

## Episode 1.3 Little Tiny Things and Big Huge Questions with Rebecca Caines and Michelle Stewart

July 28, 2017

Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Welcome back, or welcome for the first time if this is your first episode. It's going to be a good one. I think this podcast is going well so far, don't you? Wait, don't answer. First, I need to tell you what my secret feminist agenda is this week.

Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] So, I was chatting with a colleague a little while ago and I was talking about a project that I have ongoing with a friend. If any of you listen to my other, substantially more popular podcast, *Witch, Please*, I was talking about working with Marcelle and sort of sustaining a collaboration over time. And I was saying things like, "Yeah, the key is really to sort of keep open lines of communication and check in with each other frequently and make sure that things are still going well." And, and this colleague expressed, mmm, not surprise but sort of commented, "Oh, that's really interesting. That's just like a relationship." [laughter] I was like, "Well yes because it, it is one and it got me into thinking about the way that there's so much language surrounding romantic relationships, and the way that we sustain them and the kinds of energy and time that we put into making them healthy, and that all of those skills are equally central to our friendships, but we so rarely see articles about like the top 10 tips for maintaining open lines of communication with your close friends. You know, like what's happening there is this thing that, the term for it is amatonormativity, which is the sort of an assumption that in everybody's life, the romantic relationships are going to be the most important ones and that romance as a primary motivation in life is always going to be a sort of naturally central, particularly for adults. Right? You might have heard this, this idea that as you get older, you'll prioritize your romantic relationships and eventually children and friendships will just fall by the wayside, and that, that naturalization of friendships as something that we have when we're younger and that we grow out of and/or as something that doesn't deserve the same kind of energy and attention and care as our romantic relationships is something that I really would like to fuck right off, honestly. As somebody whose friendships are really central to my life, my friendships are the most important relationships my life and I invest. I want to invest all of the energy and the time and the thought and care into them as anybody does into any relationships that they value. And that's a project that I'm always working on, trying to make sure that I'm checking in with my friends and seeing how our friendships are going. You know, and that at moments when I don't feel cared for, I reach out and communicate to the people in my life who love me what it is that I need from them. Because the people in your life who love you, when you communicate what you need from them, they like give it to you if they can. And, uh, and so I really want to encourage everyone to think about what it means in your life to treat your friendships in the same way with as much priority, or hell

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maybe even more, than your romantic relationships. And, you know, that doesn't just mean, "Oh, you need to put more energy into your friendships." It also means, you know, that you're allowed to maybe ask a little bit more of your friends that you're allowed to ask for forms of care that maybe you felt in the past haven't been okay. That's all right too. So there you go. Uh, prioritizing friendship as intimate relationships. That's, that's my secret feminist agenda this week.

Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Speaking of friendships, let me introduce you to Rebecca and Michelle. Rebecca Caines is an interdisciplinary artist and scholar whose work crosses between creative technologies, including sound art, new media and augmentation, contemporary performance and improvisation, site-specific art practices and community-engaged art. She works at the University of Regina developing their new creative technologies area, which is where she met Michelle Stewart. Michelle is an associate professor in the Department of Justice Studies where she teaches in the area of social justice and research methods with her research currently focusing on how fetal alcohol spectrum disorder or FASD is understood in particular communities of practice, including the police as well as advocates and mentors. I met up with Rebecca and Michelle in the midst of a research trip they're doing in which they're traveling to various communities to use improvisation as a means of highlighting the strengths of people with disabilities. This is a snippet of an evening-long conversation over tacos and wine. Content warning for discussions of sexual violence and police violence. [Music: "Retribution" by Tanya Tagaq]

Hannah (Host): ... But I'm going to stop recording at 25 minutes, so wherever we're at, at that point. That's where we live. Um, so before we get started, can I ask you to just give brief introductions so that people will know whose voice belongs to who?

Rebecca (Guest): Yeah. I'm Rebecca Caines and this is my voice.

Michelle (Guest): I am Michelle Stewart and this is my voice.

Hannah (Host): And I'm Hannah McGregor and this is my voice. I'm hoping that Rebecca having an accent will help.

