and then I... You know, putting something on it that he actually recommended. And I wandered by it later after he left and I was like, oh yeah, bell hooks *All About Love*. [Laughs] It's just, I'm pretty sure that was the one that he put on there--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:07:26](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:07:26](#) --but it just, it really made me laugh. It was like, oh you're such a...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:07:30](#) [Laughs] Way better than the mystery!
- Hilary Atleo: [00:07:36](#) Yes, exactly! [Laughs]

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:07:36](#) Put a good book about love!
- Hilary Atleo: [00:07:36](#) Yeah exactly! That was...Yeah. It was like, I love your thoughtful feminism glimmer. [Laughs] You would never... Well, anyway, yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:07:42](#) I love that. I have also, I've been feeling the same way with the news coming out of Wet'suwet'en over the past 48 hours. And the feeling of, I mean, I think both the feeling of like distance and helplessness.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:07:55](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:07:55](#) Right? Of like not only can I not like go, but if I did go, I would be in the way.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:08:02](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:08:02](#) And so I can like give money to the legal fund and write to politicians and... but then you're just sitting there like watching things unspool on Twitter and it just feels like, we fight and we fight and we fight.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:08:16](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:08:17](#) And do we get anywhere? And then I was just... The minisode that I just did yesterday was about—I shouldn't, this is...I'm thinking about this because of the pile of books that you've pulled out here—but was about particularly sort of future narratives that show us that the future isn't some like bleak or... totally bleak or nonexistent possibility, but is also a world in which people continue to fight and do their best to make the world livable.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:08:45](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:08:46](#) And like that... That really helps me. Like stories about like we know that's what we have done in the past. It's what we're doing in the present. It's what people are going to keep doing into the future.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:08:55](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:08:55](#) We're just going to keep fighting to make the world as livable as possible. Like okay. That's tiring--
- Hilary Atleo: [00:09:01](#) Yeah. [Laughs]

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:09:01](#) --a lot of the time. But like at least it's a... at least it's a goal.
[Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:09:06](#) Yeah! I... It's so funny because I thought I have now adjusted, I've done enough podcast and media interviews to know that they're going to ask like what should we read right now? And I work really hard to curate those choices and show kind of, you know, depending on who I'm talking to. And today I, I was thinking about you coming and I just thought, "Oh, I'm gonna... If she asks me what I recommend right now, I'm just going to be like, this is my comfort reading." You know? Like these are just things that I think are good and I read them and I especially think, not that we need to veer into talking about books, but especially think we were talking, before we started recording, about *Ancillary Justice*--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:09:41](#) Yes.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:09:41](#) --which—by Ann Leckie—which is...Every time we get further away from the year when I read it, I just add a year. So the first year I read it, I'm like, "It's the best thing I've read all year!" And then the next year I said, "It's the best thing I've read in the last two years!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:09:52](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:09:52](#) I... Another book I have on the stack here, which is *The Murderbot Diaries* by Martha Wells, is also very good. And I read it more recently. But *Ancillary Justice*, just... the main character, Breq, is a hive mind and she's just like, she's so good. You know? I just, she's somebody who I... I just loved her so much. I'm like, I just love you. And then of course sometimes I think, "Wow, it's weird that all of my favourite characters are cyborgs, genderless cyborgs, with no feeling." [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:10:22](#) Like that is... I remember as a...as a young teen, maybe a preteen, I read Robert Heinlein's *Friday* and I think Robert Heinlein has been pretty clearly established as a problematic fave.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:10:38](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:10:38](#) I think he was a dirt bag. And *Friday* is, in many ways, one of those like 1970s sci-fi books that did not age well. But it is about somebody who is an artificially produced human who is spending the novel grappling with whether or not she counts as a human.

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- Hilary Atleo: [00:10:51](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:10:51](#) And I think like as a young woman who was trying to figure out like what it meant to be a person in the world, what it meant to be a woman already realizing that I was not going to do it right. But like however I was going to do it was not going to be the way I was supposed to do it. Like, those stories are really empowering because it is like getting to watch the play out of somebody figuring out what it means to be a person when they've kind of been disqualified upfront from personhood.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:11:22](#) Yeah, that is such a good way of phrasing it because that is something that I often tell people about this trilogy is that it's really about who counts.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:11:33](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:11:33](#) The whole...the whole trilogy is about, you know, if she is a person. And I, you know, as a white-passing Indigenous woman, I don't... Like, I mean, I know for a fact I haven't dealt with the type of discrimination that other folks have, but I do know what it's like to be erased and to constantly have to explain to folks and I get it in the shop all the time. Recently I had—twice in 10 minutes!—customers came in and said, "Oh, I thought this was Indigenous-owned." I'm like, "Oh..." [Sighs].
- Hannah McGregor: [00:12:04](#) [Sighs] Yeah. And then you have to make the decision about whether you're going to like--
- Hilary Atleo: [00:12:07](#) Yeah...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:12:07](#) --are we going to have a whole fucking conversation about this right now?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:12:10](#) And it's not going to go well because I'm going to be angry. I already am, like that's it, I'm there. It didn't take much. And it doesn't take much because...the--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:12:19](#) --'cause your secret is you're always angry.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:12:20](#) Yeah! [Laughs].
- Hannah McGregor: [00:12:20](#) Like the Hulk! [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:12:24](#) [Laughs] Yeah, exactly! My secret power is rage! And it doesn't take...Which is probably actually the reason why when you hear about arrests of Wet'suwet'en folks just trying to do the right

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thing and literally save us all from our own stupid decisions... Right? When you hear about that, I don't get enraged. I just, 'cause I'm already there.

Hannah McGregor: [00:12:46](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:12:46](#) [Laughs] That's why it becomes bleak, it's 'cause I'm just like...I just...

Hannah McGregor: [00:12:49](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:12:50](#) Yeah. And I think that that is why I, you know, my comfort reading is reaching for narratives where you can be a vigilante and go and you know, you can fight where...what this trilogy is about is fighting the literal leader of the galaxy because they did a wrong thing. You know? And I'm like, yes! I like my heroes. I like my heroes to be complicated characters with pure motives.

Hannah and Hilary: [00:13:12](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:13:15](#) And to run into...you know, starting with a pure motive. Like, this is a story that always gets me as somebody who starts with a pure motive and then runs into the impossibility of maintaining that pure motive in light of the complexity of the world.

Hilary Atleo: [00:13:28](#) Yes, yes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:13:28](#) Because that is also like, I think a thing that is incredibly relatable when you're like, well, I know what the good, true, good thing is. And then it's like actually let that play out in reality. And it's like, aw...yeah. Aw dang.

Hilary Atleo: [00:13:41](#) [Laughs] It's why I'm glad that you brought up Heinlein because of a recent thing. And I thought this was incredibly risky, but I was feeling quite salty. Maybe a week ago or whatever I posted to Instagram--

Hannah McGregor: [00:13:53](#) Mhm. I saw this post.

Hilary Atleo: [00:13:53](#) Yeah, exactly! [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:13:53](#) I was hoping to bring up this post--

Hilary Atleo: [00:13:57](#) Yeah!

Hannah McGregor: [00:13:57](#) --because that was relatable.

