

AT: Welcome to the Infinite Women podcast. I'm your host, Allison Tyra, and today I'm joined by Lorana Bartels, a professor of criminology at the Australian National University and adjunct professor of law at the University of Canberra and University of Tasmania. Today we're going to be discussing links between victimization and criminality, meaning the ways that being victimized can make women more likely to commit crimes themselves. And obviously it's important to note here that a lot of what we'll be discussing is not gender exclusive, but as always we are going to be looking at it through a gendered lens. So obviously this is a very broad topic. Are there any general themes you want to bring up as we're getting started?

LB: I've worked in this space for a long time. I've worked in the criminal justice context for over 25 years and I've worked with a lot of victim-survivors. I've worked with a lot of perpetrators, male and female on both sides of the coin. And I think we need to think back about where this all starts, and I mean in childhood. And there's really now increasing understanding of what the experiences in childhood look like, how they shape someone's trajectory into the criminal justice system and how that looks a little different for boys and for girls. And then there's a racial dimension in this country to that as well. So I'm going to use this term crossover kids. So that's children who are involved in both the child protection systems. So they're considered at risk. So that's generally because there'll be family violence in the home, drug use, mental health issues. So it's not safe for the kids to be in that environment. And then the kids themselves will enter the youth justice system. So their behaviors are deemed risky until that crossover happens. So that happens young, it happens disproportionately with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and it happens disproportionately with kids with disability. And I'll talk a bit about that. So what we see is a different pathway for girls. A recent data linkage project, for example, from the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council that looked at these crossover kids show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls who entered the youth justice system had the highest level of child protection involvement. So of all kids in this crossover pool, it's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls who have that highest level of child protection involvement.

Another study included an example of what is sadly far too common. So I'm going to just summarize the case study that they spoke about and then we'll unpack some of the themes that emerge there because we really need to understand this before we can look at women in prison and how they land there. So there's a lot of detail in this, I won't go into too much detail, but this really exemplifies what you see far too too often. I've known so many of these girls and women at various points along their trajectories. Kira is a 13 year old Indigenous girl who came before the court with 121 charges of assault, reckless conduct, endangering serious injury, criminal damage, threats to kill and shop thefts amongst others. She was first notified to child protection when she was one month old. The initial concerns related to both parents abusing substances including heroin, her mother's mental health difficulties, neglect, family violence and her father's criminal activity. Over the next 11 years Kira was highly transient, she had 14 addresses listed in her child protection files. At the age of six her weight was noted to drop from the 90th to the 25th percentile in a year and she was observed to be dishevelled and unbathed. Her school expressed concerns and they noted she was vague, withdrawn and emotionally unstable. She was exposed to ongoing family violence perpetuated by her stepfather and mother which resulted in her being physically victimized. She was also physically assaulted by her mother during an alcohol-fuelled incident although she refused to make a statement against her mother and she was physically abused by her grandparent during this period.

At 12 she was running away from home and staying with extended family when she began using drugs and offending. Her father had been released from prison six months earlier but there were no attempts by either parent to resume her care. She was again placed in foster care where she was sexually abused by another client before she ran away. Over the next couple of years she cycled between residential care and youth detention. Neuropsychological assessments conducted in custody at the age of 14 determined she had an intellectual disability and other neuropsychological difficulties. She was then released on a community-based order with a number of services that provided secondary consultation to her care team.

So this story of young Kira is tragic. It's common. You see from essentially from birth and probably in utero in

fact exposure to drugs, exposure to violence, deep trauma and the fact that she's landing in the youth justice system is hardly surprising. There's no capable guardian attending to her needs. So the fact that by the age of 14 she's racked up 120 charges is huge. Without knowing the specifics of her case beyond what I've described I can also say that a lot of those charges, other research would show would be things that if it weren't for that kind of background wouldn't be in the criminal justice system. So a child in a family home who loses their temper and is emotionally dysregulated, parents generally aren't going to call the cops. What happens very often when a child's in a residential care facility and there have been numerous instances of this especially kids who've experienced deep trauma, there have been cases where if you throw a plate or shout at someone, the police will be called and that's a property damage charge or an assault charge. Podcast listeners aren't going to be able to see this but Allison's got this horrified look on her face. So the age of criminal responsibility in this country in most places is 10. So you're seeing 10 11 year old having charges of criminal damage property damage assaults when it's a trauma response playing out.