Rebecca (Guest): You find things out later in life, like, you have an accent. I never had one my whole life and now I do.

Hannah (Host): [background noise] Train. Oh, so we—that's a really good point. [laughter] You don't have an accent. Everybody has an accent. Like, that's not— [laughter] Well damn, Rebecca. Blew my fucking mind. I'm going to set the scene to this beautiful ambient noise that we're receiving right now, which is that we are sitting just after sunset in a gorgeous, huge backyard at an Airbnb in Maple Ridge, which is about an hour away from Vancouver? If you don't drive straight through rush hour, which I did. And, yeah, the sun has just gone down. We are right, we are on the banks of the glorious Fraser River and there is a very long train going by. [background noise, a train whistles] Oh, I think it's done.

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[background murmurs] Wow. Bless. The rest of the podcast is just going to be 10 minutes uninterrupted peaceful silence. [laughter]

Rebecca (Guest): [laughter] And break.

Hannah (Host): Okay. So, um, I'm going to start off with the same question I've been asking everybody, which is, can you tell me something about what it means for you in your daily life to be a feminist?

Rebecca (Guest): I mean, it comes down to, for me, both really little, tiny things and big, huge questions that won't go away. [laughter] So, the really tiny things are that like, hmm, I'm not going to shave my legs. I decided when I was 12 and that never goes away as a thing that bugs people,, like it really bugs people, and I have endless conversations about it with strangers in swimming pools or showers or the hot springs or children who are very confused and on, you know, touching my legs and, and that is something that just doesn't, like, wouldn't imagine would continue when you were 40, in your forties. But it's like something like that where it's like I'm not going to—like, I've chosen to not do something in my life that doesn't make sense and is just constantly out of place for what people understand a woman should be doing. And so even though I made the decision, went through teenage-hood and went like, "That's not a thing I'm doing. I think it's done now it's over." It's just like constantly popping back up again and then I would have a conversation about why and, you know, not wanting to spend—like, frankly being quite lazy about like spending ages on a beauty regime in the morning when I can't be bothered. And, and also like the idea that I get trapped into something that needs replicating. Like if you don't do it, you're now unattractive. Like all that stuff just creeps me out. And I'm like, "Why would I get myself in a cycle where if I don't have the right tool, I'm suddenly not able to be functional as a human." Like, things that just I thought about a lot when I was 12, they just still keep popping up all the time. And I just find that really interesting as a, as a woman, a career woman, thinking I can't believe I'm in a public bathroom discussing with someone my fucking beauty regime again.

Hannah (Host): So, like I can understand children—ha ha, I can understand children, look at me!

Rebecca (Guest): [laughter]

Hannah (Host): Like children asking because if the adult women in their lives all shave their legs, they might not even know that women grow hair on their legs, which is fucked up. But, like, adults also ask you about your leg hair?

Rebecca (Guest): All the time. All the time.

Hannah (Host): What do they ask you?

Rebecca (Guest): Um, it's often like, people feel weird, especially in Canada, talking to if you haven't invited a conversation. So, there's often, like, glances and awkwardness. So the last time it happened was in the hot springs in, where were we?

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Somewhere in Whitehorse. [unclear] Um, so beautiful, beautiful hot springs, hanging out with kids, amazed by everything that's happening, and a lady, just as I climbed in, was like, "Oh, you didn't take the time to shave your legs before you got in the hot spring." And I was like, "I don't know you. I'm getting in with my kids, my friend's kids." [laughter]

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Rebecca (Guest): And I sort of didn't know—at that point I was like, you know what, I don't really need to have this conversation and I just kept swimming with the four year old that I was hanging out with, but she just felt the need to say it, which I find really strange. I mean, she was an older lady and I guess maybe for her it was a problem that she was anxious about and so she felt like we'd have some kindred spirit, like, "Wow, you left that for quite a lot of days." [laughter]

Hannah (Host): [laughter] Then you're like, "Yeah, it's been decades of days." I mean, it's remarkable to sort of experience in real life this thing where like women have so profoundly internalized these rules about how you are and are not allowed to be and then sort of externalize them onto you as a form of comradery? Like, I experienced that a lot like with weight, where people try to sort of establish a rapport around like, "We have a shared hatred of our bodies." Like isn't that wild? Like, "I mean we all want to lose some weight, right?" And just that moment it, I find it so difficult always in that moment to decide how to intervene, because I often don't want to be unkind, but I also don't want to be complicit with that conversation and figuring out how to be like, "Yeah, okay, you want to sit down and have a conversation about the politics of body hair, person I just met in a hot spring?"