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- Hilary Atleo: [00:13:59](#) Well, exactly about my, my issue. So I posted to Instagram and Facebook and I don't think—Clifford runs our Twitter—which is also why hilariously, sometimes we seem like we're... the social medias are not consistent or in the same place--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:14:11](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:14:12](#) --because it is two humans running it and we haven't necessarily communicated about what we're talking about that day.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:14:17](#) Yep, sounds fun.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:14:17](#) But I posted about what we should do with problematic authors and I... that's why it's so cool to hear somebody say, "Well, let's talk about how much I love *Friday* and how much I know that Heinlein is, is not awesome." You know?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:14:32](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:14:32](#) I mean, to make an understatement.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:14:34](#) I made a podcast about *Harry Potter* for two years and I have every intention of making more of that podcast. And J.K. Rowling is trash, but texts are not simplistic outputs of the author's personality like, that's not, that's, you know, it's a massive over-simplification. But it's tricky... I also try to read based on what I know about authors.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:15:01](#) Yes.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:15:02](#) And that's a trick... It's like when I try to read diversely and I try to read books that come from the perspective of people who I might not have encountered before. And then I'm like, well, isn't that hypocritical to be like author's identity doesn't shape a book?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:15:17](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:15:17](#) [Whispers] Except for when it does?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:15:19](#) Yeah. I, well... and I think that, again, to get back to the fact that your motives can be pure but the world is not, you know?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:15:27](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:15:27](#) It's super complicated that it's really hard to find the things that can just meet all of these... all of these needs. And I think my

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goal with posting that was partially, I was just, I was feeling really grumpy about *Harry Potter*. I was feeling grumpy. I mean, you know, people don't talk about the fact that Roald Dahl was a terrible anti-Semite, you know?

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:47](#) [Whispers] Oh my God.

Hilary Atleo: [00:15:47](#) Like there, there I was just--

Hannah McGregor: [00:15:49](#) Also extremely trash.

Hilary Atleo: [00:15:52](#) Yeah. [Laughs] Just terrible, terrible person. But I was thinking more, I was wondering, you know, I own this business and I'm selling these things, I'm making these things available. So it's not just you as a...'cause I think you as a human consuming things is sort of a different thing.

Hannah McGregor: [00:16:08](#) Yes...

Hilary Atleo: [00:16:08](#) Where you can, you can be consuming it for all sorts of reasons and so you can go at it with this lens where you're like, "I know that Heinlein was a problem" or "I know that Orson Scott card was—not was, is—a terrible homophobe who funds anti-gay initiatives and you know, I can seek to buy him secondhand so he doesn't get any money or you know--

Hannah McGregor: [00:16:26](#) Get him from the library.

Hilary Atleo: [00:16:27](#) Yeah...

Hannah McGregor: [00:16:28](#) We obviously... We absolutely read things we don't agree with. That's how we learn how the world works.

Hilary Atleo: [00:16:33](#) Yeah...But it was more as a business person, how much is just making this stuff available... how much am I contributing to it being an issue? And the... Also related, what do people expect from me? Like do you want me to be judge and jury about what should be sold? And that was really what I was getting at and I was sort of heartened, especially because right now it's so toxic on the Internet, just everything.

Hannah McGregor: [00:17:02](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:17:02](#) Which is why I thought, well this might, I might just have lit my entire business on fire by bringing up that this is a thing that we think about. The other thing that was really exciting to me was the number of booksellers who piled on with the things that

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they feel weird about having in their stores or who contacted me privately and... And it's not necessarily that it's consistent, but what is consistent is the feeling of weirdness about stuff in your store. Seeing things come through and saying, "I don't know, like I don't want this." You know, like Gandhi is very problematic in Western culture, held up endlessly. Oh, this is the other thing that I really like to complain about is how it's so ridiculous to me that non-Indigenous Canadians can hold up Gandhi or Nelson Mandela or go to *Avatar*, all of these things like that. You know, they're heroes.

- Hannah McGregor: [00:17:51](#) Yup.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:17:52](#) I just think--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:17:53](#) [Sarcastically Mutters] Well, it's heroic when people do it somewhere else.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:17:53](#) Yeah! Like well... the British shouldn't have been in India. And I'm like, I just, it's like you don't hear yourself.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:18:01](#) [Laughs] Sorry, they shouldn't have been in India. But they should definitely have been here.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:18:03](#) [Laughs] Definitely! Yeah...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:18:06](#) Because we stayed. So that meant it was good.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:18:08](#) [Laughs] Yeah! We were talking about the difference between colonial powers and settler colonialism and yeah. And just how getting people to understand--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:18:15](#) Settler colonialism is a really specific kind of head fuck.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:18:20](#) [Sighs] Aw, yeah...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:18:20](#) Right? Because how do you grapple with the legacy of colonialism in a place where the colonizers didn't leave?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:18:25](#) Yeah. And aren't going to. And I've told this story a lot so I don't feel badly sharing it so publicly. But as a kid we would leave the reserve and I would think, "I wonder what we're going to do when all the Europeans are sent home." [Laughs] Like this is, this is like you know, you're a kid, so it's the kind of thing you think. And I would think, 'cause I'm, if you haven't met me, I'm a very white-looking Indigenous person. I'm extremely passing. You would never...you would never pick me out as being an

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Indigenous person on the street. And so, and my dad's not native. And so I would say to myself like, "You know, I don't know... clearly my dad's going to be sent home." Like this is again child logic.

Hannah McGregor: [00:19:04](#) [Laughs] It's like how are you...are you going to be sad or like--?

Hilary Atleo: [00:19:05](#) Yeah, yeah and am I going to have to go with him? Like our mom's going to be allowed to stay. And so I think, then, you know, I got to be an adult and Cliff and I were having brunch one day with a person I went to university with and we were talking about colonization and all these things. This is also how I realized that all of my friends out here, didn't know...didn't... Like, they knew I was Indigenous but they didn't like internalize and/or believe it. So when I started dating Clifford--

Hannah McGregor: [00:19:34](#) I mean, such is one of the major forces of white supremacy.

Hilary Atleo: [00:19:39](#) Yeah, exactly!

Hannah McGregor: [00:19:39](#) Whiteness functions as a default, even though it's like, "I mean, I know you're Indigenous in theory, but--"

Hilary Atleo: [00:19:43](#) Yeah, it's a hypothetical thing.

Hannah McGregor: [00:19:44](#) For sure.

Hilary Atleo: [00:19:45](#) Anyway, at one point he said to her, "Well, you know, you could just give the land back." And she said, "What do you mean?" He's like, "Well, you could just leave." And she's like, "Like, go back to Europe?" And he said, "Yeah." And she's like, "I've never thought of that before." And then I, and this is again realizing all these things about the world at the age of, I don't know, 23 or whatever, I was like, "You've never thought of that before!?"

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:04](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:20:04](#) Like, this was just like, I was so appalled. And then--

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:11](#) I think about it all the time!

Hilary Atleo: [00:20:13](#) Yes, exactly! She's like, "How would I have thought of that by myself?" And I was like, "I don't know." And that was when I got the Nelson Mandela thing where I was like, you just would have looked at like...like--

Hannah McGregor: [00:20:22](#) --the rest of the history of colonialism.

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- Hilary Atleo: [00:20:24](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:20:26](#) How did it end everywhere else? Literally everywhere else.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:20:31](#) Other than Australia and New Zealand. Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:20:33](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:20:33](#) But yeah, it was just like, it was a real...it was a real watershed moment for me where I just suddenly realized that the way I'd been moving through the world and my base assumptions and I mean like... It's also ridiculous that I got to 23 and didn't realize that non-native Canadians don't think like this.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:20:49](#) Really don't, really don't.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:20:51](#) Really don't!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:20:52](#) And have this like intense sense of I...I'm working on a book manuscript right now and I... At least in the current draft that my editor has—who knows if this will last—there is a very long land acknowledgement at the beginning of it. That was mostly me being like, what the fuck does it mean to be like, I live on this land, I have no relationship to this land. I didn't grow up on it. I was not invited.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:21:14](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:21:15](#) The language we often use is "uninvited guests," but that's just a home invader.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:21:19](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:21:19](#) So that's nothing. [Laughs] There's no such thing as an uninvited guest. And like, you know, where do I have relationships, too? Like I am from Ottawa. I was born there. I didn't know Ottawa was Algonquin territory until I saw, like, Zoe Todd tweeting about it and was like, "Oh yeah, I should've known that," but never learned that as a kid. And like, okay three of my four grandparents were born in the UK and one of my two parents was born in the UK and the only family member I have who has any history in Canada is Mennonite.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:21:54](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:21:54](#) And has... so like it's like what the fuck relationship do I have to this place? And if somebody turned to me tomorrow and was

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like, "You have to go back to Scotland," like I would not have a leg to stand on to be like, but I've been here for like a year.

