

Episode 1.5 Can(n)ons & Revolutions with Andrea Hasenbank

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Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] Hi, I'm Hannah McGregor and this is *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Hey, babes. Can I call you babes? Not sure about that. Anyway, I'm excited to be back with another really thrilling episode. I don't know if it'll stop feeling this way once I expand my guests beyond the "literal favorite people in the world" category, but right now I'm just super pumped every week to bring you another one of these conversations, but before we get into it, let me tell you what my secret feminist agenda is this week.

Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] For the first of what will probably be a whole bunch of times, my agenda this week is: support Black women creators. Many of you probably already do this all the time, whether it's deliberately as a political practice or unintentionally because this is the culture you're embedded in, or just joyfully because Black women create so much incredibly dope shit, so I'm going to get more specific because I've just watched and read two things that were so splendid that I just need to share them. Thing the first, the Netflix original movie, *The Incredible Jessica James*, starring Jessica Williams. Netflix is not advertising this to me, which is absolutely outrageous because it is 189% in my wheelhouse. As I just said, it stars Jessica Williams, who is perfect and hilarious and gorgeous, and so, so funny through the entire thing, manages just to play a sort of neurotic and flawed, but still deeply and profoundly likable, protagonist whose most exciting characteristic is that, despite having all of the insecurities of somebody in their mid-twenties try and make a go of it in a really difficult field, is still filled with a pretty profound sense that she has something meaningful to contribute to the world and that's just still really exciting to see in a woman character. It's getting kind of advertised as a romance. The romantic lead is Chris O'Dowd who I find absolutely charming, but it's actually kind of not about that at all. It's actually mostly about her desire to be a successful playwright, about what our relationship is to our careers when we're desperately passionate about something, but not actually sure if that thing loves us back. It's about teaching and mentoring; it's about her relationship with a young black girl who she is teaching in a theater class. It's just, like, it was... it made me laugh. It made me cry. Almost everything makes me cry, but this earned the tears. It's an hour and 20 minutes and it is worth every second of your time. Go watch it right now.

Thing the second, slightly longer time investment, still super worth it is: *We are Never Meeting in Real Life*, a collection of humor essays by Samantha Irby. I'm pretty sure that I saw this for the first time being promoted by Roxane Gay on Twitter. Roxane Gay blurbs it as well. And so, considering how much I've loved all of her work, that seemed like a pretty strong recommendation, but I will confess that I wasn't prepared for how much I would love this collection. Um, it very much fits into the genre of sort of memoir, crossed with humor, told over a series of essays that you see in a lot of books that have been put out lately by let's say, you

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

know... Lindy West's *Shrill* is a good example; Mindy Kaling's *Is Everyone Hanging Out Without Me*; Amy Poehler's *Yes, Please*; Scaachi Koul's *Someday We'll All be Dead and None of this Will Matter*, which are all—I read all of those books. I liked all of those books. Samantha Irby has a totally different voice and a totally different take. She's incredibly raunchy. There's a ton of poop jokes in there. There's a ton of sex jokes in there. Um, it's often very raw. She deals in really open ways with depression and anxiety and poverty and abuse. And when you finish the book, you will want to be her friend so, so profoundly. There's this intimacy to the sort of self-effacing authorial voice that by the end really does make you feel like you know her, and then there's this incredibly smart move right at the end of the collection where the final essay is the one that the whole collection is named after: *We are Never Meeting in Real Life*, where she's basically like, "Yeah, I know I'm funny and charming in writing. We're not friends and we will never be friends" and it's just the smartest move to sort of draw the reader in in this way, to provide this feeling of intimacy, and then remind you at the end that you are still a stranger. And also that she doesn't owe you anything, right? I think there's the sense that many people in white supremacist, patriarchal culture are used to expecting enormous quantities of emotional labor from Black women and that that becomes particularly directed towards women who write in this autobiographical mode, who seemed to be offering up pieces of themselves. Roxane Gay has written about this as well. This sense that in order to make it as a Black woman artist, you have to sort of bear your soul, but then it gives people this sense of ownership. And Irby's collection does this amazing job of both opening up subjects in a really sort of intimate and frank way, while also at every turn refusing that desire for ownership, refusing that, um, that sense that, "oh, now you know her, now you're friends with her." Yeah, it... it was one of the best reads I've had in a while. I usually don't read essay collections cover to cover like that and I just sat down and consumed the whole thing in two days.