Rebecca (Guest): While I've been on the road for 11 hours and I'm trying to play with some kids who are really cute. [laughter]

Hannah (Host): [laughter] Yeah.

Rebecca (Guest): It's, but it's like, it's not, it's not just kind of beauty regimes. It's like, I don't know, even my colleague at the university's daughter, who's like maybe 10, she's just fascinated by me not having kids. It just, she can't get out of a brain that I don't want to have kids. And she, and I feel like she's hanging out with a lot of kids whose families are very conservative because they live in a pretty straight area, and, but it's also like... you're going to get married. Marriage is something that's very in her head and she's like, she's 10 and she's really determined that she knows that people go through these phases, they do this and they do this, then they do that, then they get married. Then her parents just recently broke up. So she's got in her brain that divorce happens too. But it's a stage, right? You do this and then you have this and, and she just, I have, I mean she must have asked me 25 times like, "So you really don't want to have kids?" And I'm like, "nope," but you like, you're like, "Can you, is it because you can't have kids?" "No, I just don't want to have them," [laughter] but it's not. I don't

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think that's because she doesn't have a feminist mom. She does. It's just around her as a sort of normal thing.

Hannah (Host): Failures of um, I was going to say failures of imagination, but that's not quite right. It's like the sort of failure to provide people with multiple versions of what it looks like to be a particular kind of person in the world. So like when you, you know, when I got to the point in my life where I realized that I wasn't like interested in a lot of the things I'd been told I needed to be interested in, and then it felt like all of a sudden the rest of my life was a blank. Like, okay, I know I don't want this set of things. I don't want partner, child, wedding, etc. But like I haven't seen any other versions of what it looks like to thrive, and so it feels like you choose the script or you don't choose the script and then, I mean the answer obviously is you improvise, but it is terrifying when it seems like everybody else is following a script and you're like, "Oh, I guess I just have to figure out how to do something different."

Rebecca (Guest): Well, Michelle and I were talking like about academia and being around women who were having lots of kids and just the assumption that that was the model that was the most worthy or not even, it's not even that; it's like an idea that, well, "you don't have kids so it's easier for you to get research done" or, you know, like "we're doing really important work bringing up the next generation, but you're just doing some writing, so of course you are going to succeed," you know, and it's so weird. It's like the opposite of feminism, right?

Hannah (Host): Yeah. It's like you've got work and you've got kids and so if you don't have kids then you should be doing more work, and it's like you know that there's other... There are other things, right? [laughter]

Rebecca (Guest): [laughter] There are other things in the world. They are not the only two options [laughter] And there's no discussion of choice. It's like choice disappeared and that's really depressing. Like it's just a depressing idea that you are, like that you won't acknowledge that sometimes, and certainly not all the time, but sometimes having kids is a choice and you've made a choice and that's a great choice, but that is still a choice, you know? And that choice conversation, I think because we've been so busy making room for people to have kids and to have kids and work and all that stuff, we're sort of scared to introduce the idea that any of it could be a choice because we don't want to take away the necessary supports that we have for you to be able to have alternative careers and kids and childcare. But like now we don't want to talk about choice anymore because we can't acknowledge that maybe you picked having a very beautiful, wonderful farm with your kids that you've made and built your house and hung out with your kids, and I picked other things. That's got to be a conversation we can have, but suddenly, like, we can't really talk about it because if I start saying I chose a career and you chose that, it's suddenly like I'm judging their kid, their choice. And that's, we're going backwards again, right?