Hilary Atleo: [00:22:05](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:06](#) I'm really used to--my cats are here! I'm really like... I've got fucking nothing. So even those Canadians who are like, "We've been here for eight generations." And it's like, you know, that's like still in the scale of human history basically like a year.

Hilary Atleo: [00:22:20](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:22:21](#) Like this is nothing.

Hilary Atleo: [00:22:22](#) Yeah, it's... It is just something... 'cause I feel like that all the time on the West Coast. And then that... That's the other... Because Clifford's Nuu-chah-nulth and Tsimshian, he, while being from the West Coast, isn't from this bit of the West Coast. You know? Except he did grow up in East Van, which is not the same as being from here. And so I think I'm like, well, I'm with a West Coaster but not really like this bit. And then also the West Coasters are, well I don't...can't speak to everybody, but I know Nuu-chah-nulth folk there. They're like, "Yeah, but you're a Nuu-chah-nulth now." Like they really don't... Like when my mother-in-law found out that I had kind of slipped up and referred to being Nuu-chah-nulth is like a "we" thing. She was like, "Good, it's finally happening to your part. You recognize that you're a West Coaster now. You guys have been together for 12 years." But it's something that I think I feel about myself a lot, being out here. I mean, obviously I said like from childhood I felt sort of about being in Ontario as well. But being out here, I constantly feel like—and running a business out here—like, I'm occupying this space.

Hannah McGregor: [00:23:22](#) Yeah...

Hilary Atleo: [00:23:22](#) You know? And I'm...I was at a party recently and this gentleman said to me, you know, I was...I don't know, I pulled out a soap box about something, who knows what it was.

Hannah McGregor: [00:23:33](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:23:33](#) We were talking about--

Hannah McGregor: [00:23:34](#) Are you like me? Fun at parties? [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:23:35](#) I am a riot, possibly literally, lighting things on fire.

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:23:42](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:23:42](#) And we were talking about extractive capitalism and tourism and I was talking about some problematic businesses I feel that are in really overtly Indigenous spaces, you know, so it would be like going out closer to the Rez and those businesses that are run by non-native folks and stuff like that. And he said to me, "But that would mean that you would, anywhere in Canada, when you went into a business, you would think about whose land it was occupying." I was like, "Yeah, I mean we're making the same point."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:24:09](#) [Laughs] It's just that for me it's a good point. And for you it's outrageous.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:24:14](#) Yeah, exactly! [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:24:14](#) We are saying the same thing here, yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:24:16](#) It's the best part of getting older. And, I don't know. It's... it's also the best part about working for yourself. It's like there will be consequences if I do something terrible or if I say something stupid.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:24:28](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:24:28](#) But it's not, it's going to be like me and my business failing, you know? It's not going to be like this reflects on whoever I work for, whatever. And then they're going to be calling me in and saying to me, you shouldn't have said this thing about Indigenous folks having rights. Like you know?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:24:45](#) [Laughs] It was very upsetting to everyone involved!
- Hilary Atleo: [00:24:50](#) Yeah exactly! No, I said it, and I own this business and if you don't like it, you know, you don't have to buy a book from me.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:24:57](#) If you don't like it, you can leave. Which is troubling when you are a small business owner. Right? And it's... So let's talk, let's... let's expand the scope a little bit here and talk about Iron Dog Books a little bit. Can you just give like a little bit of background? I'm gesturing in a circular fashion, which nobody can hear cause it's an audio medium. But we are currently sitting in the bookstore, which is really an ideal place to record. I love being surrounded by this many books at all times.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:25:21](#) Yeah, me too.

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Hannah McGregor: [00:25:23](#) So, but this location is still quite new. So, can you talk a little bit about like starting the bookstore, the background of the bookstore?

Hilary Atleo: [00:25:31](#) Yeah! Who the heck we are--

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:32](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:25:32](#) --and why we're talking? Yeah, we, I...I got a job working for the government directly out of university--

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:42](#) Mhm.

Hilary Atleo: [00:25:42](#) --and I discovered that I was a terrible bureaucrat.

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:45](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:25:45](#) Yeah. I was just like, I am bad at this. I am not good at making myself look busy when there's not enough work to do. I feel, you know, like there was just, there's a whole bunch of, just imagine being a bureaucrat and that I was not a good fit for it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:25:56](#) Yep.

Hilary Atleo: [00:25:56](#) And I was really fortunate because Cliff wanted to do his PhD in Alberta.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:01](#) Mhm. I get it, I also did my PhD in Alberta.

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:05](#) Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:06](#) ...No.

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:07](#) No, you're from the same place!

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:07](#) No wait, that's a lie. I just told a lie. I did my postdoc in Alberta.

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:11](#) Right.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:12](#) It's fine.

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:12](#) It's pretty close.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:13](#) I know my own personal history, don't worry about it. [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:17](#) [Laughs] Just rewriting it.

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Hannah McGregor: [00:26:17](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:17](#) It's on the internet.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:17](#) Ooh...

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:20](#) [Laughs] But you lived in Edmonton.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:21](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:21](#) So yeah. We know. So I had to not do that anymore, which was great because I think sometimes inertia just carries us forward and things that we're unhappy with.

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:31](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:31](#) So I got a job in a bookshop there and then we moved back to Victoria and I got a job in a bookshop there and we had two kids and we did a whole bunch of stuff. But all along was working towards the goal of opening my own bookstore--

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:41](#) Mhm.

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:41](#) --and then we moved to Vancouver. And yeah. [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:26:44](#) Yeah. I mean, the context there being that like real estate is just so prohibitively expensive there.

Hilary Atleo: [00:26:51](#) Yeah, it's just such a ridiculous nightmare. And I think that... I mean I have a lot of things to say about what happens in a city when... Not just that you can't afford housing, but that you can't afford to run a business or run an art space because there is so much what the city or province or whatever would term like "program provision."

Hannah McGregor: [00:27:16](#) Yup.

Hilary Atleo: [00:27:16](#) That happens with private funds. You know, like my good friend Patricia hosting all of those events at her bookshop Massy Books, right?

Hannah McGregor: [00:27:25](#) Yup.

Hilary Atleo: [00:27:25](#) Like, you don't need a publicly funded art space because Patricia's doing that for you. And she's doing it because she cares about her small business and it's good for her small business and she cares about the community. And so she's

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willing to put in a whole bunch of work. And if you had to pay somebody to program that, it would cost you three times as much as she's paying in property taxes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:27:43](#)

Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:27:43](#)

Exactly. So I, I just...There's a whole bunch of things I can haul out about that. But we got to Vancouver and it was ludicrously expensive and we wanted to put a bookshop in 'cause we live up at SFU. We wanted to put a bookshop in at SFU. And for a whole bunch of reasons that wasn't possible.

Hannah McGregor: [00:28:03](#)

Yep.

Hilary Atleo: [00:28:03](#)

And the book truck idea had been floating around in my head since, since Alberta.

Hannah McGregor: [00:28:08](#)

Mhm.

Hilary Atleo: [00:28:08](#)

And, I just, one night in December of 2016, said to Clifford, "I think maybe the best way to start the bookshop is, is to put it in a truck." You know, like... [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:28:21](#)

Yeah, yeah! [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:28:21](#)

And I think, I mean, he says he thought it was a great idea from the start. I think he thought it was a little bit mad at the beginning, but I--

Hannah McGregor: [00:28:28](#)

I mean, why not both?

Hilary Atleo: [00:28:28](#)

Yeah, yeah, right?

Hannah McGregor: [00:28:31](#)

You're like, that's a great and ludicrous idea.

Hilary Atleo: [00:28:32](#)

Yeah! [Laughs].

