

Edition 33: The Silencing of Women's Voices

Transcribed by Charlotte Monteith

:theme music - Real Voice by Thistle Pettersen:

:sauntering acoustic guitar fades in:

*"...But through the hallways of academia
And on the face of the moon...
The footprints of conquest
Haven't left us any room.
To say what we think, or...
To speak what we know...
To hear different voices
At least a sound from below..."*

Oh-oh oh oh oh oh...

:vocalizing fades out:

:Cheers erupt from the crowd. They count down '...2...1' in celebration of the New Year. Fireworks set off over the crowd:

Robin LONG: Greetings and Happy New Year from the feminist news team at Women's Liberation Radio News!

:celebration rages on, starting off 2019 with spirited applause and party horns:

LONG: Welcome to our first program of this new year, the 33rd edition podcast of Women's Liberation Radio News for this Friday, January 4th, 2019. This is Robin Long, WLRN's rookie collective member. I'm an out and proud butch lesbian living the dream in the EU, and I'm delighted to join the collective.

This month we focus on the Silencing of Women's Voices. We'll hear an excerpt of an interview I did with Meghan Murphy, Canadian journalist and founder of Feminist Current. We'll also hear an interview that Julia did with Natasha Chart, a feminist writer and organizer serving on the board of directors for The Women's Liberation Front. Today's podcast closes with commentaries from Julia, Sekhmet, and me. In spite of attempts to silence women, they and we are continuing to provide feminist analysis of

current events. While there's been some success in the ongoing attempt to censor these women, they will not be silenced.

We at Women's Liberation Radio News will also not be silenced. Women's stories need to be told. Our opinions, our thoughts, and our beliefs are not going to go away, no matter how loudly forces of the patriarchy shout to drown out our voices.

The team at WLRN produces a monthly radio broadcast to break the sound barrier women are blocked by under the status quo rule of men. This blocking of women's discourse we see in all factors of society, be they conservative, liberal, mainstream, progressive or radical. The thread that runs through all of American politics and beyond, except for separatist feminism, is male dominance and entitlement in all spheres.

To start off today's edition, here's Damayanti with women's news from around the globe for this Friday, January 4th, 2019.

:xylophone plays root-third-fifth to indicate news segment, fades into typewriter - keys typing, bell, and register return:

:world music fades in- percussion/bass, followed by woodwind samples:

DAMAYANTI: The UK group called 'Standing up for Women' is planning a series of actions in Washington DC, starting the 26th of January, to protest the silencing of women on Facebook and Twitter for using what has been flagged as "transphobic language". Meghan Murphy, Kara Dansky, Brie Jontry, and Posie Parker will all speak publicly about the silencing of women, and a visibility campaign has been planned to focus specifically on the word 'woman' and other female language that clearly defines women and their rights. According to the organisers, "Without this word all of our rights and protections are lost. Our rights were never created for our gender but our sex. Our sex being female, the sex that bears children, the sex that requires maternity rights; privacy rights; equality with the male sex in the workplace; specific health care issues; reproductive rights and so on." You can join the movement by standing up for women in your city. You can speak to your friends and government representatives, read up on your local transgender policies, write to your local paper, organize a meeting, or sticker the street. Just do something!

In South Korea, the sex education guidelines issued by the education ministry in 2015 are now facing increasing resistance from the growing feminist movement in the country. Students are required to sit for 15 hours of sex education a year, but the guidelines teach sexist stereotypes, normalise misogynist behaviour, and encourage rape culture. While young girls are taught to never be alone with a member of the opposite sex, women are taught to look after their appearance to be attractive to men, be sexually available to men if they have spent money on a date, and be sexually active

with only one male partner. In spite of receiving criticism about the guidelines in 2015, the ministry has not issued any real changes in the curriculum. Many teachers have started to hold informal discussion groups where they teach topics such as sexual harassment, menstruation, and sexuality. However, 'feminist' is still seen as a dirty word, and in fear of receiving backlash, the teachers are forced to use more general terms for their groups such as 'Human Rights Club'.

Earlier this year in India, a female student of the 10th standard at a Dehradun school was gang-raped by four of her classmates, who later admitted to having watched pornographic content right before committing the crime. The number of pornography-related crimes in India has been on the rise. Assaulters will view pornography, rapists will film their crimes, and then rape videos will be circulated on the internet. This attack in Dehradun was the last straw. The Uttarakhand High Court issued an order to ban pornography in the country. As a result, all internet service providers are required to block 827 sites that have been identified as having pornographic content, and accessing any site which is known to have child pornography is an illegally punishable offence. However, websites such as Pornhub have publicly rejected the ban and create mirror links so that individual viewers can bypass the block and still access pornography, and privacy laws enable the individual to view pornography in the home as long as it is not child pornography. Meanwhile, statistics show India to be the third largest viewer of pornography online, and women in the country remain vulnerable to the violent misogyny these viewers are being trained to commit.

Thousands of people in Venezuela are crossing the country's borders to seek refuge in the neighbouring country of Colombia. People from inside the country have reported a breakdown of law and order and healthcare systems. Pregnant women and young mothers are especially affected. They have to cross the border to find all birthing procedure needs in the black markets of Colombia, as well as vaccines and other healthcare for their children. Nurses at the Red Cross shelter on the border estimate that around 120 to 150 pregnant women cross the border every day to seek medical assistance. These refugee women become vulnerable to exploitation once they cross the border into Colombia. Many are forced to sell hair and breast milk to make ends meet, and girls as young as 14 are forced to enter prostitution. Many are manipulated into handing over their identification documents to pimps and drawn into prostitution rings. Others who go into other professions such as selling candles or coffee at traffic lights become vulnerable to trafficking.

In India, the Supreme Court ruled a verdict allowing all women to enter the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala, where women of menstruating ages were historically seen as impure and forbidden from entering the temple. After this verdict was implemented by the Kerala Government, however, huge protests began from right wing organisations who saw this as an attempt to destroy Hindu Culture. Thousands of protestors attacked and harassed women who attempted to enter the temple. In response, the left-wing coalition government planned a 'women's wall', where millions of women formed a

human chain to cover a 620 km long stretch, as a symbolic protest to show that they would not give in to the pressure of the right-wing. A day after the women's wall was held, two women managed to enter the temple in spite of right-wing protestors trying to bar their entry.