Hannah (Host): The "Look, we know that sort of you chose to have kids" line has been used as an excuse to keep women out of all kinds of career paths and to like not

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provide, yeah, the necessary social assistance, and the reality is that what's in place there, the sort of prejudice against child-having, is about misogyny, not against hatred of children, right? It's actually because like—and we know this because men who have children have absolutely no cost to their careers as a result of it. In fact, often they're careers are more successful, whereas women who have children often sacrifice their career, so the issue is misogyny. It's not child having. But yeah, that sort of, that framing of like, you know, the question of children as inherently a question of women and what their lives will look like then becomes a sticking point in conversations between women about the choices that they've made,

Rebecca (Guest): And a way to sort of bring back in a sort of judgment around what kinds of activities are more important than others, which ones are more valuable and a critique, like I sometimes have these critiques of like, "you know, universities are getting very, very hard to get jobs in and they're very, very corporate and we're losing our ability to teach the kind of classes we want to teach and do the research we want to do" and somehow caught up in this conversation about universities getting crappier is an idea that the career-hungry, ambitious person doesn't have kids and like stomps on everyone to get to the top is the only other option. It's like, you get to have kids or you get to be that, sorry, there are you two options, and you're like, "There are so many people I know not doing either of those things, and it's actually working quite well." You know? [laughter]

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Rebecca (Guest): They aren't a total asshole and they're still actually being able to have a fulfilling life, but it's like... we create these kinds of dichotomies between like a happy family of whatever it looks like and this ambition and that, that's it. That is that, the two. That's the two options. So I don't know what the rest of us end up doing.

Hannah (Host): Can I bring you into this conversation? [to Michelle] You don't have to weigh in on any of these topics about body hair or child having. You can just tell me about, tell me what in your daily life, sort of, living feminism means for you.

Michelle (Guest): I don't, like you were saying what's feminism and praxis? And I think for a lot of folks, women, nonbinary folks, men, however folks identify themselves, I don't know if they think about feminism as a daily praxis, but rather like they've taken from histories that have formed who they are on the daily. And so for me, I think, you know, we have this kind of punctuated political moment right now where people feel like they have to identify if they are or not a feminist and it's their own political gesture to do that in various settings. But I think for myself, you know, I take like lessons and ideas from people that did a lot of really important work quite a long time ago and ideally in 2017 we're building from first, second, third, fourth, whatever wave we imagined ourselves a part of, but like that we're actually building from that space, right? Whether it's community building that we do or if it's in the work we do, or ideally those worlds are together if it's praxis, right? So, I don't know. Yes, I'm a feminist? [laughter]

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Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Rebecca (Guest): Is that the short answer?

Hannah (Host): That wasn't the question. I'm really interested in that question of building, because I feel like we have been seeing a lot of, something that happens a lot in sort of waves of political movements, which is like for the new feminism to articulate itself, we essentially have to, like, devour our mothers. So like have you seen models of what it looks like to sort of build on? And I'm thinking, you know, there's been a lot of conversations in Vancouver, or I think in Canada in general right now, about trans-exclusive feminism, which is often linked back to sort of major second wave thinkers who were explicitly transphobic and how it is that we can pick up those histories. There are pieces of second wave feminism that I fucking love, you know, the politics of not having children, the politics of growing your body hair, like lots of ways of moving through the world that were articulated by these thinkers and activists that like... So how is it that we can sort of pick up some pieces and not others without it needing to be this sort of ritualized matricide? [laughter]