Hannah McGregor: [00:28:32](#)

Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:28:33](#)

So that's what we did. It's like a...we, we started essentially a food truck, except instead of selling food, we sell books. And, we thought that it was going to let us serve our community up at SFU and also go out and make what I refer to as "real money" on the weekends to keep the business going. And it did, but there were a whole bunch of barriers to it. So we...in like, including lack of licensing and the weather.

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Hannah McGregor: [00:28:54](#) Yeah...

Hilary Atleo: [00:28:54](#) You know? So both systemic and, and other just sort of general natural barriers to running the shop the way we always wanted to, which means that we realized after about a year and a half in that we needed to start looking for our brick and mortar location so we could run the truck and the brick and mortar location and that's where we're sitting right now.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:14](#) Okay. So is the truck still up at SFU?

Hilary Atleo: [00:29:16](#) It's actually, right now, parked right behind the store here 'cause we have parking behind here.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:21](#) [Laughs] Amazing, incredible.

Hilary Atleo: [00:29:21](#) And it's off the road. It's off the road now until April.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:24](#) Okay. For weather.

Hilary Atleo: [00:29:24](#) Yeah. Well... yeah. So the two, the two pieces of lack of licensing and zoning to be a mobile retailer and the weather, what it means is you can only operate at special events, markets, and festivals.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:39](#) Gotcha. That are zoned for that kind of thing.

Hilary Atleo: [00:29:40](#) Yeah. And they have... And that have special events permits and they have limited runs, usually not in the winter time.

Hannah McGregor: [00:29:48](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:29:48](#) And then the places where we can operate, i.e. SFU, you know, being up there on a Wednesday in January when a blizzard has hit is not like...super financially...I don't know, stable, maybe?

Hannah McGregor: [00:30:03](#) [Laughs] Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:30:03](#) Yeah. Like sometimes you can have a good day, but it's not, it's not enough to pay the bills.

Hannah McGregor: [00:30:06](#) Well, that makes sense as a model and I am delighted that you started the brick and mortar because even though I work at SFU, I am never at SFU Burnaby, I go there like once a semester and like people have to drag me up there.

Hilary Atleo: [00:30:19](#) [Laughs] Yeah.

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:30:19](#) There has to be a requirement. But this is mere blocks from my home, so I couldn't be happier. When I moved to this neighborhood two years ago I was like, this neighborhood is almost perfect, but no bookstore, no hardware store.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:30:35](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:30:35](#) Those were my only complaints about the neighborhood.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:30:37](#) And this is where like if we want to circle back to how much you can eviscerate the livability of a city with property prices and property taxes, when you do not have those services, it's really easy for the city to just behave as though private businesses, private business, and there's no need to encourage specific types of private business.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:30:59](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:30:59](#) You know, as long as you're making it possible for people to operate businesses, et cetera. But there is a massive difference between a 2,000 square foot McDonald's and an independent hardware store that takes up 800 square feet. [Laughs].
- Hannah McGregor: [00:31:12](#) Yeah, yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:31:12](#) They are not the same thing.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:31:13](#) They are not the same. And, and the cities that thrive are cities that do things to make sure that small independently owned businesses can stay afloat, can have space, can have, you know... That keep giant chains out of their downtowns, that have strong small business associations, like all of these things. And as soon as governments prioritize just money over the livability that small businesses bring into a city that's when that city becomes unlivable.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:31:46](#) Yeah, it is. It's not that I don't care about housing affordability because I really do and it's been a major cornerstone. But about two years ago, I started to shift the way I talk to people and my advocacy because there are a whole bunch of related factors to do with small business affordability. And it's, it is the service provision piece. It is the wage piece. You know, we get caught in this cycle where you can't afford to live here, so you're only shopping at, say Walmart.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:32:17](#) Yep.

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- Hilary Atleo: [00:32:17](#) And then the small business that was paying more has gone out of business. So now you are, instead of working there, you're working at Walmart and now you can only afford to shop at Dollarama. You know, we get caught in this cycle of capitalism because [laughs] that's really just like--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:32:32](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:32:32](#) --it's just capitalism, you know, like that's how it works.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:32:36](#) But that's a piece, that's a piece we often don't think about it's like--
- Hilary Atleo: [00:32:38](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:32:39](#) --we are concerned, rightfully concerned about housing affordability. But there is a wider problem of how expensive real estate is.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:32:47](#) Yeah. And that... And when I shifted my advocacy, I started talking about things like, you know, talking about Massy Books being a performance space.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:32:55](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:32:55](#) And how, when we look at the way we assess things like taxes, we should say, "Here are targeted industries that are delivering services way beyond the financial investment from the city." Because it is actually ridiculous. I mean, our taxes are \$18 per square foot here, which yeah, exactly, which is \$18,000 a year. It's actually slightly more, it's almost, it's almost \$19,000 a year.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:33:17](#) [Incredulous Silence]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:33:17](#) But... Because of the size of our space. But if you're paying \$19,000 a year in taxes, again, if we're going to host events and be a community space and do all these sorts of things, just paying someone to do that much less funding the actual events, just paying the person to think of the ideas and everything costs, what, I don't know, \$50,000 a year? Like, you're already having a massive savings if you forgive me half of those taxes, you know?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:33:42](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:33:42](#) Or if I get a rebate back or something like that. But then the other piece of this is, is that we need to start requiring

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affordable—they're called CRUs, commercial retail units—to be a piece of development applications. Yeah. And the way to do that with long-term stability is to require small units to get built.

- Hannah McGregor: [00:34:01](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:34:02](#) It's something that I think they did extremely badly up at SFU, which is that all of the spaces up there are about 1,300 square feet. And so with the rents that they charge--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:34:12](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:34:12](#) --and the way all the fees and taxes and everything add up, you just can't get an affordable rent up there.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:34:19](#) Gotcha.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:34:19](#) So if you build... if an affordable CRU looks like a 500 square foot unit, then even if your taxes are \$18 per square foot—which is ludicrous as established—that's \$9,000 a year, you know?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:34:32](#) Which is maybe doable.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:34:34](#) Yeah, it's a lot different. I mean, that's why, I don't know, let's do some math here. That's like what, \$750 a month that you're paying in taxes instead of...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:34:42](#) \$1,200 a month or more?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:34:43](#) Yeah, yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:34:44](#) So I was raised by small business owners. Parents owned a folk music store in Ottawa.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:34:50](#) See, exactly! Think about the community contribution.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:34:53](#) Right? And it was like the centre of community. It was beloved, it was a school of music and a retail store. It was where Alanis Morissette took voice lessons there.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:35:03](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:35:03](#) Like, you know, it was a real hub. And as the business... He, my dad, started it in the seventies and as real estate got more and more expensive and more and more expensive and the business just couldn't grow at the rate at which the real estate grew. And

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my dad tried to convince the guy he was renting the business from, he was like, "Can we split this space in half?" 'Cause they had a really big real estate space. He was like, "Can we split this space in half and only have half of it? Can we like, can you give me a break? You know, can you do something? Because like I can't keep the... like it's too expensive. I can't keep the business going." And the, the guy, you know, the owner said no and he ended up having to declare bankruptcy.

Hilary Atleo: [00:35:49](#)

Wow.

Hannah McGregor: [00:35:49](#)

And this business that was like beloved, in the centre of a lot of things for a lot of people disappeared overnight because like, at the end of the day you can't be a community hub if you don't have a space.

Hilary Atleo: [00:36:02](#)

Yes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:02](#)

And the basic premise of like, give arts- and culture-based businesses tax deductions, recognizing that they are like contributing meaningfully to a city...like that's not out of the question. We fund the arts in this country.

Hilary Atleo: [00:36:19](#)

Yes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:19](#)

Based on the recognition that they are valuable.

Hilary Atleo: [00:36:21](#)

Yes.

Hannah McGregor: [00:36:21](#)

So like, increase the pool of money we give to the Canada Council and add to the, you know, add to what Heritage Canada is doing. A pool of like, money for small arts businesses. That's...That's so doable!