AT: The biggest thing that's striking me as you're describing this particular case study which I'm sure is not isolated by any means (LB: sadly not), what I'm hearing is that the institutions that are supposed to be protecting particularly vulnerable people, so you mentioned that she's an Indigenous child, she's a child with disability, she's a child in what appears to be an abusive and neglectful home environment. What I'm hearing is that first the foster care system and then the justice system failed this child. And unfortunately that is not surprising, but I'd like to look at how particularly justice systems often are more focused on punishment than on rehabilitation and I know that you've talked about this before in your work.

LB: Yeah absolutely and again I want to be clear this applies to girls and boys. It plays out a little differently but absolutely. So yeah, having that that trajectory is not uncommon. And then we have a system that is really not adept at responding in a way that is trauma-informed, meeting the children where they're at, able to see what we often call the needs, not the deeds. So it's very easy, tempting or the default response to say, "okay there's 121 charges – this is a bad kid." And especially because some of those actions may in fact have very real consequences. Some of them are pretty minor but some of those actions may have real consequences and it's not to negate the impact of those actions on the victims where there are victims of those actions. But we're not good at, in our systems, whether that be child protection, courts, but more distally schools, healthcare systems, at looking at what underlies all of that. And so we we just deal with the surface level stuff, the criminality. Though well I'll use inverted commons – the "criminality" of what looks like criminality. And this is this pathway into the youth justice system, what we deem criminality but it actually comes from a place of not having needs met. And this happens so commonly that it breaks my heart that as a country we're prepared to tolerate needs not being met of children who absolutely deserve it. Within our international law framework, within what people would want for their children, we're just so far from what you would think is basic human dignity. And I've met countless kids who've been through the youth justice system or people who are adults now who went through the youth justice system. The things that they've been subjected to, you would not wish on your worst enemy. And it's just extraordinary to me that we have this system that brutalizes so comprehensively.

AT: Going off of that I'd like to discuss who is given the benefit of the doubt, who is considered less responsible for their actions or the same actions are considered more acceptable. Because it seems very clear to me that in a broad variety of contexts, women's actions are often judged much more harshly than men's. And in a criminal justice system, my understanding is that people of color often face much higher sentences for the same types of crimes compared to their white peers on average and feel free to obviously contradict me if that's not true. I saw a statistic that I believe comes from the ACLU, the American Civil Liberties Union, that said that men on average are sentenced to two to six years in prison for murdering a female partner but when women kill their male partners, which is often in self-defense they get an average of 15 years. So similarly I feel like when you see situations where say a child has been put in a dangerous situation, possibly not

intentionally by any means but it does seem like mothers face much more judgment for that when fathers don't face the same level of judgment. So I'm just curious, do you see this reflected in your work? Am I completely off base? You tell me.

LB: So you're not completely off base. I would say that yes there's absolutely a racial dimension to it. If anyone fares better in this criminal justice system, it's being rich and white. That said I know plenty of rich white folk who have fared very badly through this system as well, so that's by no means a guarantee. It increases your chances of going okay through this system. The gender piece is a little complex and we certainly don't have clear data like what you've referred to in the US, because by and large women and men do commit quite different types of offenses and the motivating factors are a little different. But certainly there are examples of women killing their partners, and this is the most extreme version obviously, killing their partners in what very clearly to an outsider is self-defense in a response to extreme violence. Historically there's been a failure to understand that. The courts are getting better at understanding what that violence looks like, understanding coercive control, things like that. But there's an awfully long way to go and as for those gender judgments around norms around motherhood, for example, or femininity, yeah, that frequently plays out. And again, I think over the time that I've worked in this system, it is improving, I would like to say, but off an extremely low base. And as you're saying this, what came to mind is a case I was very tangentially involved in a couple of years ago, a woman from a non-English background, woman of color, and this goes to again this why the criminal justice system is such an imperfect tool for dealing with complexity. She was a single mother. She had two young children. On the day in question, she had dropped her children at childcare. She had taken steps that indicated she was about to kill herself. She then didn't do so. She picked her children up from childcare. She took them home, fed them. She bathed them and then she held the head of one of the children under the water for, I think it was mere seconds, less than a minute. She then got the children out of the bath, got them into their pajamas and called 000 to report what she'd done.