Michelle (Guest): Well, I think that a politics of intersectionality—I know intersectionality is this really polluted kind of garbage word, everything is always already intersectional—but it's like, but if you're doing that in your regular work, whatever you imagine your regular work to be, then I feel like that politics is really trying to have a rigorous inclusivity that you're really trying to learn from one another. And so then you're really maybe a little bit more aware of your subject position. You're really trying to really take account of who you are in the world, where you are, where power is marked, how do you do the work, where you're, I don't like the language of allyship, so like what does it mean to do solidarity work or be an accomplice? And to me that's like a really robust form of listening. And so a dear friend of mine, call out to Leo, really focuses a lot on call in, not call out. And so how do we do that work in a way that we're deeply mindful of how accidentally horrible we can be to each other, and sometimes it's quite accidental, right? Um, but to figure out a way to have a politics of accountability that moves around that in a way that we don't destroy each other, like you said, or like kind of devour mothers along the way. So how do we say like, "Hey, like slow down, the thing that just happened here doesn't work and how do we all do that work together?" So we keep our communities as intact as possible. You know, and at times we make really tough choices about who belongs in our community, but always I think trying to build community and build a really robust community that is trying to be accountable to one another in the ways and breaths that we can know one another. And that to me, for some people, that might be something that for one person looks like first wave feminism because it's their first look at something, and for another person we can call it second, third, fifth, whatever waves we want. But wherever we are and whatever experiences we have, that we're really trying to be accountable to one another, I think, in ways that really require like a deep attentive listening and again, like I think like really an honest commitment to

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calling each other in, so that we're taking care of each other while we try to build our capacity to take care of each other on the long-term. Yeah.

Hannah (Host): Yeah. I like calling in a lot. I had a conversation in the last episode with my friend Lucia, and we talked a lot about reparative justice as a framework and the way that sort of one of the issues at the heart of a sort of carceral framework for responding to rape culture is that the premise is that the rapist is always a monster who must be cast out of society. And that, that framework means that we don't have any ways of actually understanding and accounting for violence within our communities, because the second somebody has committed this violent act, they're cast out. And so therefore if you're in my community, you couldn't have done that. So like, what do the models become for saying, like, "No, you're staying here," like you are accountable this to this community. We're gonna keep having this conversation here. But that requires forms of community bonds that I think for a lot of people, particularly people living in alienated urban settings, often aren't in place. Like who calls you in, you know, like who do you have, who actually holds you accountable for your actions?

Michelle (Guest): You know, where we live now is not a gigantic urban location, but I do think that, you know, the work that people put into community building, folks that work in urban spaces and non-urban spaces, and I've lived in both, you have to be willing to commit to finding your community and anchoring yourself into a community of accountability in some way. And, you know, that means if you feel like you move really frequently, you have to figure out how to anchor yourself and figure out how you do that preliminary solidarity work to demonstrate your commitment and then build those communities, um, those community relationships in a way that you can be accountable. Because otherwise it's actually, in a lot of ways for some people, an act of privilege to move between spaces where they're not accountable and for other folks it's actually a demonstration of marginality that they never get anchored, right? And so it cuts both ways, and I think that happens in cities or in smaller locations. But I do think that in the radical community and the leftist community that I think that is a—I wouldn't say it's common, but I do think it's a struggle—is how do we deal with these really challenging issues of interpersonal violence, sexually-based violence, or other types of violence that people would typically turn to the state and seek relief. And you know, I think it's really incumbent upon all of us that do community work to really look at the really challenging projects people have undertaken to try to figure out how they do that work in a way that works for their community, that does produce safety and accountability and keeping our communities intact. Because it's not the answer just to pick up the phone and call the police. The answer is, why are you picking up the phone? Why are you calling the police and like, why are you hailing the state? And we hail the state often because we don't have mechanisms in place to know what to do with the situation we're faced with. And sometimes it's because we're deeply hurt by what's happened to ourselves or our loved ones, and I would never negate that at all. But I do think that we do have people in our lives, in various places around the world, that have done a really, really challenging work of figuring out how they do that type of accountability work

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and they've relied on other models or they've developed their own and sometimes they go very badly and it can destroy a community in a minute. But at the same time we know people who have done that work and they can do that work sometimes. But like you said, it's a challenge, right? Because we're still holding people inside of our community because we say, "Okay, let's try to do this together." And that takes the work of everybody. And I would never pretend to displace the position of the person that was assaulted and all the individuals that are impacted by that particular issue. Yeah.