Hilary Atleo: [00:36:32](#)

Yeah. I was chatting with a gentleman whose job it is to advocate for small businesses like with their property taxes, basically to get, to get their property taxes reassessed so that they're cheaper. And when I suggested this to him he said, "But you know, everyone would just fight about what should be a targeted business" and I had the same reaction you did where I was like, I feel like we've already agreed as in I feel like there is an arts budget and arts and culture budget in...for the city of Vancouver. They, they are funding it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:37:01](#)

Yep.

Hilary Atleo: [00:37:01](#)

You know, we know what it is that we-- [Laughs]

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:37:03](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:37:03](#) --that we want to put the money into and we, what we just really have to do is say, hey, all this money that you're dumping into live/work spaces for artists, what it's doing—and to be clear, I support live/work spaces for artists—but what making that the focus of arts funding in Vancouver is doing is allowing a lot of artists to create work and sell it online.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:37:23](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:37:24](#) Because there is no local market. And you know, if you talk to publishers, they will talk about the fact that they are losing market share at a ridiculously rapid rate—Canadian publishers—and they are losing it because instead of coming here and being told, "Oh, you like Esi Edugyan maybe you should read Ian Williams or maybe you should read Steven Price 'cause they're married or, you know, another Canadian author," you are looking it up on Amazon and you're saying, "I really loved *Washington Black*" and they're saying to you, "Great, you should read Ann Patchett."
- Hannah McGregor: [00:37:51](#) Yup.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:37:51](#) You know, because that is like the next hottest thing that's kind of similar in the general fiction category and funding or... It's not fair to say funding because there's a huge difference between saying you don't owe us as much taxes you're being assessed at because you are doing this thing which we consider to be very important.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:38:10](#) Tax rates are a fucking thing for businesses. Like, we give tax breaks to fucking oil companies all the time.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:38:16](#) Yep, the film industry, people with leverage. I think that if we... I think if we made it more apparent that like, we do think this is really important in the city. So, yeah, it's, I think that that thing about values, especially now that I am a small business owner, I use the phrase "small business activists" the other day and one of my regulars, regular customers said, "You know, I don't know, a small business activist doesn't sound that great. It makes it sound like you're one of those people who's fighting, you know, against having affordable housing in your neighborhood" or something. And I was like, just there are so, there's so much weird stigma... And now entering this world, the small business activists who march around and be like, "Tax breaks!" [Laughs]

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:38:57](#) [Laughs] And yeah, I mean it's always this question of like, do we want to build slightly more functional systems within capitalism while also ultimately working against it as an overriding structure or are we just going to be like all capitalism is bad so I will do nothing to improve anything about... Like seems, like seems like a pretty useless attitude, frankly.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:39:19](#) Yeah! It's the same as the, as the like, do you want me to curate only for things that I think are virtuous and good?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:39:24](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:39:24](#) Again, maybe this is just aging, but you start to...for the record, I'm 35 like I'm, I'm making it sound like--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:39:29](#) [Laughs] It's like, you just keep saying you're ageing--
- Hilary Atleo: [00:39:29](#) [Sarcastically] I'm now....seventy. [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:39:29](#) --and we are the same age. So, if you could just dial that back.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:39:38](#) [Laughs] I just, I guess I would not have felt—well, you know, when I was 25, 10 years ago—I would not have been so maybe like pragmatic about some things or, or even so willing to say, "Hey world, you know, I'm willing to take the heat. Tell me what you think about selling H. P. Lovecraft." You know? Like, tell me what you think about this.
- Hannah and Hilary: [00:40:01](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:40:01](#) So being a small business activist--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:40:03](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:40:03](#) --or just my current, my current favourite term for myself has, has just, I think it's maybe given me more empathy. I was in a conversation with another small business person and it was one of those things where we agreed and agreed and agreed and then their conclusions about what needed to be done were so vastly different than mine.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:40:22](#) Yup.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:40:22](#) I just thought, "Okay, I need... either I need to work on my pitch because clearly something I'm saying is not correct or, you know, like I need to listen and then also persuade you because

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your conclusion about what is really causing the problems in the city is not correct."

- Hannah McGregor: [00:40:38](#) Yeah. And I mean they all link together, right? Like people who can afford to live in a place and who can afford to live centrally, walk around their neighborhoods on foot, have more disposable income for quaint local businesses. And then the flip side is also the case, right? People who have small local... Like, it all, you know, it's all of a piece and it's... The longer I live in Vancouver, the more obvious it seems to me that like so many of the city's problems would be fixed by rent control.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:41:06](#) Yes! Yes!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:41:06](#) Like, just like a guy I know on Twitter recently was... Somebody was talking about the shutting down of art spaces in Vancouver and was like, you know, what are we going to do to make the stop happening? And he was like, "Vancouverites treat this like it's a problem that doesn't have an obvious solution. There's a solution. It's called rent control."
- Hilary Atleo: [00:41:27](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:41:27](#) 'Cause what's going to happen is that... Like, I don't know if you remember this story, I think it was from last year where a bagel shop had to close down because they couldn't get anybody to come and bake the bagels.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:41:38](#) Oh...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:41:38](#) And it's because it's like a minimum wage job and you start at like 5:00 AM and it was in Kitsilano and nobody can live in Kitsilano and afford to work a minimum wage job and anybody who would work that job has to take transit into the city and the transit doesn't run that early. And the owner of the business framed it as a like, kids today are too lazy to work a minimum wage job and it's like, no, we have driven people who would work at small businesses out of the city and that's going to... There's going to be like nobody working in coffee shops. Like, what are we going to do with our four million coffee shops when nobody can afford to live in the city anymore?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:42:23](#) Yep. That's the kind of stuff that gets me, that makes me really enraged.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:42:27](#) Yeah.

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Hilary Atleo: [00:42:27](#) I hear it a lot because I own a bookshop and so people come in and say, "Kids these days don't read" or you know, and they'll be holding a book and they'll be saying, you know, "Nobody reads physical books anymore. I read physical books but nobody else does." I'm like, you are not a unique and beautiful snowflake.

Hannah McGregor: [00:42:42](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:42:42](#) There are lots of other humans.

Hannah McGregor: [00:42:45](#) You're...in a bookstore right now. So...

Hilary Atleo: [00:42:48](#) You yourself are currently giving me money for a book. You are just proving your argument as we speak. You're not the only one. And I, we get it all the time. And I have another bookseller friend who says that people want you to be struggling when you're a bookseller. They don't want to hear that you're doing really well. They want you to sort of be like a pauper and Oliver Twist being like, "Please, sir, like just support my bookstore because I'm doing it for the love of reading." And I, I mean, I am...

Hannah McGregor: [00:43:14](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:43:14](#) And you know, it's not like I'm rolling around in my bathtub full of money kind of thing.

Hannah McGregor: [00:43:19](#) That would be an inefficient way to store money anyway.

Hilary Atleo: [00:43:27](#) Yeah... I'm not, I wouldn't...it's not sanitary.

Hannah McGregor: [00:43:27](#) Seems really grubby, too.

Hannah and Hilary: [00:43:27](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:43:27](#) You don't know what people have done with those. Gross.

Hilary Atleo: [00:43:28](#) Yeah. That's not the case. Like, I don't want to make it be like, yes, we're the world's most lucrative bookstore, but I do think that when you engage in what I kind of call a "virtue business"--

Hannah McGregor: [00:43:37](#) Mm.

Hilary Atleo: [00:43:37](#) --there is... You're only allowed to be so successful, maybe..?