The police came and by the time they arrived, she was reading them a story. Took her away, she was remanded in custody for nine months. There was no physical damage to the child, but she was charged with attempted murder. It was a cry for help. She was a family violence survivor, she was from a migrant marginalized community and when she was sentenced, the male judge said that he wasn't sure that this was even a criminal act and that this was a cry for help and that he had to sentence her on the basis of what had come before him. But he didn't really feel that it should have actually been in the criminal courts at all and that there should be avenues for women experiencing what she was experiencing to be able to call for help and get support rather than the criminal response. So that was a case from a couple of years ago and I think a very nuanced and empathetic response from the judge.

AT: Was any mental health support provided to her? Because obviously, like you said this is a cry for help – did they do anything to answer that cry?

LB: I don't think so, from my recollection, which is awful, absolutely awful. I never met her, I helped the lawyer a little because I've written about women who killed their children. My heart went out to her and I just thought how are we failing her and as a society failing women who are isolated, who are desperate. Parenting is very hard we bring the criminal law response in as a sledgehammer when we need so many other responses. And as I say I've worked in the criminal justice, and I use that inverted quotes, system for such a long time and the longer I do so, the more I become convinced that our responses to complex issues lie anywhere but the courts and prisons that I've spent my professional life. They lie in housing and education and healthcare and community gardens and places of faith and music halls and everywhere but the institutions I'm trained in. And that's a really complex thing to grapple with and every time a politician stands up and says "we have no tolerance for domestic violence" – nor should we – "we're going to have tougher laws" I think, that's not what's going to address this. I'm doing a project at the moment where I talk to men who commit family violence and

we have this knee-jerk response that's all about law and that's not actually what's what's effective.

AT: When we're talking about punishment versus rehabilitation, I'm genuinely curious because I feel like a lot of people have this idea that it is more expensive to provide what they see as "additional" services, so mental health services for example. As opposed to the way I look at it which is the whole "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." If we can prevent these things from happening, you see this in healthcare as well – if you can prevent the thing from happening, that is typically going to be cheaper for the community than having to deal with the problem that you didn't address earlier

LB: That is absolutely the case, Allison. The data absolutely bears this out. So we have in this country very high what's known as recidivism rates or reoffending rates and very high return to custody rates. So for example, 85 percent of children and young people who leave youth detention will return within 12 months. Compared to other countries, in our adult setting it's about 60 percent of people who've been in prison, who are in prison, have been to prison before. In some other countries, it's as low as 20 percent. It's very expensive. So we're talking in the ACT, where I live, to lock up one child in youth detention for a day is about \$4500. You can do a lot with that money. Just thinking specifically about women, there was a study done on behalf of an organization called Keeping Women Out of Prison, it's based in New South Wales, that was released recently. They had costing them that showed that the average cost to government for corrective services per woman in prison is \$180,000 but when you factor in other economic costs, that rises to \$314,000 per year. So that's lost income, cost of childcare and support services and the like. So there's an awful lot you can do with that kind of money and there's numerous studies that show that keeping, well anyone, but a woman in this context, in the community, providing housing, wraparound services, health, education, child support, all of that is so much cheaper in the community and has better crime prevention benefits. So it's economic, it's safety, it's intergenerational because if you stop that cycle then it'll be her children, her children's children, her children's children's children.

So there is this notion that we need prisons to punish, and for very extreme crimes maybe we do. But most of what women are doing is pretty mild crime. It's better addressed in the community. It's cheaper to address it in the community. And that's not a particularly radical statement. There's reports from the Productivity Commission for example that show this. There's pretty comprehensive modeling on this. There's a lot of things we can and should be doing, as I say that there's big ticket items around housing, education, employment, levels of literacy, so engagement in education to address – about 60, 70 percent of people in prison are functionally illiterate. So addressing that is also really critical. So yeah, there's so many things we we need to be doing and if we did them right, then our crime rates would go down, our costs would go down.

So currently we're spending as a country over \$6 billion dollars a year on prisons and it's really not money well spent. You've got a situation now in the Northern Territory as a result of their tough on crime policies where you've got women in the Northern Territory being locked up where there's like 20 to one room, sharing one toilet. They would all be Indigenous, they would all be survivors of physical and sexual violence. This is not the kind of model we need to be working with. We need a trauma-informed, culturally appropriate model. This is costing a fortune and it's ineffective. So we really just need a completely different paradigm that is holistic, trauma-informed, compassionate.