So, like I said, the agenda of supporting Black women creators is, it's going to come back time and time again because there's such an incredible amount of phenomenal work being created. [laughter] And I'm going to probably end up talking about it a lot. So there you go. Go watch *The Incredible Jessica James*. Go read *We are Never Meeting in Real Life*. And if you have some other fantastic books or movies or TV shows or albums that you want to pitch to other listeners, why don't you tweet about them using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]

Hannah (Host): [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans] All right, it's time for Andrea. Andrea Hasenbank is a PhD candidate in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta (that's where we met), where her research focuses on the circulation of print and the reading publics that formed the leftist pamphleteering culture of 1930s Canada. Currently, she works in politics and reads manifestos on the sly. She wears her eyeliner wings so sharp they could kill a man and one time she invited me over to her condo for a Tupperware party. [Music: "Rise Up (With Fists!!)" by Jenny Lewis and the Watson Twins]

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

- Andrea (Guest): Alright, how's my vocal fry?
- Hannah (Host): It's great.
- Andrea (Guest): [laughter]
- Hannah (Host): Aw, okay. So you, um, you said you were interested in chatting about knowledges and what knowledges count, which I really, really like that, I like that question a lot. I liked that as a way of framing, sort of, the experience of working in different sort of high performance, high intensity and deeply intellectual fields. So like, my experience as an academic has been one of, early on, earning the 'cred' to be there by proving that I could out talk and out think the boys, and then only gradually getting to a point where I felt comfortable enough with myself as an academic to be like, "oh, it's not actually my job to prove myself to you on your terms." Like, I can bring the things that matter to me to bear and to this work.
- Andrea (Guest): Yes. Oh my goodness. That's such a liberating thing, I think, to think and feel about it. And it's so funny when you talk about that impulse, the need to out think and out talk the boys. So, I work in politics now, in addition to being an academic, but I think back to some of my early political science undergrad classes, where there would be two women in the course. I would be one. The other one wouldn't talk and I would feel compelled to bring all of the feminist perspective through me, while also sort of maintaining this, "Oh, but I don't have to just be the woman" sense of things and that is outrageous. No one person can ever be expected to do that and the idea that feminism becomes one woman out thinking and talking a room full of men is ludicrous. I mean, that's how we end up with a very narrow view of what feminist action is and is also how individual women with strong voices and unusual ways of thinking and doing things become targeted because they stick out. They don't appear to have people backing them up and people working with them, which I think, if anything, we can say about the new whatever wave of feminism we're in, fourth or fifth or—
- Hannah (Host): Somebody called it fourth wave feminism the other day and I was like, "Oh, we're still using waves?" [laughter] I thought it was just the All Feminism now.
- Andrea (Guest): The All Feminism, the completely interrelated feminism, which I would define as sort of like younger women, older women, nonbinary, trans women, and people of all these different sort of once atomized groups, finding ways to talk to each other and just like be there for each other. My God, like, femme Twitter is incredible. You see these ways that people reach out and just sort of support each other and cheerlead each other and it's that sense of, there's a community behind you and a community that you stand with and a community that you're responsible to. You don't just get to be out there being some stick out, lone voice talking for everyone, for all woman, just because you are a woman. You

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

have to kind of... be a part of something and, you know, have an awareness outside of yourself. So yeah,

Hannah (Host): Yeah. But then it also feels so often like, um, you know, you go to Twitter, you go to your friends, you have these conversations. You realize so intensely that, like, you're not alone. You're not making this stuff up. There's lots of other people backing you up on these experiences and lots of other people pushing your thinking by having experiences that are beyond your purview. And then you go back into a male-dominated workplace and all of a sudden it's back to this, like, "How do I legitimize the things that I know to be true as a feminist? How do I legitimize them to you in terms that make sense to you?" Like, how do I bring to you the sort of community-based knowledges that I have acquired through going out and listening to these conversations and then I come back and you want receipts. You want—

Andrea (Guest): Yeah.