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:40](#) Yep. Well, and people don't really... I'm, I saw this with my dad, too. Like people don't really want you to like be making money off of them.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:43:48](#) Yes.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:48](#) Because there's this idea that like if you really believed in this, you would just give everything away for free.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:43:54](#) Yes.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:54](#) And it's like, well that would be great.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:43:56](#) How am I going to pay the rent?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:43:56](#) But like we still, you know, we're still all living within this world, so let's just function within it, shall we?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:44:02](#) Yeah. I did want to also really quickly say that recently somebody asked me, "You know, you're known for your queer feminist sci-fi and your Indigenous studies section. Like how did you realize that's what your customers want?" And I was like, "Oh, you know, I, I really feel like we got lucky." Like basically this is a situation where we were like, "This is who we are, world!
- Hannah McGregor: [00:44:25](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:44:25](#) And not that I don't listen and I don't work my butt off, 'cause I do, I work super hard and I, and I try and listen and I try and reflect my community. And when they say things like we want a bigger, better music section, you know, I relabel a shelf and move a whole bunch of stuff in and start ordering for that. Like I do that. But also, those things are, you know, our Indigenous studies section and our feminist, queer, BiPOC, sci-fi are major sources or like a major proportion of the revenue that the business generates. And that is purely... that's just pure joy for us. Like that's just, we love this. We're super excited that other humans love this, too, and want to come in.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:06](#) And that's going to be the thing when you have a small business that you're better at selling anyway. Right?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:45:10](#) Right.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:10](#) Like there's also this sense of, again, when you, when you are running a small business and doing a lot of hand selling this stuff

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to people, like what are you going to do? Fill your bookstore with Jordan Peterson books and then be like, "Ugh, fine buy it, but I hate you." Like, or you're going to fill it with the stuff that you are excited to hand sell so that you can hand sell it to people. Like...

- Hilary Atleo: [00:45:31](#) Yeah. I'm kind of thrilled about the fact that we have never had to stock Jordan Peterson. And part of the reason why we never had to stock him is also because I just... We cannot compete with the Costcos of the world or the Amazons of the world.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:44](#) Yeah!
- Hilary Atleo: [00:45:45](#) And so it's a central tenet of stocking the store that I don't try--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:45:48](#) --to compete with Costco. Not--[Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:45:50](#) No! I mean, by that, I mean I don't ever... I don't say I'm going to stock this hot, new hardcover novel and, I don't know, mark it down or like put it on sale or something. I just like, I'm just like, no, I don't stock that someone can go and buy that Louise Penny for \$19 on a table at Costco. So I don't need it in hardcover.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:46:09](#) Yep.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:46:09](#) And it's not that I don't love Louise Penny. I do. But there are just so many other funny mystery writers who I could put on the mystery shelf that aren't Louise Penny.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:46:17](#) Yeah. And if it's like, you know, if this is the book that you can find at Costco or you can find at the drugstore, we don't need that. Like I can go to the London Drugs and pick that up. Right?
- Hilary Atleo: [00:46:25](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:46:25](#) Like, I want this bookstore because I want to be able to find all of that other stuff.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:46:29](#) Yeah. And also to get back to just thinking about your, your dad, which is just the... Like that, I... Yeah. Wet'suwet'en. And then hearing stories like that where I'm like, okay, I just...can't. [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:46:41](#) I mean, this is what... Like I've had this conversation with him many times and I think it was hard for him when they declared bankruptcy 'cause it felt for him like it retroactively meant

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everything he had done had failed. And I was like, you successfully ran a small business for 37 years, something like that. That's the thing... That's not a failure.

Hilary Atleo: [00:46:59](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:46:59](#) Just because something ends doesn't mean it was a failure and it wasn't going to like, it wasn't going to last forever. It was... At some point he was going to retire but like, you know.

Hilary Atleo: [00:47:09](#) But he wanted to retire and sell it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:47:10](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:47:11](#) And it's more that one of the other things that really kills these things that we see as really important community hubs is that there is a major assumption amongst consumers or your customers or whatever, that if you're there and the lights are on, then you are making money, you know? And it... They don't even necessarily think it consciously all the way through, but they're like, you're here, therefore all the bills are being paid and you're earning a fair wage.

Hannah and Hilary: [00:47:36](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:47:37](#) Just...so hilarious when I say it out loud. Like, I think I have a pretty dark sense of humor and I really like to make... especially like with all the arrests in Wet'suwet'en, I was talking about my... No hope there is a point but there is no hope, a stance. And you know we were joking around about it and with some customers and some friends who came in 'cause that particular day I had a lot of Indigenous folks stop by before and after the protest just to visit and talk. And we were laughing about something really dark and I said, "This is my new stand-up comedy routine." [Laughs]. And my friend Alana was like, "I think you need to work on it--

Hannah McGregor: [00:48:20](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:48:20](#) --It's pretty bleak!" [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:48:24](#) "It's making me wanna cry."

Hilary Atleo: [00:48:24](#) Yeah! "I don't think it's going to go very far...just saying." Like it's talking about how there's, there's, there is a point but there's no hope to that point is...

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- Hannah McGregor: [00:48:32](#) I mean, this is what phrase I've been seeing resurrected a lot recently is a Gramsci phrase where he says that we need "pessimism of the intellect and optimism of the will."
- Hilary Atleo: [00:48:43](#) Yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:48:43](#) So we need to not believe that things are going to get better, but we have to keep fighting for them to get better anyway.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:48:47](#) Yeah, that is... I've never actually heard that Gramsci quote before.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:48:50](#) Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, I see it on like academic Twitter a lot.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:48:54](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:48:54](#) Like this was one of those like, you know, many of the Marxists I know with PhDs are really into it. Like, okay, that's a very, very small, weird subcategory. But I love it. Right? As a, as a way of thinking about being in the world, it's like, yeah, okay. That...
- Hilary Atleo: [00:49:08](#) That is exactly how I feel about all things in life.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:49:11](#) Yeah. [Laughs] Great.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:49:12](#) Yeah, I'm just like, this probably won't work, but we gotta try.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:49:15](#) Yeah. Yeah, you gotta try. So, why don't we come full circle back to "this probably won't work, but you gotta try" to these books that you've got here.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:49:23](#) Okay. Yeah, here are my recommendations. Obviously we've talked about *Ancillary Justice* a lot.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:49:28](#) Ah, it's so good.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:49:28](#) It's so good. And I just, yeah, if you want a book by a, not by a, like, he's not a non-binary cyborg, but about a non-binary, genderless cyborg. It's a space opera about justice and who counts as a human. [Laughs] It's just, it's everything to me. And then I... we also referenced *All Systems Red*, which is essentially the same thing except in this case the genderless cyborg, Android, or however you want to phrase it. They're a security robot and... Yes, see, this is where things get really nerdy. So everyone hold on.

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- Hannah and Hilary: [00:50:01](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:50:01](#) Hold onto your butts.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:50:01](#) Yeah, hold onto your butts 'cause I'm going to nerd out for a little bit. They know that on one of their previous security contracts or they suspect that they lost it and killed all the people they were supposed to be protecting.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:50:14](#) Oh no!
- Hilary Atleo: [00:50:16](#) Yeah. And so they have... In this book, they have hacked their governor module and nobody knows. So part of it is that they are acting as though they still have the governor module on. But they don't, they have free will. And it's so funny. Anyway, so because they suspect that they have killed all of the people in their previous contract, it refers to itself as "Murderbot." And I know, and it's so--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:50:38](#) [Sadly] Aw....
- Hilary Atleo: [00:50:38](#) --like if you want to talk about bleak humor that somehow still manages to give you hope, even though it's terrible, Martha Wells' *All Systems Red* or *The Murderbot Diaries* is it. And I have a whole pile of them in quite cheaply right now and I, it's really worth it. Plus she has a new *Murderbot* book coming out this year and I just think everyone needs to get caught up on the first four *Murderbots*.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:51:00](#) There's four?!
- Hilary Atleo: [00:51:03](#) Yeah! But they're very skinny.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:51:04](#) This is great. This is a very slender book. You could absolutely read four.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:51:06](#) If you added all four of them together, it would be--
- Hannah McGregor: [00:51:09](#) --one average-sized book.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:51:10](#) Yeah, exactly. Yeah, for sure. And then all along with comfort reading *Empire Wild* by Cherie Dimaline is, was... I mean, obviously *Ancillary Justice* was my favourite thing from the last six years, but [Laughs] well this is a pretty close second. So my reserve, Curve Lake... To be clear, I didn't grow up on reserve. I grew up about 20 minutes south of my reserve and we were back and forth a lot because all of my mom's family lived on

reserve. So they're, yeah, [Laughs] it's just so ridiculous that you have to justify these things to be like, yeah, I'm not trying to occupy space. I mean, that's not ridiculous. I'm not, I am not trying to occupy space that doesn't belong to me, but it's just, it's ridiculous how white Canadians want you to be a certain type of Indigenous person and you have to make it clear that you're not. But anyway, so, my reserve is Curve Lake which is about two hours northeast of Toronto and Cherie Dimaline is from Georgian Bay and spent a lot of time in Toronto. So we're in a very, we're from a very similar place and have, even though she's Métis and I'm Ojibwe or Anishinaabe as lots of people refer to it. We have kind of like a lot of similar experiences. And so partially I just love this book because it felt so much like home, just the way she writes about people and the way those people talk to each other. And yeah, I really, I strongly recommend it. And also it's about a vigilante woman who goes after a werewolf. So yeah, it's like everything I want in a book.