Last month, the organisation Marie Stopes, which provides after-abortion medical care for women in Kenya was banned after it was accused of promoting termination of pregnancies on the radio. While abortion is illegal in Kenya, many women go through with unauthorised abortions on their own, risking various medical complications. Marie Stopes provided healthcare for women who had been through botched abortions or miscarriages. Women's health activists campaigned against the ban on abortion, arguing it was unconstitutional and put women and girls' lives in danger. Earlier this month the ban on abortion services by the organisation was lifted.

Natalie Connolly, a 28 year old woman, was murdered by her partner John Broadhurst who inflicted around 40 serious injuries on her while she was intoxicated. He fractured her eye socket, causing severe internal trauma. He then sprayed bleach on her face, and called the paramedics, saying on the phone that she was "dead as a doughnut". In court, her death was portrayed as an unfortunate accident due to consensual sex. Broadhurst's lawyer blamed Connolly for her own death, arguing that she had a history of enjoying "rough" sex. The severe violence Broadhurst inflicted on his partner was framed as negligence, and he was sentenced to merely three years and eight months. He was charged with manslaughter instead of murder by the Birmingham Crown Court. This verdict brings to light the increasing normalisation of sexual violence as "consensual kinks" and the effects has on women's safety and autonomy.

The Brighton and Hove City Council issued guidelines to school teachers to teach students that "all genders" can have periods. Menstruation products will be available in all bathrooms in the school, and teachers have been instructed to be respectful to students questioning their gender, adding that not addressing students by their "preferred pronoun" constitutes harassment. This is at a time when Britain has been said to face 'period poverty' where lack of access to period products and lack of knowledge about their own bodies has incredibly negative effects on girls' education and well being. This move is symptomatic of a larger movement to erase women and their bodies from healthcare, education, and public discourse.

Rosa Freedman, a professor of Law at the University of Reading, spoke at a meeting held by A Woman's Place UK to discuss the gender recognition act and its implications on women's rights. Outside the meeting, trans-activists gathered to shout slogans and abuse the women who had gathered there. Freedman had previously been vocal about the legal consequences of the GRA, but now she received abuse from her own students. Her office door was covered in urine, and she was stalked around her university campus by students, many of them men, who shouted threats of rape at her and called a Nazi. Freedman is Jewish and has also been vocal about being a sexual assault survivor, so she found these threats particularly disturbing. She also reported

receiving anonymous calls at 3:30 am. When she answered them, voices on the other side laughed and called her a 'TERF' who should be raped and killed.

The murder of two girls in Israel last month brought the number of women and girls murdered in the country to 24, in 2018. In response, thousands of Israeli women called for a nationwide strike, protesting against domestic violence and demanding more action and state funding to deal with the problem. Women refused to go to work and held demonstrations on roads in many cities in the country, blocking traffic. The protestors observed a moment of silence to mourn the deaths of the 24 women, and smeared the roads with red paint to symbolise the blood of the murdered women. In response, the Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, announced that he will head the governmental committee to combat domestic violence, but members of the opposition criticised the government for not funding the existing domestic violence program.

Earlier this month, a 28 year old woman in Uttar Pradesh, India, was set on fire by her molesters, and she is currently battling for life with 45 percent of her body covered in burns. The assailants tried to molest her on a previous occasion, but she managed to escape. After that, she attempted twice to register a complaint with the police, but they refused to file a complaint. The men set her on fire while she was on her way to the police station for the third time. The incident highlights how police negligence affects women's safety, even years after landmark cases of police negligence had led to the formation of sexual harassment laws in the country.

Female students of Punjab University in India carried out a sustained protest for 40 days to demand the abolition of hostel curfews that applied only to women. After the protest, during which almost 700 women stayed outside of the college past their 9 pm curfew, the college authorities agreed to extend the curfew by one hour. However, the parents of one of the students have filed a Public Interest Litigation against the extension of the curfew, citing an increased risk of sexual harassment. As a result, Kanu Priya, the president of the student council who led the protests, now has to appear in court to defend the extension of the curfew. This is part of a larger wave of movements across the country, where female students in various universities have begun protests against misogynistic rules.

Last month, female workers of an H&M factory in Hidramani in Sri Lanka, organised a peaceful protest to demand the living wages they are legally entitled to. Along with not being paid living wages, workers reported not being given job security or protection from occupational hazards, and being vulnerable to gender based violence. This was part of a wave of protests which took place in countries such as Italy, Bulgaria, Croatia, the UK, and the USA, as part of the 'global week of action against poverty wages at H&M', as 2018 was earlier declared by the clothing company as being the deadline by which it would have started paying all its workers a minimum living wage.

Earlier this year, in a village in Tamil Nadu, India, Rajalakshmi a 13 year old Dalit girl was beheaded by her male neighbour, a member of the dominant caste. The man had

been visiting her home and sexually harassing her for some time, but being from a lower caste, the family chose to remain silent and did not challenge him. Enraged at having his advances rejected by a girl from a lower caste, he arrived at their house with a sickle. After abusing the family, he beheaded the girl, and carried her severed head with him to his own home, where he attempted to discard it. Later, his wife alleged that he was mentally ill, but it was found that he was in a perfectly sound mental state when he committed the crime. The incident was met with silence from civil society members, even as the #MeToo movement gains full strength in the country. Extensive media coverage on sexual harassment in journalism does nothing for lower caste women, as their vulnerability to sexual violence is doubled by sex and caste.

In December, WLRN's Julia Beck was removed from the Baltimore City LGBTQ commission. Members of the Law and Policy Committee originally elected Beck to serve as one of two committee co-chairs, but their support quickly evaporated when Ava Pipitone, a biological male, accused her of violence for using male pronouns in reference to a male rapist. Beck was the only lesbian on the Law and Policy Committee. Now, Pipitone has assumed Beck's role as co-chair. Pipitone is currently the president of Baltimore Transgender Alliance, an organisation which threatened to publicly execute lesbians during Baltimore Pride. You can read more about this story on Women's Liberation Front and AfterEllen.