Hannah (Host): You know? You want a scholarly citation proving this to be true and I know it to be true because I have been listening to Indigenous women on Twitter. So like, you know, I know that that knowledge doesn't count a lot of the time in academia. That knowledge doesn't count on purpose because the whole systems through which we decide what counts and what doesn't are designed to exclude certain people's voices. You know, it feels sometimes like you're doing this double duty, this sort of work of translation, which I actually think is in some ways the best thing I can think to do with the forms of privilege that I have? It's like, I am in that position where I can do that translation, so I'm going to try to do that translation and legitimize forms of knowledge beyond the academy. But boy howdy, that's tiring.

Andrea (Guest): [laughter] It really is because sometimes it makes you feel like you're constantly writing the introduction to something.

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

New Speaker: When, in fact, you have a very in-depth, interesting analysis that you want to get to, that you want to unpack and have there for people to engage with, without always constantly having to reset the terms of something. My academic work is very much about working class knowledges, writing, literatures, and some of that work has been happening in that kind of narrow view of what classes for many, many decades, and it's this idea that what a reader or a writer or a person in the world takes and uses from a text is a very, very different from what can be intended and that sort of flipped view of things that, in fact, it's what a community sees and uses in a text that is valuable. This is something I think scholarship is really still grappling with.

Hannah (Host): Mhmm.

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

Andrea (Guest): And then to have other identarian communities come in or other–feminism isn't an identarian community, it's half the population.

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Andrea (Guest): Like to say this is a special interest group is outrageous, but this sort of mode of... the fact that there can be multiple readings and multiple knowledges is incredibly destabilizing for the entire way academia is constructed. The university is supposed to be the place that gathers and keeps knowledge, just the one monolithic body of knowledge.

Hannah (Host): Yep.

Andrea (Guest): But to have this idea that it's all, not only not contained within the walls of the university, but it's out in the world everywhere and can be different things, can be contradictory things, and that even the way we go out and get it is suspect and different and difficult and questionable is, I think, a really threatening thing. And so we see on the political side of things resurgence of conservatism that we thought were long gone. And by we, I mean sort of like the liberal leftist population at large. This idea of, like, nationalism, patriotism, sort of like honour as this overarching thing. Like, you are wearing a fantastic shirt right now that has the Canada 150 logo, but says, "colonialism 150."

Hannah (Host): And the logo's upside down,

Andrea (Guest): The logo was upside down.

Hannah (Host): and is white instead of multicolored, which is also pretty important. [laughter]

Andrea (Guest): [laughter] You know, a t-shirt that signifies in a lot of ways.

Hannah (Host): Mhmm.

Andrea (Guest): But I think for Canadians, the 150 badge has really become this place to really explore questions of history and power and dominance, and I think even people who normally wouldn't get involved in those conversations are. But what has surprised me is the reaction very strongly of people who just want us to talk about Vimy Ridge more

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Andrea (Guest): And just want us to sort of like really get our explorers knocked down and like set out, like we aren't talking about Samuel de Champlain, like, get the fuck outta here. And so that's been surprising to me, and so seeing that in politics, it doesn't surprise me that there's also an equivalent movement in academia for people who want a canon, people who want a set way of criticizing attacks or people who want to attach meaning to what a single author is putting into the

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

world, rather than what are all of the people reading that author doing with those words. And that's a little bit frightening. It's the idea that we've had this perception that we've made this great progress and I think many people certainly on the liberal part of the progressive spectrum, and I use liberal and left to me and very, very different things, that liberal people think progress is a platform that you stood on and it is stable and then you do the next one and you go to the next one. So this idea of incremental change, you know, like one people, "Alright, we'll make sure working class people could get the vote and we'll worry about you women, we'll worry about you racialized people later," and then you go forward. You're like, "Okay, maybe we can have gay marriage now, but like let's not deal with trans people—

Hannah (Host): Polyamory.

Andrea (Guest): Or polyamory or anything like that. We'll get there. Whereas I think on the left, like the Marxist-oriented left, the idea of incrementalism is just a smokescreen.

Hannah (Host): Yeah.