Hannah McGregor: [00:52:36](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:52:36](#) You know, it's not for kids, it's for adults. It's, I think that to me, this book is such a, such a resistance to what contemporary white society wants Indigenous folk to be creating is art. Like it's not a personal trauma story. You know, it's a, it's a novel that has heroes and has absolutely ridiculously hilarious jokes about natural resource extraction. I mean, also like, again, this is some pretty dark humor.

Hannah and Hilary: [00:53:07](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:53:07](#) If you want to joke around about natural resource extraction. And then we... I had to pick out a couple of comforting kid's books. To me, I'm really noticing a trend with the things that I think are comforting.

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:18](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:53:18](#) I'm like, okay, what will--

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:19](#) [Sarcastically] This is what all my comfort texts are about...the end times. [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:53:26](#) [Laughs] Real quick, we'll gloss over this one, *Fur, Feather, Fin—All of Us Are Kin* which is a great rhyming book that just basically explains animals. And also I learned that detritivores are a category. Yeah.

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Hannah McGregor: [00:53:38](#) I've never heard of those, what are they?

Hilary Atleo: [00:53:38](#) They're bugs and things that eat detritus?

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:41](#) Oh! Detritifors!

Hilary Atleo: [00:53:41](#) Yeah, detritivores.

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:45](#) -tivores?

Hilary Atleo: [00:53:45](#) Yeah. Detritivores, like detritus but like a herbivore, but they eat...

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:50](#) [Whispers To Self] Detritivores...Detritivores...

Hilary Atleo: [00:53:50](#) Yeah, exactly.

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:51](#) Good word! Ooh...

Hilary Atleo: [00:53:52](#) Yeah, it made me really excited and I was like, "Oh my gosh, I had no idea that all of these things..."

Hannah McGregor: [00:53:57](#) Yeah, and that's like... I feel like I kind of self-identify.

Hilary Atleo: [00:54:00](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:00](#) [Sarcastically] Real garbage eater over here. Yeah, love it.

Hilary Atleo: [00:54:03](#) [Laughs] Yeah! It's great. So anyway, I learned a new word. It was very educational. It's a really good picture book. But Shaun Tan wrote one of my favourite picture books of all time, which is called *The Rabbits*. Have you read it?

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:13](#) I haven't.

Hilary Atleo: [00:54:13](#) Yeah, it's so... Again, like I said books about the end times, it's real... And 'cause *The Rabbits* is about colonization in Australia and it's all these little marsupials and the last line of the book is: "Who will save us from the rabbits?" So, I'm laughing, but I'm just laughing 'cause it's like, it's just like, you know, I, I don't know, I really, that... That in so many ways summarizes it.

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:37](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:54:37](#) So this is another--

Hannah McGregor: [00:54:37](#) Are the rabbits a metaphor for the colonizers?

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- Hilary Atleo: [00:54:40](#) Yeah. [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:54:40](#) Cool. Just checking. [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:54:44](#) I don't know, man.
- Hannah and Hilary: [00:54:50](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [00:54:50](#) You can tell 'cause they just arrive in a place and then breed like crazy and then eat everything.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:54:55](#) I mean, also in the, in the illustrations they are literally wearing little uniforms and carrying muskets and yeah, like they're... It's like... And the marsupials are... have like face tattoos, you know?
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:07](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:55:07](#) Like, they're so clearly, but yeah...
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:10](#) Yeah, I'm figuring out this analogy here.
- Hilary Atleo: [00:55:10](#) No, it's, it's really great. But I have another Shaun Tan book which is called *Tales from Outer Suburbia* and it's equally thoughtful. It's not quite as like "all hope is lost" because you know... But it's, it's a collection of shorter pieces and so much of, you know, like we can just #mood everything that Shaun Tan has ever done.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:55:33](#) [Laughs] Everything we've been saying, I've been just like fighting the urge to be like "Mooood! It's a mooood!"
- Hannah and Hilary: [00:55:35](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:55:42](#) Hilariously, the last thing which I didn't have a copy of but I really want to recommend is my current favorite cookbook which is called *Bitter*. So...
- Hannah and Hilary: [00:55:48](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [00:55:48](#) ...Things really escalated fast. [Laughs] It's by Jennifer McLagan and cookbook reading is genuinely some of my favourite comfort reading, you know? It just, food... So we were talking about how food is an insurmountable problem sometimes, but so often food seems like a problem I can solve.
- Hannah McGregor: [00:56:11](#) Yeah.

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Hilary Atleo: [00:56:11](#) You know? Like I can follow this recipe and I can make a thing.

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:14](#) I can make a dinner.

Hilary Atleo: [00:56:16](#) I can make it and yeah... I can feed my kids. And the book *Bitter* by Jennifer McLagan, she writes these incredible histories of things and their cookbooks and their histories and they're detail-oriented. She's most famous for her books *Fat* and then *Bones* and then *Odd Bits*, which is all about meat. But there are three books in all, the meat... But the book *Bitter* is about the flavour of bitter, which is the least popular flavour--

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:37](#) Ohh...

Hilary Atleo: [00:56:37](#) --and all of the ways that the bitter flavor makes food better.

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:40](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:56:41](#) And then recipes highlighting bitterness. It's just, it's like--

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:45](#) That sounds so good.

Hilary Atleo: [00:56:45](#) It's so good.

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:45](#) I love bitter things, so I'm super on board.

Hilary Atleo: [00:56:48](#) She's got this--

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:49](#) I mean, like dark leafy greens--

Hilary Atleo: [00:56:50](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:56:50](#) --but also like, all of the other versions, too.

Hilary Atleo: [00:56:54](#) Yeah! She's got this whole thing in there about how grapefruits are way too sweet now.

Hannah and Hilary: [00:57:00](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:00](#) That's a real, that's a real old-man-shouts-at-cloud kind of--

Hilary Atleo: [00:57:02](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:02](#) --attitude. "In my day..."

Hilary Atleo: [00:57:02](#) Yeah! She's like, "What's up with these pink grapefruits?"
[Laughs]

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Hannah McGregor: [00:57:08](#) So, I swear, like the last time I bought a grapefruit I was like, "They've changed how grapefruits taste, right?"

Hilary Atleo: [00:57:13](#) Yeah, yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:13](#) 'Cause I remember grapefruits when I was a kid and they were like, [Disgusted Voice] "Ugh bitter."

Hilary Atleo: [00:57:17](#) Yeah. First off, they were yellow on the inside and the outside.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:20](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:57:20](#) They weren't pink. Anyway...

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:23](#) I was listening to an episode of *The Allusionist* which is a lovely podcast about language.

Hilary Atleo: [00:57:27](#) Ooh.

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:27](#) It was talking about the history of naming apples and the host Helen Zaltzman was talking about the Red Delicious and how outrageous that seems as a name because it's like... This is like objectively one of the least delicious apples.