Hannah (Host): Yeah. I have a dear friend of mine who recently posted to Facebook a website that's a list of resources for not calling the police. She was like, you know, we need to understand the ways in which always turning to state intervention and to police intervention as your first gesture is like, it is a gesture that we know results in violence against minoritized communities. Like, we see this taking different forms, but the theme of the police is that they are the military arm of a state that was designed explicitly to support white supremacy, and so to ask the police to intervene is to ask them to exert that violence against those populations. So, she posted this website and was like, you know, here's some resources. Like, if you are also—that like, specifically, if you are a white person who would also like to learn how to not call the police, here are some resources. And the responses that she got were virulent in a way I rarely see on social media, like on a platform like Facebook. Like, people were so angered at the idea that you should not call the police in the face of a crime happening. Like they were so mad at her for suggesting that that was not an appropriate response. It was. It was really remarkable to see playing out how closely held that idea of the ability to trust the police is for a lot of people.

Rebecca (Guest): I was just gonna say there's a history there, there's a history of women in abusive relationships not calling out and there's a history of neighbors not listening to their neighbors being beat up and there's a history. So there's a kind of, I think something's going crooked when you pick up the phone for the police and you think that you're stepping into that history in doing the right thing. Like, well, generations of people never dealt with that. So my job is now to deal with it. I'll call the police, right? I, you know, and I do remember as a teenager Tracy Chapman singing, you know, about not calling the police when your neighbors getting beaten up and as a teenage woman thinking, "I don't want to be that person."

Music: [Music: "Behind the Wall" Tracy Chapman: "Last night I heard the screaming, loud voices behind the wall. Another sleepless night for me, it won't do no good to call the police.]

Rebecca (Guest): Something's happening, I should do something, and I don't have a lot of resources in my brain, so what do I think you have to do is pick up the phone and call the police. So I do think there's a, like there is—you've got to think that people's outrage are possibly also born out of, "Shit. We don't want to do, replicate a system where we do nothing either, right?" [laughter] So she was trying to get resources that would help people have another option, but

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probably a lot people were like, "Man, that 25 times I didn't do anything when I heard my neighbor being beaten up and I finally called the police and now I'm, now you're telling me that's not good enough?" You know like, there's a guilt and shame and a history of women being not—like, "We'll just ignore it. It'll go away"—that I think has got to have fed into people having that sort of response, because I don't think it's just like, "Oh, we trust the state." I think that there's something else happening, you know.

Michelle (Guest): If I saw that go across a thread... You know, I don't know if she was writing in Canada or the US? Was she writing in Canada? [pause] So she's running in Canada. She was writing in the settler state, you know. I'll identify myself: I'm a settler. I'm not a person of color and not a visible minority. I think that there's a whole group of people, myself included, who grew up conditioned to have normalized understandings of what a police encounter would look like. And that was, you call the police because something's wrong and they will help you solve the problem. And that's not the experience of a disproportionate number of people that have the police called on them when a) nothing was wrong and the police engage with them and it turned out horribly for them. And so people that have a privileged perspective and how they engage with the state think that they can call the state and also do away with something they don't want to deal with because my own research focused, before, on police practices in Canada and some of my work still works on the justice sector. But I think from my own perspective, speaking from my own perspective, that people call the police out of complacency and apathy and they call the police in to deal with situations they don't want to actively deal with themselves. And as someone who has actively responded when there has been a very horrible situation involving violence, when there's moments where people would default and call the police, we have to ask ourselves why we're not stepping in; why we're not talking to someone. If someone looks like they're injured, why aren't you talking to them? Why are you calling the police? And if it's because it really does seem like it's something outside of your control, I just don't know how much somebody weighs out all of the potential outcomes because of potential outcomes we know are deadly for people of color and we need to remember that and at the end of the day we can look into the Canadian demographics, disproportionate number of Indigenous people are in prison and they're in prison for a number of reasons, not least of which is apathy and calling the police. And we call the police into situations where the police didn't need to be called in the first place and some would definitely argue they never needed to be called, but in the first place they didn't need to be called and there was devastating consequences for that individual because there's a racist system that they will then encounter.