Andrea (Guest): It's a way of convincing people that there's progress made, but we see very much how that can always be rolled back or about how it's built on a shaky foundation that gets eroded. You tumble back in and suddenly we're back in a world that doesn't look very much different from the 1930s or the 1830s in some ways.

Hannah (Host): The 1830s! I saw this tweet yesterday that, uh, that said, it was—my favorite genre of journalism is giant corporations reinvent feudalism—and it was screen caps of all of these articles—

Andrea (Guest): I read that too!

Hannah (Host): —that were like, you know, "Google creating a town where all of their employees can live." And it's like, "Oh no!" [laughter]

Andrea (Guest): Yeah, we have a word for that in working class and union labor. It's the "company town." The company runs the town, the money you get is script to spend in the company store and it's just ways for the company to diversify on the backs of its own employees. So yeah, that is capital feudalism if you like it. And, man, are people excited about it.

Hannah (Host): [laughter] It's so innovative and new, how exciting!

Andrea (Guest): It's, you know, so disruptive to have a captured group of people who can't leave the space and are completely beholden to the company for everything in their daily life and needs.

Hannah (Host): Can we go back to the idea of canons? I think that's so... what I've been hearing from a number of different people in different contexts is this anxiety over...

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

okay, if we don't have one official, expert, gate-kept body of knowledge, whether that's a sort of official media line or a canon of literature we study or the voices of experts who we put our utmost faith in, if we destabilize that, then how do we then make decisions about who's right and who's wrong, what we believe and what we don't believe, right? It's either these sort of ossified structures of canonicity and legitimacy or it's what we're facing today, which is the sort of fake news media illiteracy, "That's just my opinion. Everybody's entitled to their opinion. I'm allowed to think vaccines aren't real. How dare you oppress me with your science? I'm allowed to think that, that's just my opinion." Like, the way in which like, oh if there's no space for expertise, then opinion runs riot, and then we have no grounds upon which to say "no," that some opinions are better than others and that one is fucked up.

Andrea (Guest): Yeah, and you know, I actually think it's a question of confusing canon for critical process. That in fact what we long for is an effective process to go through these thoughts, to work through these ideas, to talk to each other and that traditionally a canon has stood in for that. A canon has been the reified process that other people did to vet this thing and the issue is reified. It was a process done at one point in time and we just all agreed for 500 years that, you know, Shakespeare was still the thing we were going to keep looking at. And I think Shakespeare is great so I'm not going to get all up in his grill, but like—

Hannah (Host): I strongly believe that if you and I took our politics of what texts count and looked back at the history of literature to choose a new section of things we'd be interested in teaching, we would probably both come up with Shakespeare.

Andrea (Guest): Yeah, absolutely.

Hannah (Host): Because we're interested in popular literatures and performance and embodied histories and Shakespeare's at the heart of that.

Andrea (Guest): But those are things that new ways of thinking and working with the texts have brought to it. Those were not always the ways it was studied. Before, it was just, like, literature on the page. It wasn't even literature in performance, and so I think the most canonically useful texts are the ones that are really fluid and are really open to new ways of interpreting, new ways of using, new ways of translating. I think the things we would chuck out would be, you know, Hemingway's novels where it's just like one individual, rigid perspective that lays out one very clear image that we're trying to get at. I do teach a Hemingway story in my first year courses.

Hannah (Host): Is it one about abortion?

Andrea (Guest): It's not that one, actually.

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Andrea (Guest): It's the one about suicide.

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

Hannah (Host): [laughter] Oh Hemingway.