That concludes WLRN's world news segment for Friday, January 4th, 2019. I'm Damayanti. If you have news tips and stories to share that you'd like to hear included in our world headlines, please contact us at wlrnewscontact@gmail.com and let us know what's going on!

:Song interlude - Your Revolution by Sarah Jones:

:Jones is welcomed onto the stage by applause which stops abruptly as Jones begins:

Your revolution will not happen between these thighs
Your revolution will not happen between these *thighs*
The real revolution ain't about booty size
The Versaces you buys, or the Lexus you don't drive

:laughter from the audience:

And though we have lost Biggie Smalls
Baby, your notorious revolution
Will never allow you to lace no lyrical douche in my bush. Ok?

:more laughter:

Your revolution will not be you killing me softly with Fugees

Your revolution ain't gonna knock me up without no ring or no plans
And produce lit-tle future MC's
Because that revolution will not happen between these thighs
And your revolution will not find me in the backseat of a jeep
With LL, hard as hell, doin' it and doin' it and doin' it well

:laughter and applause as Jones mimics the background singers of LL Cool J's 'Doin' it':

Your revolution will not be you smackin' it up, flippin' it, or rubbin' it down
Nor will it take you downtown or humpin' around
Because *that* revolution will not happen between these thighs
Your revolution will not have me singing, 'ooh, ain't no nigga like the one I got'
Your revolution will not be your ass sending me for no VD shot
And your revolution will not involve me, feelin your nature rise
Or, hehe, helping you fantasize
Because that revolution will not happen between these thighs

:Jones says in a Jamaican accent mimicking Shaggy:

And, oh-oh, no, my Jamican brother, your revolution will not make you feel bombastic
And really fantastic
And have you... *:waits for applause to quiet:*
...groping in the dark for that rubber wrapped in plastic
And you will not be touching your lips to my triple dip of french vanilla,
Butter pecan, chocolate de-luxe
Or having Akinyele's dream, a 6-foot *blowjob* machine
Oh-oh-ok, you want to subjugate your queen?
Think Imma put that in my mouth, just 'cause you made a few bucks? Please.
And your revolution will not be you dyeing your hair platinum blond,
Singing about what we gonna do all night long
'Cause all you can see is that badonkadonk-donk-donk

:laughter from audience:

'Cause that revolution will not happen between these thighs
But...

Your revolution makes me wonder where could we go,
If we could all drop the empty pursuit of props and the ego
And revolt back to our roots, use a little common sense
On a quest to make love De La Soul,
No pretense
But your revolution will not be you flexing your little.. sex and status
To express what you feel, hm
Your revolution will not happen between these thighs
Will not happen between these thighs

Will not be you shaking and me...

:Jones yawns and the audience laughs:

...Eventually faking between these thighs

:thunderous applause:

Because, why?
Because, the revolution,
When it finally comes,
for all of us,
It's gonna be real.

:Cheering resumes but quickly fades as the lo-fi outro kicks in:

NATASHA: That was Sarah Jones with her song spoken word piece 'Your Revolution'. Next up we'll hear excerpts of an interview Julia did with Natasha Chart about the blog Gender Identity Watch. Natasha is a feminist writer and organizer working with Women's Liberation Front, or WoLF. As a member of the board of directors, she helps the organization protect the sex-based rights of women and girls. In this interview, she explains how WoLF helped Gender Identity Watch get back online after Wordpress removed the site late last year.

Julia BECK: Hey, Natasha, it's great to have you. I have some questions about the blog called *Gender Identity Watch*. So it's my understanding that WoLF took over, but I want to know when it was removed by WordPress, and why.

Natasha CHART: Sure, Julia. Uh, thanks for having me. Women's Liberation Front ended up taking Gender Identity Watch over, uh, we announced it on October 7th. We had it for a little over a month. And then, on November 16th, we got this completely out of the blue notice from WordPress, and it included this line as their explanation of why they were taking it down; They said, 'We received a report regarding the publication of private personal information on your blog, specifically the malicious publication of private details related to gender identity, including former names.' So that was their explanation including the, uh, you know, not-so-subtle warning that other content providers that we might seek to host our site on might have similar rules. They had just changed that policy. I've heard different things from different people about when exactly they changed that policy, if they changed it the day before or three days before based on people's examination of internet archive files. But at any rate, the first we heard of it was a notice that the site was down. The site being down, the tools that they offer to retrieve the files to transfer it did not work, particularly it didn't grant us access to the media files. Gender Identity Watch was a fairly large- is a fairly large-collection of information about all kinds of laws, policies, activities, actions, and events that, like, affect women's place in the law, as regards gender identity policy, and, you

know, various actions that people have taken to impact this. And so that included a lot of PDFs, audio files, video files, uh, a lot of just basic images, screenshots, and whatnot. And everything that was on the site was part of the public record. It was not too terribly useful as an archive without the media files. We were concerned about this. Uh, the 16th was a Friday, so we were sort of scrambling all weekend to figure out what to do and how we could get those files back. WordPress was not really very responsive: they kept sending us links to basically the same sort of interface they had before, which only gave us text files. So, November 20, we had a law firm send a letter to them formally requesting the media files, which they had said they would, like in their initial letter to us they said that all of the content would be transferred. So we posted about that the next day, uh, on our blog- on the 21st- and sort of waited to see what happened, and then periodically, you know, sent them a question about this after we tried some new thing. I heard that some of the other bloggers- we just found this out later, I mean, because at the time we weren't directly in touch with anyone else who had been affected by this- and we were told later that some people got their files back on the 26th, we did not. And so on, 27th we decided to try to see if we could raise enough money to start a more engaged legal action to, you know, maybe take them to court.

BECK: So WoLF was considering taking WordPress to court?

CHART: We were. I mean, we didn't know what else we were supposed to do to get these files because they had been non-responsive to us. But then, on the 29th, tried one more time to ask them, like, 'will you please give us our files?' And they did. So, we had, then - a volunteer, who had already been working with us to help transfer the domain and the text portion of the site set-up, was able to slot them back into their appropriate places in the script, like, she didn't have to go in and put all that back in by hand, thank goodness. They gave us a full compressed download of all the media files. It was so bizarre because, it's just, this is all public information.

BECK: Well then, if it all was just public knowledge and public information that was hosted on the blog, why was the removal significant? I mean, I guess that speaks to the significance of the removal of the blog.