Hilary Atleo: [00:57:39](#) Yeah. [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:57:39](#) And the person that she was interviewing was like, "Yeah, according to our current terms, but like at the time when it was a new apple, it was probably a really sweet, exciting eating apple." But we've just like... we're engineering new apples every day that are sweeter and sweeter and sweeter and sweeter. So our expectations for fruit have changed.

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:01](#) Yeah. I have two hilarious apple things, one of which is anybody who knows me knows that I will monologue about things that are better in Ontario.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:08](#) Oh my God, the apples are...

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:09](#) Right?!

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:10](#) Our apples are better.

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:11](#) The Ontario--

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:12](#) Also, our peaches.

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Hilary Atleo: [00:58:12](#) To be clear, she's saying that...our Ontario apples.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:15](#) Yeah, sorry. Our... Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:15](#) Not "our." I thought... just 'cause we're in Vancouver--

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:15](#) No, no--

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:18](#) --you're not defending the British Columbia apple.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:20](#) Yeah, I, I'm absolutely not defending the British Columbia apple. I am also from Ontario. The apples in Ontario are better. The peaches in Ontario are better.

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:29](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:29](#) BC peaches are trash.

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:31](#) Mealy.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:31](#) Mealy! So flavourless!

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:33](#) [Laughs] So flavourless. And honestly it's 'cause it gets hot and then, in the case of the apples, then cold, you know? And it's not damp all the time. Like you just, the apples out here are, they're mealy but and they're kind of mushy and they don't have that acidity. So, that is my first thing. Like, I will get on my high horse about how good the fall food is in Ontario any time.

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:53](#) We've got better fall food because we've got fall.

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:56](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:56](#) BC has many other things that are delicious. Cherries!

Hilary Atleo: [00:58:58](#) [Gasps] Yeah!

Hannah McGregor: [00:58:58](#) There are cherries here. And that is magical.

Hilary Atleo: [00:59:01](#) Wine.

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:01](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:59:01](#) The wine, I mean, we have wine in Ontario, but unless it's like a cold climate sparkling Chardonnay? Eh.

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:06](#) Yeah, BC one, BC one is better.

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Hilary Atleo: [00:59:08](#) Mhm, mhm.

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:08](#) Yeah.

Hilary Atleo: [00:59:08](#) And then the other thing is that my absolute favourite type of apple is called the Empire.

Hannah and Hilary: [00:59:12](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:17](#) Just love that crunchy, delicious Empire.

Hilary Atleo: [00:59:21](#) Mmm... I just, if only there were more Empire everywhere. It would just be so much better.

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:26](#) I was out for drinks with a friend a couple of weeks ago and there was a beer on the list that was like "Imperial Glory." And he was like, "I better not have that one, huh?" [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:59:37](#) No, this is even worse! My favourite beer is Russian Imperial stout!

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:40](#) [Laughs]

Hilary Atleo: [00:59:40](#) I'm like, "Oh God. I think I might have a colonial fetish." Like... Oh yeah! We talked about that with *Battlestar Galactica* a lot.

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:48](#) [Whispers] Oh my gosh...

Hilary Atleo: [00:59:48](#) Do you watch? We're like, we are just a hundred percent just cheers? chairs? for the Columbi--

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:50](#) [Whispers] I fucking love *Battlestar Galactica* so much.

Hilary Atleo: [00:59:50](#) I know, it's the greatest.

Hannah McGregor: [00:59:57](#) Oh, goddamn.

Hilary Atleo: [00:59:57](#) When you go up to SFU, are you ever like, "I'm walking through Caprica City"?

Hannah and Hilary: [01:00:00](#) [Laughs]

Hannah McGregor: [01:00:03](#) You know what? No, but I should.

Hilary Atleo: [01:00:04](#) Yeah.

Hannah McGregor: [01:00:04](#) I should absolutely be doing that.

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- Hilary Atleo: [01:00:07](#) Yeah, sometimes when you're hiking around in the woods, you can be like, in the forests of Kobol! Like... [Laughs] Sorry. I'm really...
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:13](#) I do like, there are so... One of my favourite things, like even before I lived in BC, just watching, like, middle of the road sci-fi and being like... Like, *Stargate Atlantis*, which I love deeply, and the fact that every planet that they go to looks like a forest in BC. [Laughs] Every... They're like, "Whoa, we're discovering this whole new planet. What a surprise. It's also mostly redwoods."
- Hilary Atleo: [01:00:38](#) It's all the shots of the islands that get me. They're like, "This exotic locale." I'm like, "It's straight up Salt Spring Island." [Laughs] Yep.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:47](#) [Sarcastically] You can almost see the soap makers from here.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:00:51](#) Sometimes we get really sarcastic about the fact that we're like, "And there's Toronto badly pretending to be Boston," but I actually love it.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:00:56](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:00:57](#) I just love it. I think it's so great and I think it's when I... One of my goals has been to get the truck used in--
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:04](#) Oh yeahhh.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:01:05](#) --TV.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:05](#) Yeah, that would be great! Just like background shots, you just see it there...
- Hilary Atleo: [01:01:09](#) But when I used to say like, "Can't you just see it in, you know, like a *Harry Potter* mini-series or something? Like in Diagon Alley?" Yeah, I can.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:16](#) Yes.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:01:16](#) I don't know, I just feel weird about it now. But yeah.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:19](#) I mean, yeah. You don't want, we don't, we don't want... This is a question I'm genuinely asking myself, as I do not want to give J.K. Rowling more money, but I also really want to go back to the Wizarding World of Harry Potter.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:01:31](#) Yeah!

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- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:32](#) This is the most absurd non-problem in the world. Like nobody has ever had a lower-stakes problem than this.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:01:38](#) [Laughs]
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:38](#) Truly, it couldn't be less of a real issue.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:01:45](#) But you know when something is symptomatic of all the other things?
- Hannah McGregor: [01:01:48](#) Yes.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:01:48](#) Yeah, that's, that's how I feel about that. The way we settled it in the store is we're still selling the books, but we're not selling any of the merch. We know the books are still giving her money. But one of our incredible, very activist customers said to me, "I would rather they bought it here than Amazon."
- Hannah McGregor: [01:02:09](#) Yeah.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:02:09](#) And so that, I think... That actually had a surprisingly big impact on me, is that our, our fans or our customers understand that we are running a business and we do have to pay our ridiculously high tax bill and that that means we have to sell things. And, and to be honest with you, your eight-year-old who is super excited about the wizarding world, they're probably in this neighborhood being raised by a parent who's super...What's the right word for somebody who's just a good human?
- Hannah McGregor: [01:02:37](#) [Laughs]
- Hilary Atleo: [01:02:37](#) And supports, you know--
- Hannah McGregor: [01:02:40](#) Yeah, super non-trash.
- Hilary Atleo: [01:02:42](#) Yeah! Supports people just having rights, you know? And getting to decide what they want for their own bodies and those sorts of things. Yeah. So they're probably in this neighborhood being raised by someone like that and they're growing up with those values now. Just--
- Hannah McGregor: [01:02:52](#) And that eight-year-old's not a TERF, so...
- Hilary Atleo: [01:02:54](#) That eight-year-old is not a TERF.
- Hannah McGregor: [01:02:54](#) Yeah.

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Hilary Atleo: [01:02:54](#) So, it's like never wrong.

Hannah McGregor: [01:03:14](#) [Hilary's Theme Music: "North Side Gal" by J.D. McPherson] If you'd like to learn more about Iron Dog Books you can find them online at irondogbooks.com. That's I R O N dogbooks.com or find them on Twitter and Instagram @irondogbooks. As always, you can find show notes and the rest of the episodes of *Secret Feminist Agenda* on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor. And you can tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. And of course, as per usual, rating and reviewing the show is a great way to help new people find us. Thanks so much this week to thejackanory from Ireland for your kind review. The podcast's 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. Hilary's theme song was "North Side Gal" by J.D. McPherson. This episode was recorded on the traditional and unceded territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh first nations where I'm grateful to live and work. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Theme Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]