Andrea (Guest): But I teach it against Martha Gellhorn's writing. So Martha Gellhorn was an incredible journalist, writer, war correspondent, who served in the Spanish civil war as a war correspondent, magazine-wrote, lived well into her eighties and nineties, has written some incredible essays. She was, at one time, Ernest Hemingway's wife. I don't often mention that in my intro text, but for me personally, teaching the two of them together is a really interesting thing because you get this idea of different genres, different work. And whereas we have someone like Hemingway's writing with its sort of, like, very distilled modernist imagery, it's very pared down, it's very exact, you get Gellhorn coming in with the work of an on-the-ground reporter. Her writing is very vivid. There's a lot of description, there's a lot of scene, there's a lot of dialogue, and partly that, I think, is obviously the difference between being like a correspondent trying to capture a scene and someone doing literary fiction where you can kind of purify everything, but I would not doubt that bringing in questions of "what is the woman's experience in this?" What is the issue of being someone so outside of this world coming in, what knowledges they can bring to it. So those knowledges of observation, of figuring out social cues and structures or an emotional weight to relationships that are happening that might seem cursory. Just seeing, you know, a woman pulling the child away from some rebel. Like, those are really important knowledges and they can be translated into literary work in very particular ways, but when you look at some other work that similar skills might bring, it's a little harder to see. So I work in politics and I love it. It's fantastic. It's exciting, but some of that work of like very careful relationship building, very attenuated observation of things. I'm finding a way to use the experience of actual people in building policy and communicating with people is not the typical way of doing this kind of political work. And then being with a group of people from a more left orientation, from a feminist orientation—I should say, I work almost entirely with women. I have some very excellent male colleagues, but there is a very strong feminist impulse in the work we're doing and finding how that butts up against the ordinary machine of government or the ordinary machine of campaigning can be a little disheartening.

Hannah (Host): Yeah.

Andrea (Guest): That even when you've arrived by all the standards of liberal feminism, you've got female premier, female cabinet ministers, female chiefs of staff, female political staff, that it's still just this ongoing struggle. And that is where you see the limits of slow incremental change. Like, when you've got all the stars lined up and you still can't roll out the incredible work you've always dreamed of? Um, you know, it's a little, it's a little disappointing.

Hannah (Host): It's the really meaningful difference between, like, the removal of barriers that kept women out of particular kinds of fields versus an actual reformation of those fields such that they prioritize and foreground feminist knowledges.

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

- Andrea (Guest): Yeah.
- Hannah (Host): Like, those are two really different things. And I do think—I talked about this with Lucia on her episode—but I do think that white women have historically been really willing to sort of buy into this liberal feminism mode through which your whiteness plus your credentialing can get you into these workplaces, in so far as you are willing to continue to repeat the existing damaging patterns of how things are done in those places.
- Andrea (Guest): It's the "Lean In" sort of approach to things.
- Hannah (Host): Yeah. Precisely.
- Andrea (Guest): If you just get in there, be more male than your male colleagues, be more white than your white structures, you will be able to come out on top from them.
- Hannah (Host): Yeah.
- Andrea (Guest): But at what cost?
- Hannah (Host): Yeah.
- Andrea (Guest): You know? That doesn't help anyone. That doesn't help the individual person doing that. They might achieve a level of success, but the personal cost is enormous. That doesn't help other younger women trying to come into the work because it's so much about your individual drive and structure and you've done it. You know, that's the *Working Girl* model, if you will. [laughter]
- Hannah (Host): [laughter]
- Andrea (Guest): And it doesn't help other marginalized peoples who can't be whiter, who can't be male-r, who can't even get their foot in the door.
- Hannah (Host): Yeah.
- Andrea (Guest): And I do think when we're talking about what knowledges is count, it just so disavows ways of doing and knowing that I think could be incredibly transformative, to our university structures, our government structures, even our workplace structures, to say what if it was family-friendly for everyone, you know? And the idea of bringing in universality really is different. It's not "we're just going to help low income people," "We're just going to help marginalized people." If you say we're bringing in this for everyone and it's a way of normalizing it for the people who already had some of these things, while also bringing up the people from the bottom without stigmatizing. You know, universality is incredibly important because you're getting rid of distinctions, at least in the ways of what is available to people. How people access and use that is still very much a divided and atomized sort of way of doing things. Maybe not

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

even atomized, just different communities are going to access these things differently, but if the availability is there.

Hannah (Host): And so much of the time. I remember reading this thing a little while ago saying that a lot of the time, sort of wealthier white kids going to Ivy League schools in the states end up paying less in tuition than, like, first generation university-goers who are going to, like, state schools because these wealthy white kids whose parents went to university know how to navigate the system, know how to find scholarships, know where—like, there's all of these tacit knowledges that are passed down from generation to generation, and so even if there is a sort of, on the surface, everybody has access to the same forms of funding, we know that when access to things is passed down through tacit knowledge of like even the existence of those things like, "oh, did you know if you do this, this and this, you can get this written off on your tax report?" Like, who knows how much income did your parents need to be making for you to ever have found that out? Who learns how to handle money early on? People who grow up in environments that have disposable income and then that is never something that sat down and taught. It's something that's allowed to be passed on tacitly, such that those who come from money continue to be better at it.