CHART: Yeah, what they said was private details related to gender identity, including former names. So-

BECK:-So, who was that? Do you know?

CHART: Well, I asked! I wrote them back, and I was like could you specify what posts on this site violate this policy? And I got no response for that question. They couldn't even point to something that had been specifically said or done that was, like, the triggering event. This had to have been more than that. It's about , you know, denying women the right to speak about this particular group of men who have started claiming that feminist critique is hate-speech - but they're being taken seriously.

BECK: Mm. Mm-hm, they're been taken seriously because they're men.

CHART: Well, yeah! I mean, everybody knows a vast number of married women who have former names. And I have never in my entire life heard of a woman flipping out and losing it because someone referred to her unmarried name. Like, I've never even heard of that. I mean, like, women change their names all the time. It's still, like, this big ongoing cultural conversation about whether it's reasonable for women to keep their so-called maiden names throughout their life- to just keep the name you were born with. It's considered very daring and out-there.

BECK: It's the power of naming. The power of language. And it's a male power, so-

CHART: The right is male.

BECK: Yeah! So when women try to exercise that right, now, we're in the wrong.

CHART: Absolutely. And-

BECK: It's frustrating.

CHART: You just- the difference between how women are treated when we change our names - this kind of dialogue doesn't happen. This isn't a dialogue around women changing their name, this is a dialogue around men changing their names, you know, that it's supposed to have this magical power.

BECK: Well, there are many nowadays,uh- many headlines - say a woman does something when in fact it's a man who identifies as transgender.

CHART: Yeah.

BECK: And it's already skewing crime statistics. It's already happening. So-

CHART: I think that Ian Huntley case in the UK is just horrific.

BECK: Yeah...

CHART: Where Twitter has started kicking women off for deadnaming Ian Huntley-

BECK: Of all people!

CHART: - who sexually tortured and killed two little girls. And you can now be kicked off one of the world's biggest public marketplaces for speech, and politics, and news discourse, and current events for calling him 'Ian Huntley' instead of Nicola Huntley, when Nicola is the name of one of his victim's mothers - that's sick. It's sick. And it's all

of the same where these content companies are taking it upon themselves to impose limitations on speech that are not imposed on them in law. I mean, content providers have almost total immunity, you know, as long as they're, like, sort of a public marketplace for speech, you know, as long as they're platform providers, they have almost total immunity under U.S. law from third-party action or any kind of liability. But then they turn it around and they do this to women.

BECK: There are some other blogs that did similar things where they posted pieces of information that were already public like GenderTrender.

CHART: Mm-hm...but they were shut down also.

BECK: Yeah...So how did WoLF become the owner of Gender Identity Watch whereas GenderTrender just - I don't think it's back online, I think it's still gone.

CHART: Yeah, uh, I've heard that there is an archive version of the site available. Like I said it was about a month before all this happened that, specifically, like, a call was put out, and we'd considered taking over, we voted on it and offered that. We thought that giving it an institutional home, that it was a valuable public record that, you know, sort of deserved that. But that's the only site where we had that kind of arrangement just for that odd reason.

BECK: So in order to get Gender Identity Watch back online, WoLF had to get these media files. You approached Wordpress, like, a handful of times - probably more than a handful of times - and then, finally, they just released the files, is that right?

CHART: Yeah, we did contact them a few times about this, and again, you know, we had our lawyers try to get in touch with them.

BECK: So it is back online, and I actually just went to the blog, and I can see everything so... yeah, everything's back to normal pretty much.

CHART: Everything's back to normal.

BECK: Yeah. So do you have any advice for bloggers out there who might have the same thing happen to them where something they tweeted or typed or put on the internet is somehow deemed offensive and their entire site is shut down?

CHART: I would say that the first thing to do would be to try and get off WordPress if you can. There's a service called Orange that's, um, supposed to be very pro-free speech. And this is just such a huge barrier for people, like, I couldn't do this, like, maintain a private server, you know, for a website. I honestly would get off the free services or if you are using a free service to, like, back-up all of your material on a regular basis. This is definitely imposing a cost-barrier on feminist speech because all of the easy access, free public services that everybody else gets to use, all of those free

services are being targeted against us. They have high-market concentrations, so there's just a few of them, and they've clearly just been heavily captured by gender identity ideologues.

BECK: Like Twitter - that's a big one.

CHART: Like Twitter, like Facebook, like WordPress, obviously. I haven't heard about this happening to people on Tumblr, but I bet someone's trying.

:laughter:

CHART: I mean, you know that's happening.

BECK: Well they did - I know that Tumblr did crack down on the porn, the pornography-

CHART: Yeah!

BECK: - that was on the site, which is good I think; But what is that gonna mean for women, you know, gender critical women, you know, are they gonna be censored as well?

CHART: Yeah, I don't know. I've heard that there have been, like, you know, discussions of sexuality and sexual health that shouldn't have been affected by that ban but were, but that is probably more in response to Apple. They'd gotten enough complaints about Tumblr being, you know, essentially a massive purveyor of porn that they were going to ban the app for the App Store.

BECK: Wow!

CHART: And that is why they did that, not because women complained because, as you know, these tech companies don't give a fuck about women's concerns. And obviously they don't because feminists have been complaining to Facebook and Twitter and all these other tech companies about this kind of content for years, and it has not come down. But if Apple threatens to take your app off the App Store, it'll come down real fast. So to the extent that anyone can, I wanna say, get off these platforms that hate women. They don't care about your speech rights. They don't care about your political rights. They don't care about your right to organise to end oppression. They won't help you. And they won't listen to you, and by and large they won't care. It'd be great if they changed that, that'd be super awesome, but to date I have not seen evidence of that behaviour.

BECK: When you say that women should get off WordPress and off of Twitter, part of me *does* agree, but the other part of me thinks: well, why? We shouldn't be *forced* off of these platforms, because they're so big and their reach is so vast, we would lose the ability to share the news. So I agree-

CHART: I think we're in a catch 22, we're between a rock and a hard place right now.

BECK: Yeah.