AT: As I mentioned in the intro, so much of what we're discussing is not exclusive to women or other genders who are not cisgender male. And so I'd like to discuss that we're not specifically talking about men harming women. We are talking about the ways that this path potentially looks different for women and girls. And so with that in mind I would like to address that women hurt women and girls too.

LB: Yeah, absolutely, and women hurt boys and men. It happens in every sort of permutation. I talk about this stuff a lot with my students. The data are very clear: of the stuff that makes its way into the courts, it is

absolutely the case that it's mostly a male perpetrator and a female victim, and that pattern is also the most dangerous pattern. However, all the other permutations exist as well. Some women are very violent to girls and women and men. Men's violence against men is also a really important part of the equation and you might think, "okay, why am I talking about this on a podcast that's predominantly about girls and women?" This is a really important part of the equation. I couldn't even tell you how many times I've spoken to men, including men in prison who are there for violence against women, who then tell me about the sexual abuse they experienced at the hands of a man as a child who've said, "I've never told anyone this before." They've been sexualized by other men. They then become violent towards women. So we need to unpack experiences of physical and sexual and emotional abuse and the trauma that brings, and address that if we want to deal with violence against women, which is the key pathway into the criminal justice system. And in particular this is something that really was quite difficult for me, as a strong feminist, as someone who'd worked with women victim survivors for a long time, to start listening to and validating men's experiences of harm. We don't have a very clear discourse for that and that's something that's really evolved. And I've spoken to many, many colleagues, women who, like me, were used to listening to and siding with, for want of a better word, women survivors. So to feel like you're not betraying the sisterhood, to start listening to men who are perpetrators, but who themselves were victims long before they were offenders, and saying, "okay, well this is an important part of the puzzle." That was something that has been quite difficult to come to grips with and that's an important part of exploring this space. So there are very few women in prison who have not experienced physical and/or sexual harm. Some data suggests it's as high as 80, 90, 100 percent. And if we want to address that we need to understand and address men's experiences of harm, generally as children.

So for example I know a woman, she started as a prison psychologist. She's been working with men who commit sexual violence against children. She says she's worked with 600 or 700 men over, I think it's like 50 years. She can count on one hand the number of men who were not themselves sexual violence victims as children. So it's this very complex ecosystem. If we want to support girls and women, we need to work with the men and address their trauma. There's been some really, really interesting research in this space. There's two things I'd like to talk about. One, it's called the The Man Box and there's some amazing work that's been coming out of New Zealand. The Man Box is this really interesting work that's been led by an academic in Queensland, Michael Flood, and Jesuit Social Services in Melbourne. And it shows that the extent to which men subscribe to a range of traditional masculine norms – statements like "a man who doesn't fight back when others push him around this weak" or "a real man would never say no to sex" or "a man shouldn't have to do household chores" – so that the extent to which a man subscribes to those values, which they call the Man Box, like a man is boxed in by those sort of attitudes. But the more they subscribe to those values, the more likely they are to use violence against an intimate partner. They're more likely to have forced a partner to have sex, those sorts of things. And on one level, that's really kind of intuitive. But to prove it means you can go, "okay, well these are the attitudes that we need to be really grappling with," and address those attitudes of those men if we want to stop those behaviors against women, which are intergenerationally the pathways for girls and women to land in prison themselves.

But part of what's so fascinating for me about this research is what it also says about men's well-being. Because the men who subscribe to those values and behaviors, they're also more likely to do stuff that's damaging to them. So they're more likely to be gambling and drinking and self-harming and getting in car accidents. So that's having an impact on them and their well-being. It's having the impact on not just their partner but their children. So there're the kids of, that's the little Kira who's, not I know obviously what sort of attitudes her dad subscribed to, but you see this pattern that's intergenerational and we've got to work at a systems level with whole families and address this and support. The more we say, "these people are monsters and shun men," the more we ostracize people. We're actually not addressing issues at their root. We need to really be for the well-being of the little kids, the little boys and girls and the whole family ecosystem. This is the stuff that I think we really need to be thinking about holistically, not just that carceral feminism of "we need tougher sentences and that's what's going to keep women and girls safe."