Hannah (Host): Yeah. It's remarkable to think through how it's apathy on both sides. Right? How like there's ways in which a failure to intervene on the one hand is a sign of like, "I'm normalizing the violence that I'm overhearing." Like it's perfectly normal for my neighbour to be beating the shit out of his wife so I'm not going to intervene. And in that case, calling the police feels like or is framed as the intervention, and yet at the same time calling the police is also an attempt to

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put on a Band-Aid on the bullet hole of like, you know, a culture in which this violence is normalized and like, you know, feeling... like I have, I was in the same situation as a teenager, like overhearing, you know, a guy out behind my house beating up his girlfriend, and calling the cops and that feeling like a scary risky thing to do at the time because I was 13 and home alone and, and scared about the violence that I was hearing. But that also my understanding of the police as people who will come and help is because I am like a white, middle class, settler person and was taught from day one that the police were my friends and I had to unlearn that.

Michelle (Guest): Well, and that's what I think it goes back to, like thinking about what our communities have the capacity to do. And our communities don't have the capacity because we don't build strength in communities writ large. We build, if we're fortunate, build strength in very small communities of practice. They're very intentional and then we try to build that capacity and maybe there's capacity then to respond to something that feels like you might, depending on your subject position, otherwise call the police for, but I would never negate the reason why somebody chooses to call the police because there's all sorts of reasons you would. Your own personal background, women that have been assaulted, individuals that had been assaulted, like they're not going to step into harm's way for a number of reasons. I think that what we have to ask is when we're calling the police, are we actively thinking about why we're calling the police? Because a disproportionate number of calls for service are things that we can go and talk to one another about. Why are we calling in for noise complaints? Why wouldn't we talk to our neighbour? Why aren't we intervening if someone looks like they've been injured and just double checking, because we do have a lot of capacity and I think that we forget that sometimes and that's not in intentional communities. That's if you stopped at the side of the road and then somebody stopped to assist you, would I also stop to make sure that everybody is able to do something here, and of course in some situations then we would call an EMT, because we can't, you know, and again, like everybody's own background comes into play and so I don't want to erase the fact that people make those choices, but I ask people to think about, when you pick up the phone and call 9-1-1 or wherever that is in your community, are you doing it really thinking it through and really being cognizant of who you are when you're making that phone call and double-checking what your own capacity is to respond. Because we hear about people screaming in alleyways and waiting for the police to respond. And we also know recently of a very high-profile case in the us where a white woman called the police and then was shot, and that became a polarizing example again of Black Lives Matter, right?

Rebecca (Guest): I don't know. There's these sort of stereotypes of compassion, of something, that is still considered so feminine and yet it these qualities of like being able to reach out to each other and support each other are human qualities that have been atrophied, right? They've really kind of, they've just withered. And if you look at lots of feminist theories, trying to find a model, like how can we have a community while we're not like, "Sorry, you get to be in it and you don't." Or how do we have a community where like... my capacity to say you're part of my

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community doesn't require me pretending that all these other things that you're going through don't exist, because I'd like to hold onto the fact that, you know, you look a little bit like someone I could hang out with. You know? And it's like these models that feminists have been trying to work on are not about, they're not theoretical. They're real. They're these models of how do we be together in a way that is honest and able to look out for each other and also able to draw lines where lines need to be drawn. [Music: "Retribution" by Tanya Tagaq]

Hannah (Host):

If you'd like to learn more about Rebecca and Michelle, I've linked to some of their work on the website, that's [secretfeministagenda.com](http://secretfeministagenda.com), where I'll also be posting short reading lists for every episode. If you want to tweet about the podcast, use the hashtag [#secretfeministagenda](https://twitter.com/secretfeministagenda) and don't forget to rate and review it if you like what you've heard so far. The podcast theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album, *Chub Rub*. You can download the entire album on [freemusicarchive.org](http://freemusicarchive.org), or follow them on Facebook. Rebecca and Michelle's intro song was "Retribution" by the absolutely brilliant Tanya Tagaq. If you don't know her work already, go and buy 100% of it. It's absolutely genius, and the video for "Retribution," which is also linked from the site, is incredible. Thanks to Siobhan McMenemy for suggesting the new sign off, which you were about to hear in just a second. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]