CHART: And I don't know what the best course of action is. But I do very highly recommend meeting face-to-face, I think it does help to alleviate a lot of that, I don't know, distrust or the hesitance that goes along with engaging with someone who's anonymous. There's things that you would say to people in sort of an impersonal or anonymous online interaction that you would never say to someone in person, even if you kind of disliked them-

:laughter:

CHART: You would hold yourself back, like...

BECK: Yeah!

CHART: ...it really worsens the public dialogue. And I get your point, and I don't mean, like, just completely withdraw from the public-online sphere, but what I mean is, like, don't keep your precious archive there. You know, like, show up, but they can kick you off at any time so make sure that you have backup. You know that GenderTrender is an incredibly valuable archive in its own right. It's, i think, a loss to all of us that they have not been able to get that back online yet.

BECK: And I hope they can.

CHART: Yeah!

BECK: I'd love to see them come back. But it's like, how? Do we need a team of lawyers?

:laughter:

BECK: Does GenderTrender need a team of lawyers to hassle WordPress? I don't know. It shouldn't take that.

CHART: Well, I mean, at this point it's a bad problem, I don't think there is a good solution to it ...right now. I think people are working on things. I hope that it becomes possible for more women to speak up about this.

BECK: For women who don't blog, for women who just have regular, I guess, personal Facebook pages or personal Twitter accounts... Do you have any advice for women, lesbians, or, you know, radical feminists, regular women - do you have any advice for us on how to navigate these platforms and what to do if and when we are silenced?

CHART: Make backups of anything that you wanna keep. Make backups of your writing. Make backups of your records. Download your profiles. Download your tweets. Also - and I say this in full understanding that there are so many women that feel they cannot speak up for good reasons, you know, maybe they have particular responsibilities or maybe they're in a sensitive job, I understand all those reasons, and I respect them - but I guess that my advice would be that if can speak up, please speak up, please, because, you know, in the UK they're having this big conversation about self-identification. We aren't even having that conversation here [The United States], and we have self-identification laws in several states. We have self-identification as a federal policy governing women's emergency shelters. We have self-identification as a patch-work policy governing girl's and women's sports. We have that, but they're having an argument over there right now about. We can't even have that conversation because no mainstream outlet will report on it because people are too afraid to speak up. There are not a lot of us trying to change this, and we desperately need reinforcements. We need help, we need more voices. I wish there were 5 other radical feminist organisations tackling different things, and not just us. Please speak up because things are changing so fast.

BECK: In my opinion it's been past time, it's past due. Come on!

:laughter:

BECK: What are we doing!

CHART: It so is. It so is. We need to make them sit up and have this conversation.

:Song interlude - Let's Get Loud by Jennifer Lopez:

(Ahhhhhh)

:fast-paced, high-intensity salsa:

(Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey)

Ya Jeny llogó, presente! (Hey, hey, hey, hey)

(Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey)

Here we go!

Let's get loud, let's get loud

Turn the music up, let's do it

Come on people, let's get loud

Let's get loud, let's get loud

Turn the music up to hear that sound

Let's get loud, let's get loud

Ain't nobody gotta tell ya what you gotta do

*If you wanna live your life
Live it all the way, and don't you waste it
Every feeling, every beat
Can be so very sweet, you gotta taste it (Uh-huh)*

*You gotta do it (You gotta do it), you gotta do it your way
You gotta prove it (You gotta prove it), you gotta mean what you say (Come on, you
know what we're here for)
You gotta do it (Do it), you gotta do it your way
You gotta prove it (Prove it), you gotta mean what you say*

*Life's a party, make it hot
Dance, don't ever stop, whatever rhythm
Every minute, every day
Take them all the way, you gotta live them (Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, 'cause I'ma
live my life)*

*You gotta do it (You gotta do it), you gotta do it your way
You gotta prove it (You gotta prove it), you gotta mean what you say
You gotta do it (Do it), you gotta do it your way
You gotta prove it (Prove it), you gotta mean what you say*

*Let's get loud, let's get loud
Turn the music up to hear that sound
Let's get loud, let's get loud
Ain't nobody gotta tell ya what you gotta do, no, no*

:refrain - music slows:

*Yeah, I like this groove (Ah)
Make it hot, ayy papi (Haha)
Let's get down
Let's get down
Let's get down
It's just a party, baby, come on
Let's get loud (Ooh!)
Let's get loud
Let's get loud
Pump it up! (Ah)
(Hey, hey, hey,-)*

:song fades out:

Jenna DIQUARTO: That *Let's Get Loud* from Jennifer Lopez. WLRN's Robin brings us our next interview segment with feminist writer and speaker, Meghan Murphy. Murphy is the founder of Feminist Current, a website that provides a unique perspective on male violence against women. She was recently banned from Twitter for using male pronouns in reference to a male person who identifies as something other than a "man." You can find Meghan Murphy speaking on YouTube, and at the "Women Stand Up" panel coming up this month in Washington, DC. This interview is available in full under the podcast tab on WLRN's WordPress site.

Robin LONG: When did Feminist Current decide to start covering identity politics? Was it really hard to do that?

Meghan MURPHY: Um, I guess I had kind of avoided the issue for a while to be honest because partly I don't like to speak out about things or write about things until I'm fully certain of my arguments. So I like to think about ideas and make sure I'm certain about what I'm going to say, and that my arguments are solid, and I'm able to defend myself, and that I'm comfortable with my arguments. I don't want to start talking about something I don't fully understand, or that I don't have a coherent argument to make around. So that was part of it. I was exploring the arguments. I was exploring the issue. I was thinking about it. I was reading about what other feminist writers were saying. I'm trying to figure out, you know, really, what my perspective was and what my analysis was of gender identity before I said anything. But I also guess I saw it as a bit of a distraction from feminist work, and in some ways, it seemed kind of silly. Like, I think I wanted to, for a little while, take this live-and-let-live approach and say: ok, well, whatever. These people can do this if they feel like it.