AT: So on a previous episode where I discussed the manosphere, specifically in educational settings, with Samantha Schulz. Go listen to that, maybe not right after this one because that's also a pretty heavy one, and maybe go take a break, have some chocolate and come back. But Samantha and I were talking about some of the psychology behind the manosphere and these boys – I mean, some of them are men but mostly boys – and the reasons that they are drawn to this really toxic masculinity content. And from my perspective, it does largely seem to be about power and control and that idea that particularly for young people, especially if they're in more vulnerable situations, they probably don't have a lot of control over their own lives. They probably don't feel like they have a lot of power in their own lives. And for boys in particular, I think that the manosphere is a way for them to feel powerful, to feel more in control and to feel justified in behaving in ways that are harmful to others because that is their right as people assigned male at birth. And the correlation that I'm seeing here is, when we're talking about someone who has been victimized, regardless of their gender, I can see how one way for them to rationalize taking back the power that has been taken from them is to harm others. And I don't know if this is reflected in the statistics, but my understanding is that there's a model where, say something bad happens to Dad, whether he's had a bad day at work, his boss is being a jerk or his sports team lost. We know there's a spike in domestic violence around major sporting events. But Dad's having a bad day. Maybe he feels like he doesn't have the control over his life that he wishes he had. He comes home, he takes that out on Mom, possibly getting physical. Mom then turns and takes that out on the kid. The kid then takes that out on the pet. And each person is trying to regain their own power by exerting power in unhealthy ways over those with less power than them. And to me that does seem like this is what a lot of it comes down to. But I'm not the expert, so what do you think?

[Listen to Dr Samantha Schulz on the manosphere in the classroom or read the transcript.](#)

LB: Yeah, I'm not a psychologist, I'm a criminal lawyer and criminologist. It comes down, not to evil, it comes down to lack of skills and tools. Not to trivialize it – it's kind of banal in a sense, because it can happen, is happening and thousands if not millions of households around the country and around the world. It doesn't absolve the person of responsibility, but for the most part they're not saying, "oh I'm going to make this person suffer." It's "I don't know how to do otherwise," especially if they've been raised in a household where that's normalized. So it's passed on intergenerationally. They don't have tools that enable them to deal with their difficult emotions: "my boss is a jerk" or "someone just slapped me around" in ways that are healthy. And to complicate the issue further there's emerging understanding around the role of neurodevelopmental issues and neurodiversity and domestic violence. So a lot of what looks like a desire for control can actually be emotional dysregulation relating to that. So for example, it could be an autistic meltdown. It could be the need for a dopamine hit because you've got undiagnosed, untreated ADHD. Now I want to make this extremely clear to your listeners, that does not make the behavior okay. I'm not saying the person who flies off the handle because dinner is not on the table at 6:00 doesn't make that behavior okay but it puts a different gloss on it that maybe they need the dinner on the table at 6:00 because they need precision. They need some order in their life and they're going to freak out if that's not happening, not because they want to control the person but because they're sensing that their life is a bit out of control and they don't have the tools to manage that.

AT: And just speaking as someone who does have autism and ADHD, I have a punching bag in my garage specifically because if I get to the point of "I need to hit something," that is what that is there for. I have different tools, like for example rage gardening personally is really helpful for me. I know not everyone has access to a yard full of weeds that they can just go and yank out when they need to get that anger out. But I have been there. But like you were saying, I have the tools, I have the privilege in a lot of ways to have prepared for something that I know is likely going to happen, that I am going to feel a certain way and I need to make sure that I am not harming myself or others. But there is a privilege to that.

LB: It's a privilege and it's also a responsibility to go and do it. But if you're a six foot three bloke, and no one's

ever spoken to you about this, and you don't know you've got this, and the only “punching bag” you know, especially if you saw dad doing that with mom, is the missus and the kids, it does not make you an evil person that you're doing it. But it makes your actions problematic, absolutely. But I think we need to be looking at how do we develop as a society a model that goes, okay we need to stop these behaviors but if there's some underlying issues that we haven't identified, how do we work with families and go okay your behavior is not okay. That rage is not okay. We need to help you develop the skills to do this in a way that's safe for you and your family.

AT: Yeah, I should also note that something that I've discussed before with different people is that, as an adult, I don't have meltdowns nearly as often as a kid does. Because, going back to that question of control how much control do I have over my daily life, over my environment. Because of various privileges, I have much more control over my environment I am much less likely to face a meltdown than someone who is trapped in a job that they hate for example.