Andrea (Guest): Yeah. If you have money, you can learn how to make it work. But that's not across the board because you often hear too of the three generation problem where people come into wealth. The first generation makes it, the second generation grows it, the third generation blows it?

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Andrea (Guest): Because again, they've not had to have the experience and I think regarding money there is a working class sort of facility to making your dollar go further, or it's being careful in how you spend and how you use your money, that's also equally valuable. So, there's those two skills where it's not just the investment side, but it's the actual use and preservation of resources that I think are very usefully done together. I'm talking about education too. It's the difference between opting in and opting out. So public schools work best when everyone's in that. When your wealthy families are there, when your low income families are there, where children of different religions and backgrounds, everyone's there. And it's set up to be universal and what happens when some people start opting out of a universal program is it begins to erode it. Suddenly that tax base goes down. Suddenly the kids with the most engaged families are out in a private school. Those efforts are not being dispersed out to other places. The people who may have fought against 40 kids in a classroom aren't there, so they're gone and so the ways of sort of using that social capital gets siphoned off instead of spreading out so that an entire classroom of children can learn about these sorts of things. Our Canadian healthcare works because everyone is involved. No one can opt out and it works the same for everyone. And this is why I really resist the idea of like, well, if we just created a few clinics, the people who can afford it will go there and we'll have more resources for the

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

lower people. No, that's absolutely not true because if you create separate clinics, then your doctors are going to go there, then your staff are going to go there. And all it means is you are stretching the same resources further and it's not then the thing everyone uses. It's the thing that people—

Hannah (Host): That you use if you can't afford better.

Andrea (Guest): Exactly. And so I think the idea of universality in terms of at least social programs and ways of redistributing resources is incredibly important. It's not just enough to kind of open up supplemental ways for people who can't make it. You have to kind of put a, put a ceiling or be like make it even across the board and you'll find, I think, not only will more people use it, it will certainly be a better per capita use of your resources, but it also kind of... you stop that polarization and it is, again, it's a temporary measure, but like post-war North America where we had the greatest number of people sort of in the middle—the least amount of income polarization that has ever been seen in history was in post-war North America. The top were taxed to a point where it was enough to actually supplement the bottom. Real wages were at a point where people on the lower end were making enough to live and everyone had access to these incredible social programs in the middle, and when you start allowing people at the top again to siphon off resources and go off, big surprise, the people in the bottom fall out. It's like a magnetic gravitational force in the middle. If people are moved closer together, they hang onto each other more effectively. And if you start pulling one pull away, the whole thing falls apart. So you know, if liberal progressives want to, you know, hang onto society without revolution, they should be finding a way to kind of bring those poles closer together because otherwise there are way more people at the bottom. And that is how you flip it over.

Hannah (Host): Andrea, do you want to hang onto a society without revolution?

Andrea (Guest): Hannah, no one wants to live through a revolution.

Hannah (Host): Oh God, I'm fucking—I was having this conversation last night. I was like, I feel so viscerally like we are five years before the French Revolution. Like maybe not even five, maybe one. Like there's going to be decapitations in the street. And it's like, revolution is not exciting. Revolution—the radical overturning of systems, a lot of people die. The most vulnerable people die.

Andrea (Guest): Yeah. It's, um, it doesn't get good for a while and I don't think we've ever actually seen, over a long historical period, where did get good, because guess what, a revolution happened and then people just kind of set up the same structures, just with different people in them. Um, I've been really encouraged and like intrigued by some of the difference between Canada and the US right now. So I would argue that Canada's solution to increasing polarization was to put in some soft liberals and try to stop up the middle again. We're seeing places where that doesn't work. Indigenous people are not buying into this bullshit and they are mobilizing in ways we've never seen before, but that's still

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

not the general population. In the United States, the answer to recession and income difficulty was to put an orange clown billionaire into the White House to increase the divide. And what we have seen is people are out in the streets, in full force. Um, women are out in the streets. Women are very much articulating who this hurts and what needs to be done. People of colour, people of racialized, minoritized communities are out there in the streets. That should be terrifying to every member of the top 1% in the States.