But then things started to change because they started imposing or, you know, trying to implement policy changes and create laws around gender identity, and on top of that all these feminists I saw were getting attacked and smeared and no-platformed, and, you know, that's when I really realized that I had to start speaking out. I sort of tried tentatively to challenge some arguments that I was seeing around, you know, Laverne Cox and Caitlyn Jenner, and asking, you know, why is it empowering for this person to start adopting feminine stereotypes and to start self-objectifying and self-sexualising, like, just because this person is male it's empowering when they do it but, you know it's not- it never been- femininity has never been empowering for women. But, yeah, you know, when I saw what was happening to women like Julie Bindel and others - you know, Sheila Jefferys, obviously, Julia Long, people like that - I was like ok, like, I have to start saying something; this isn't okay. And then, really, it was when bill C-16 came up in Canada, which is Canada's gender identity legislation, I was like ok, it's now or never, you know, it's gonna be too late if we don't start speaking out and fighting back.

LONG: Mm-hm. And did you have to deal with the same kind of vehement backlash from the very beginning or is that something that's built over time?

MURPHY: Oh, no, it was immediate. Immediately, as soon as I said anything critical about a trans-identified person or even started asking, you know, tentative questions about gender identity there was a huge backlash, partly, that led to this petition to have me fired from Rabble, where I was working as an editor at the time, and, uh, you know, that was partly also to do with my work around prostitution and my challenges to men who pay for sex, but I was also immediately accused of being transphobic and, you know, I was... hardly saying anything at all. I was even, at that point, still trying to use their preferred pronouns and those kinds of things and, you know, when I saw that happen, I was like ok, whatever, like, I'm not gonna dance around this anymore. I'm gonna say what I really think. I'm not gonna call men 'she' or 'her'. It doesn't matter what I say, it doesn't matter what anyone says - the second anything critical about gender identity ideology, or about, even, a trans-identified person, or about the legislation - if you even ask questions, you get attacked and smeared and, you know, your job is threatened and your life is threatened, so there's no point in playing these games and trying to, you know, be polite. We have to tell the truth, and we have to fight back, and we have to stand up for women. And either way we're gonna get attacked so just go for it .

LONG: Yeah... speaking of attacked, you were recently banned from Twitter. Do you wanna talk a little bit about that?

MURPHY: Sure, so, um, I've been on Twitter since 2011, I've never had any issues until this year. And I've said the kinds of things that I started to get supposedly lock down for quite some time, you know, I've refused to use preferred pronouns, I've called males 'male' even though they identify as transgender. I tell the truth, I report facts on Twitter. I report facts about men, about trans people, you know, I'm not engaging in hate speech in any way, I'm certainly not saying anything violent, but, I tell the truth and, uh, people don't like that, but I assumed that on Twitter I had the right to speak the truth and, you know, as a journalist to report facts about male behaviour, and about the feminist movement, and about trans activism.

But I got temporarily suspended a couple times in August when I started tweeting about a local man named Lisa Kreut who's involved in the labour movement here in Vancouver. He identifies as a sadist, so he works as a dominatrix as well as being involved in these local unions - um, I guess he does that on the side, part-time. And he was given a platform to speak at the Vancouver Women's March and was using that platform to promote prostitution as empowering and to kind of disparage radical feminists, and I just found it really appalling and shocking, partly, that they would offer a man a platform, but also a man who was clearly anti-feminist. And connected to the fact that the Vancouver Women's March had made it really clear that radical feminists weren't welcome at the march, so, you know, actual women, actual feminists, actual women who are doing work to fight violence against women were made to feel unwelcome while they were platforming this anti-feminist man who was promoting anti-feminist ideas simply because he identifies as transgender.

So I was tweeting about him and, again just facts about what he had done, because one of the things he had done was to lead efforts at the BC [British Columbia] Federation of Labour Convention in 2016 to have Vancouver Rape Relief blacklisted, so he was trying to defund Vancouver Rape Relief which is Canada's longest-standing rape crisis centre, um, and transition house. So he successfully had them blacklisted along with some of his allies in the labour movement, um, so I tweeted about that. Um, I tweeted about the fact that he got Feminist Current's ads pulled from our website, he has a contact at SheKnows [Media] which was the company that was hosting ads for us on our site, and he contacted them and claimed that we were engaging in hate speech, which we are not, and they pulled our ads. Um, he is also one of a small group of trans activists here, in Vancouver who started a smear campaign against a local anti-poverty activist named Yuly Chan because she was affiliated with Vancouver Rape Relief, you know, she was a supporter of Vancouver Rape Relief, and because she tweeted a couple of links from my website, Feminist Current. So they used these things as an opportunity to smear her and have her no-platformed from a conference here in Vancouver - a leftist conference. So I just tweeted these facts, I didn't, you know, say much more beyond what was actually happening, and they suspended my account, temporarily, for that and forced me to delete the tweets, which was strange.

And then, finally, in November, my account was locked down when I tweeted 'men aren't women' and tweeted 'what is the difference between a trans woman and a man?'. And, you know, these are things that I say and ask quite frequently and, you know, when I ask questions like 'what is the difference between a trans woman and a man' I'm being sincere, I'm not being facetious, I'm not trying to be rude, but I'm trying to get to the core of what trans activists are arguing. Like, how is it possible for a male to become female? Like, what does that entail? What is the difference between a trans woman and a man? What is it that you're claiming is happening here? What is the change that's happening that makes this person not male anymore? And no one will answer these questions. No one will explain. And these are questions that we need to answer if we're gonna be expected to accept this idea that the moment that a man declares himself a woman he's literally female and then has the right to, say, access women and girl's change rooms, or be transferred to a female prison, or to play on women's sports team and things like that. So there was that. They locked my account and asked me to delete these tweets. I deleted the tweets. And then, finally, on November 23rd, they permanently suspended me after I tweeted a link to a blog post a man who had been calling up local estheticians here in the Vancouver area, and asking them for Brazilian bikini waxes and when they declined, saying the only offer the service to females, he essentially tried to extort money out of these women, you know. He took them to court and tried to sue them for discrimination on the basis that he was now claiming to be transgender.

LONG: Weren't these women working class women who really couldn't afford legal representation?

MURPHY: Yeah, of course, I mean, they were just, you know, independent business owners, they're just women who are... you know, you don't make that much money as an esthetician. So not only should it be clear they would probably feel unsafe being alone in a room with a man, especially a man like this who doesn't seem to respect women's boundaries, but, yeah, also these aren't women who are making a lot of money. These aren't even women who can afford lawyers, you know. It's totally - it's just appalling that any person would behave like that towards another person in general. But it seems pretty obvious to me that because this person has been engaged in numerous, numerous court cases over the years, he has a pattern - a long-standing pattern and habit of suing local businesses, in the same way, to try to get money out of them, you know - now it seems like he sort of leapt on this transgender trend to try to do the same to these women without concern for their lives or livelihood and obviously not caring if they felt intimidated by his request.