LB: Or in and out of jail. (AT: Well yes, obviously.) And society has said you are a terrible, terrible worthless human being. So the estimates suggest that in the order of 50 percent of people in prison are neurodivergent, mostly undiagnosed. So about 25 percent ADHD, poor impulse control, poor emotional regulation, substance use issues. There's research that shows that having ADHD makes you both more likely to perpetuate and experience domestic violence as a victim. I'm working on a project in relation to neurodivergence and policing at the moment and there's a whole host of reasons. Again this could be a separate podcast which isn't specifically about gender, and around some of the behaviors that manifest quite commonly for neurodivergent people that do not play well in interactions with the police – inability to recall details, lack of eye contact. There's a bunch of things that for some folk will not serve them in their best interests, not to mention people who forget dates and don't turn up to court and oopsies that's the breach of a court order right there. So there's a whole host of complexities. As I say I could talk about at length. This does not make the behavior is okay. I was talking to someone about this the other day I've heard of cases where autistic men have collected extraordinarily extensive collections of child exploitation material online, and it became their hyper fixation and they wanted to “complete the set,” which is horrific in the extreme. But there was no one actually able to communicate, “this is not okay, this is not an okay special interest.”

AT: Dude, just go get obsessed with trains like everyone else.

LB: But we don't have a disability-aware narrative. We say, “obviously you're interested in children from a sexual perspective,” but to the point where they weren't actually interested in what was being depicted from a sexual perspective, which is bizarre. That's where the compassion piece comes in, of we're just at the very beginning of starting to understand how do we develop these responses that are more nuanced, empathetic, addressing the the issues and the harms that are caused, without the sledgehammer approach. And that brings me to what I wanted to speak about, which is this beautiful work that's being done by this beautiful couple in New Zealand, Matt Brown and Sarah Brown, which I think is just so powerful and inspiring. So Matt is a Samoan man. He grew up as a sexual assault survivor. His father was in and out of prison for violence against mom. Matt was one of eight children, in and out of state care. His wife, Sarah, was a young mom and a domestic violence survivor. They found each other, remarkably, and embarked on this path of self-healing. And Matt became a barber, and he found that all these men that he was doing the fades and the shaves for had similar childhoods to his. They were in and out of prison, they had gambling issues, they had drug issues, they were bashing up the missus. And he started having these men's healing groups in his barber shop. And he did this really powerful combination of validation and accountability, speaking to the men, the boys inside who were harmed as children, but also saying, “your actions are not okay.” So they ended up writing this book, *She's Not Your Rehab*. They they delivered a copy to every man in prison

in New Zealand. For those who couldn't read, there were reading circles for the men who could read to read it to them. They now have a free app launched New Zealand. They did in Australia, they worked on it with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men to make it culturally appropriate here, called Inner Boy. It's about healing your inner boy who was harmed. And it's this really I think amazing combination that we don't see that much of, which is healing the harm. And they talk about, if you don't transform your pain, you transmit it, acknowledging the pain that these men have experienced, but making the cycle stop there. Because he grew up with his mother obviously very badly battered and bruised, he didn't want to perpetuate that cycle with his own relationships. He didn't want to be the man his father had been. And I know so many men like that and I know so many women who go into the same relationships that they grew up in. And they're cycling in and out of prison and the line between victim and offender is gossamer thin.

And that's something I think many people in society don't understand. They see these dichotomous cohorts – you're either a victim or you're an offender. That's not how it works in reality. Almost everybody was a victim a long, long, long, time before they were an offender. So we need to address that that trauma that those little girls and boys, often from as I say in utero, if we really wanted to stop women and girls entering the criminal justice system and stop them getting killed, that's where we need to be focusing our attention. And as I say, I think Matt and Sarah are doing beautiful work. They've now started doing some work in schools with boys. And it's the antidote, not the only one, that's an example of the antidote to that sort of manosphere, of showing an example of how to be a boy and a man who is vulnerable, who is able to express their emotions, who doesn't subscribe to those narrow patriarchal masculine norms for the well-being of that boy or man, but the broader community. The more we can do to focus our attentions holistically, we need to be there for children. We need to believe them. We need to be there for families, including men who use violence. We need a systems-wide approach that's trauma-informed and holistic. And that needs to be everywhere: in childcare centers and schools and sports settings and community settings and churches and community gardens, music, anywhere where this stuff happened. The prison's when it really goes badly wrong, but the opportunities to stop that happening is all around us all the time in nature, connecting, going to the beach, all of those things. That's the best protection.

AT: Join us next time on the Infinite Women podcast and remember, well-behaved women rarely make history.