Hannah (Host): I think it is. [laughter]

Andrea (Guest): I think it is absolutely rattling them. I think the people in the very, very top are too stupid and isolated to see what is happening and so, as always, the US is a place of more extremes than Canada is. Canada has done a better job of padding the middle, but I am going to be very interested to see in the next couple of years how this plays out.

Hannah (Host): I'm terrified. Interest is not the word for me. I'm definitely just terrified. [laughter]

Andrea (Guest): I'm terrified and interested and this is the problem of bringing a historical knowledge to things is, you know.

Hannah (Host): Yeah.

Andrea (Guest): It is useful to be able to recognize certain patterns. I mean history does not repeat itself at all. There are always specific circumstances and differences, but being able to sort of gather a pattern is interesting. For me the problem is a certain amount of historical knowledge turns me into a bit of an observer of things rather than a participant, and the work that one can do as an academic often, or a person involved in sort of, I don't know, strategic level work, is you do feel isolated in a certain way or you feel apart, and it's hard to sort of get in there to the active side of things. And maybe you just don't want to because for some of us we go into academia because observing things is interesting. Observing things is compelling to us, but a really useful way I think to invigorate academia and scholarship and university life in this time of increasing extremes is to find ways of bringing knowledge of action into that knowledge of observation and study and find ways of bringing that sort of long-studied and tested strategic knowledge to people mobilized on the ground. Like our university, University of Alberta has been kind of building on its mantra of knowledge exchanges. I don't think that's what they meant. I don't think they met, "Go arm the people in the streets with your incredible political knowledge."

Hannah (Host): [laughter]

Andrea (Guest): I think they think like, "Let's build some think tanks. Let's get some better engineering equipment out there. Let's work with industry," but the humanities can certainly get out there and do some innovative growth of our own. It

Secret Feminist Agenda Transcript

doesn't have to be widgets though. It can be like cells of people and so I think when we're talking about using knowledges, that's incredible and then there's a place for feminist knowledge in there too, for community-building knowledge. That might be the way to kind of foster that exchange. If you start finding ways to grow a community that has a place for someone with, like, a carefully tested, observed, academic knowledge as well as someone who has a place of actually having experienced these things, or tested out theories on the ground or found different tactics. If there is a place for them to be able to come together and exchange them that that would be incredible. And so I think there is—that's the missing piece, is that feminist knowledge of community and practice that I think we'll find a way of doing that. Women have been making do for all of human history and so I think finding a way to recognize the work of making do as really the thing that has kept society going, that has kept humanity together as a whole, that has kept marginalized or minoritized or disadvantaged communities together and going could be incredible. [Music: "Rise Up (With Fists!!)" by Jenny Lewis and the Watson Twins]

Hannah (Host): For more hot takes on politics and print culture, follow Andrea @aghasenbank. That's h a s e n b a n k or check out her website: andreahasenbank.me. I've linked an incredible talk of hers, "CanCon for Crooks" on the website and you should for sure go read that right now. As usual, you can find all the episodes and the weekly reading list on secretfeministagenda.com. You can follow me on Twitter @hkpmcgregor and tweet about the podcast using the hashtag #secretfeministagenda and please keep the ratings and reviews coming in. Laurita Casada, Wtfitpsrs222 (I don't know how that works), sea1290, cadekis, Neon Taile, Anna Rose James, and BeccaLikesBooks all gave five star reviews. Thanks so much. Y'all are the very best. The podcast theme song is "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans off their album, *Chub Rub*. You can download the entire album on freemusicarchive.org, or follow them on Facebook. Andrea's theme song is "Rise up (with Fists)" by Jenny Lewis and the Watson Twins. As usual, I've linked to the music video on the website. That's it for this week, folks. This has been *Secret Feminist Agenda*. Pass it on. [Music: "Mesh Shirt" by Mom Jeans]