So, yeah, I tweeted a link to a blog post that revealed his identity. So somebody found out - 'cause he had been kept anonymous in the media here in Canada, although the women he was suing, their names were in the media, but he was only referred to by the initials J.Y. - so a blogger discovered his real identity, wrote a blog post about it. I tweeted the blog post and said 'is it true that J.Y. is actually the name?'. And I linked to his twitter account which still had his male name on it, you know, he's still going by Jonathan and had 'Jessica' in brackets. And then somebody else had posted a screenshot from a review he had left on like Yelp or something like that, saying thanks so-and-so for the great bikini wax. It was a review of a salon, and it had his face and his name attached to it. So I tweeted that screenshot and said 'yeah, it's him.', 'cause it confirmed my question. And that's what Twitter suspended me for permanently, for tweeting that screenshot saying 'yeah, it's him.'

LONG: Wow. You have an appearance upcoming in Vancouver that has also had a lot of issues.

MURPHY: Right, so on January, 10th, there's an event that is happening in Vancouver, at the Vancouver Public Library, to discuss gender identity ideology and women's rights. We booked the room, um, well, the organisers booked the room, I didn't actually do it myself. The two women who are just independent women who really were politicised around this issue actually, around trans-activism, and wanted to do something and wanted to force this conversation to finally happen in Canada 'cause it has not been happening; The media won't cover it, politicians won't acknowledge that there's even a debate. And they booked the room for 6:30 pm on January, 10th which is a Thursday. And we hired seven security guards on our own accord with the money that we fundraised, and just recently the library contacted us, they - the library was receiving a lot of pressure to cancel the event from trans-activists. And they released a statement saying they wouldn't be canceling the event, but they also disparaged me in the process and essentially said, you know, 'we won't be cancelling the event, but Meghan is a bad person, and we don't like what she's saying, but we have to, you know, we have to uphold free speech.' And then, recently, they contacted the

organizers and said that they wanted \$2,000 more in security fees 'cause they wanted to hire seven more security guards of their own. So I guess there would be fourteen security guards in total to host a talk-

LONG: But you already - the organisers already paid for seven security guards.

MURPHY: Right. So the library said 'due to danger - potential danger to patrons and staff due to these protesters they wanted to hire seven more security guards which seems excessive to me and then told us that we had to hold the event after hours which on a Thursday night is at 9:30 pm which is ridiculous of course, I mean, obviously there'll be parents coming who have kids who might have school in the morning and people have to get up for work in the morning. Essentially I see it as an attempt on their part to force us to cancel so that they don't have to deal with the harassment that they're getting from trans activists.

LONG: And if the trans activists are the ones that are creating the threat of violence, why aren't their organisations being billed for this extra security?

MURPHY: Well, yeah, I mean, that's the thing as we aren't the ones posing a risk; we're just trying to have a conversation, you know. Feminists are not violent, we're not the ones threatening people with violence, the people who are threatening violence are trans activists, you know, we've received a number of graphic, violent, misogynistic, and sexualised threats through Eventbrite which is where we're selling tickets. So I just, I find it weird that we're the ones who are consistently positioned as somehow hateful, or a threat, or as violent despite the fact that we are none of those things and the only people engaging in misogynist hate speech, and violence, and threats of violence are trans activists. But also, you know, like, the library has not spoken out critically about the behaviour of the trans activists, you know, the mayor of Vancouver referred to me and the event as despicable and said nothing about the fact that these people were threatening us and saying really disgusting things and trying to shut down our free speech. And we're just, we're feminists, we're just women who are trying to have a conversation about something that threatens our rights and safety, and yet we're being vilified, and these people will say nothing about the behaviour of trans activists.

LONG: Ah, sure, I've never heard of a radfem, uh, threatening to rape and murder someone.

MURPHY: No. Never.

LONG: But the event is still going on, the organisers were able to raise the money to hire the extra security then?

MURPHY: Right, yep, so we've been able to raise the money to pay for the security. We're gonna hold the event anyway. It's gonna be at 9:30 pm. People are still coming

because people want to support this conversation and to support us. So I think that's significant in and of itself that despite these hurdles people and, you know, despite the fact that I'm sure lots of people are worried about showing up, you know, worried that they'll be somehow be smeared just for *being* at the event or, you know, they're worried what the protesters might do. And people are still coming to support. They know this is important. They know that it's time to stand up against this. I think that's a strong message to send to the library, and to trans activists, and to local politicians, and the media, and the mayor. People care about this that much that they're willing to take a risk to support and show up and have the conversation.

LONG: Do you think that this growing wave of people who are standing up and showing up at these events, do you think that's gonna change the environment of censorship, or do you think it's going to continue to get worse, for a while, before it gets better?

MURPHY: I think that it will help. I think that it will challenge these people's entitlement, like, their belief that they can just shut down any conversation they don't want. It'll show people that, no, we're gonna have the conversation anyway. We aren't scared. You don't have the right to shut down people's free speech. You don't have the right to shut down feminist speech. I think that if we caved and cancelled or if the library caved and cancelled, then the opposite message would have been sent, which is that bullies win.

LONG: Mm-hm.

MURPHY: But, you know, because we're going on with the event and having it anyway, and people are showing up it'll send the message that no, free speech does matter, and we aren't gonna cave to, you know, a few vicious bullies.

:theme music - Real Voice by Thistle Pettersen:

:acoustic guitar:

*"So speak out, speak over, speak under
Speak through the noise
Speak loud so I can hear you, I wanna know you,
I wanna hear your real voice.
I wanna hear your real voice.
Your real voice, your real voice, your real voice..."*

:music fades out:

:Thunder crack with rain starting:

:Station tag - multiple collective members' voices:

"You are listening...

"You are listening...

"You are listening...

"You are listening...

"You are listening...to WLRN...

...WLRN

...to WLRN

...WLRN

:reversed cymbal crash fading up to to a sudden stop:

:thunder, relaxing sounds of the wetlands: rain, crickets, frogs, birds:

Sehkmets SHE OWL: The first step towards female liberation is women telling the truth, that's why men are so quick to punish us when we dare tell it. We're living in a time when feminists have to worry about silencing tactics from self-identified liberal and leftist men and their handmaidens more than we do about the right-wing trying to shut us up. Whether we want to tell the truth about porn or prostitution, the gender cult or femininity, heterosexuality or the nuclear family, rape or marriage, racism or capitalism, male violence with the false feminism liberals have pushed into mainstream culture, you can always bet that right around the corner is a gang of conniving, pissed off, predatory men and their adoring female followers ready to threaten you on social media or get you banned from the internet or kicked out of physical venues or whatever else. They know that most women will be too afraid or too tired to keep fighting them once that initial silencing takes place. In a world where anyone can develop international reach online pulling the plug on feminist voices via intimidation and banning is naturally the first line of defense from men and anti-feminist women who fear the rise of real feminism or even just single-issue defeat.

The feminist movement can't exist or accomplish much if feminists don't talk; if we all retreat and isolate ourselves in order to avoid the wrath of our enemies. This isn't new even though it might feel like it is for those of us too young to remember 20th-century feminist revolution. The only difference between this round of misogynistic silencing and last century's is the internet, which can often seem like a bottomless cesspool of anonymous men and women willing to say anything to scare feminists behind their Twitter handles and other aliases. Male anger, violence, and misogyny aren't new. The resistance to real radical feminism isn't new. Women getting harassed and banished from public space isn't new either. It's just easier to keep track of now. And perhaps it feels overwhelming after the decades of offline feminist fade-out.

Some feminists think we have more supporters out there on issues like the gender cult and the sex trade than it appears because those supporters keep quiet in public to avoid being attacked for saying males can't become women, or paying women to get raped for male entertainment is misogynistic and wrong. And if that's true, if there are liberal and leftist women out there who secretly agree with feminists on any of the issues pertaining to the male oppression of females worldwide, then they are as much a part of the problem as the women who genuinely oppose feminism for their own selfish and male aligned interests. The silence of these women equates to their abandonment of us feminists to the male wolves. It might save them the kind of harassment and punishment many outspoken feminists get these days, but it won't help them in the long run. It won't save any of us from the myriad of ways men are out here oppressing us. And in fact, your silence will contribute to the female condition getting worse in the 21st century thanks to the left-wing men as much as the right-wing ones. If there's one thing history proves, it's that men don't stop until they've completely and utterly established their control of women and girls, and there are no limits to the depravity and violence they will visit upon us if we allow them to act unchallenged.

Feminism will never go mainstream. It will always remain a movement on the fringes that's how we know it's the authentic threat to male power that it is. So when we speak, we shouldn't expect to garner thousands or millions of supporters or fans; To be embraced and welcomed by the masses; To enjoy the level of attention and affirmation that liberal and anti-feminists attract for pushing women to perform pornified femininity and submit completely to the male agenda. It shouldn't surprise us at all when our speech is met with outrage and attempts at silencing, yet still we must speak. Why? Because our truth-telling is the only thing that can stall the total inhalation of female kind, and once in a while we might even see a small victory. When we speak, there is a chance we will reach a woman or a girl who has no feminist consciousness and help her awaken.

In the bayou, in the swamp, or in the local pond, frogs will be going about their business and ribbit to their heart's content. But as soon as a predator enters their space, they go quiet. They don't want the predator to find them, so they hide in silence. They shrink out of a natural instinct to survive.

What's interesting about frogs is how they come out of their silence. When the predator leaves their area, the frogs will still remain quiet... until one brave individual starts ribbiting again. Then slowly the other frogs chime in. And soon the whole community is loud as hell again, singing in unison. All it takes is one frog, just one reckless, loud-mouthed individual to get the whole group going after a scare. Be that brave frog. Raise your voice. When one woman takes a stand, she makes it just a little bit easier for ALL women to speak up. We are much harder to silence when we shout together.

:natural ambience fades out:

:simple kick/snare starts in, followed by bass melody, and eventually additional light percussion indicating outros:

SEHKMET: Thanks for listening to WLRN's 33rd edition podcast on the silencing of women's voices. I'm Sehkmet She Owl. Until next time, stay strong.

DAMAYANTI: WLRN would like to thank our guests this month for sharing their views on the silencing of women's voices. Thank you so much to Meghan Murphy and Natasha Chart, for speaking with us. This is Damayanti. Thanks for tuning in to WLRN.

BECK: If you like what you hear and want to help support our feminist community radio, please visit our WordPress site and click on the donate button. In addition, if you want to join our team, send us a copy of your resume to wlrnewscontact@gmail.com. We are always looking for new volunteers to conduct interviews, post on our social media pages, and keep us moving forward as a collective of media activist women. Thanks for listening. This is Julia, signing off for now.

APRIL: And I am April Neault. Thanks for tuning in. Our program for next month will focus on the Vancouver Rape Relief and Women's Shelter. We will look more closely at the Montreal Massacre Memorial, an annual conference that Thistle and Julia attended in December 2018. Our handcrafted podcasts always come out the first Thursday of the month so look for it on Thursday, February 7th. If you'd like to receive our newsletter that notifies you when each podcast, music show and interviews are released, please sign-up for our newsletter on the WLRN WordPress site. Stay strong in the struggle and thanks for listening.

LONG: This is Robin signing off from another addition of WLRN's monthly handcrafted podcast. You can find us on Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, and Soundcloud in addition to our WordPress site. Thanks for listening!

DIQUATRO: And this is Jenna DiQuarto, WLRN's sound engineer and producer. Our monthly podcasts are always crafted with tender, loving care and in solidarity with women worldwide. Thanks for your support! We would love to hear from you so please share, like and comment widely.

:music ends with loud snare hit and big reverb decay:

:theme music - Michigan (Gender Hurts) by Thistle Pettersen:

:driving acoustic guitar fades in:

:vocal harmonies:

*"...But how will we find our way out of this?
What is the antidote for the patriarchal kiss?"*

*How will we find what needs to be shown?
And then after that
Where is home?
Tell me
Where is my home*

*'Cuz gender hurts
It's harmful..."*

:lyrics fade out: