THE ROUTLEDGE COMPANION TO GENDER AND BORDERLANDS

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CHAPTER 20

PODCASTING AND RESISTANCE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE ACROSS CANADA, THE UNITED STATES, AND MEXICO

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In a 2021 episode entitled "Protect Indigenous Women," co-hosts of the Indigenous podcast *All My Relations*, Matika Wilbur (Swinomish and Tulalip) and Desi Small-Rodriguez (Northern Cheyenne and Chicana), discuss the urgency of addressing the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in the United States. They remind listeners that "MMIW has been a crisis since 1492," referring to the problematic (and fictional) narrative of the "discovery" of the Americas frequently deployed to whitewash the violent colonization process. In turn, this process laid the foundation for the settler-colonial structures that have enabled colonial and contemporary practices of disenfranchisement, removal, abuse, exploitation, and genocide of Indigenous Peoples (Wilbur and Small-Rodriguez 2021).

As they frame MMIWG as a crisis directly connected to colonization, Wilbur and Small-Rodriguez ask both Indigenous and non-Indigenous listeners to challenge the inaction and complicity of local, state, and national structures and individuals in the United States who fail to acknowledge the historical roots and contemporary realities of ongoing femicides of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit people (two-spirit is the term for an Indigenous-specific gender-nonconforming identity in some Indigenous communities (Jacobs, Thomas, and Lang 1997)). Throughout the episode – even from within its title – Wilbur and Small-Rodriguez address listeners directly, exploiting podcasting's unique ability to draw listeners into an intimate audience community, and emphasizing the importance of holding physical and digital space for individual MMIWG narratives, even while statistics and data highlight the sheer scope of the crisis. As Small-Rodriguez puts it:

> if we aren't acknowledging that the data is a story, is a loved one, it, even if you don't know them when you hear their story, it touches your heart. It's part of your story now. And what responsibility do you have to that story now that you know it? Because I was always taught, when you hear stories, there's a responsibility that goes with that. There's a teaching with that, there's a knowledge and you're meant to do something about it.
>
> (Wilbur and Small-Rodriguez 2021)

Small-Rodriguez's comments about taking action in light of the complex relationship between large-scale depersonalized data, individual stories, and listener responsibility are linked directly to

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the core argument of this chapter: that podcasting offers a way in which the individual stories of femicide victims, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, can be responsibly told and heard. Because by definition podcasts have the capacity to reach across international political borders, they represent a novel way through which meaning is made and knowledge is produced so that accountability for femicide and gender-based violence can be demanded, and so that the victims of femicides are not forgotten.

In developing this argument this chapter explores how podcasting has been used – since its emergence as a popular, widely-used medium in 2012 – to examine, expose, and critique long-standing structures and crises of gender-based violence and specifically femicide and feminicide (defined below), in Canada, Mexico, and the United States through a comparative border studies approach that functions on two levels. As it focuses on how North American borders figure in podcasts' discussion of gender-based violence, the chapter explains how, because of its own elemental composition, the medium is an especially effective means of shedding light on the trans-border and transnational nature of gender-based violence of femicide and feminicide. I argue that podcasting's essential qualities, including its geographic non-boundedness and cross-border character, its capacity to transform a heterogenous listenership into a community, and its focus and reliance on narrative storytelling, are fundamental to its potential to expose and challenge cross-border gender-based violence in North America. Underpinning this argument, the chapter offers close analytical listenings (Spinelli and Dann 2019) of two podcasts: *Forgotten: Women of Juárez*, hosted by journalists Oz Woloshyn and Mónica Ortiz Uribe, which aired in 2020 on the iHeartMedia platform; and journalist Connie Walker's (Cree) *Missing & Murdered: Finding Cleo* investigation, which aired in 2018 as a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) podcast. Each of these shows draws attention and responds to femicides in different ways, mobilizing the narrative techniques of investigative journalism alongside more context-specific and locally grounded storytelling strategies to directly engage listeners.

In *Forgotten*, listeners follow Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe as they investigate the so-called "Juárez murders," the waves of murders of young women that have been occurring in the "infamous" border town of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico for over three decades. These murders have been linked to border-specific factors including the cross-border drug trade and landmark international free trade agreements between Mexico and the United States that precipitated Juárez's near-total transformation into an industrial border town. Juárez is home to hundreds of maquiladoras (assembly plants for international corporations, see Kopinak 1997; Iglesias-Prieto 2017), a development that some commentators and investigators have connected to the femicides. For example, as Alicia Schmidt Camacho puts it, "The peculiar features of the Juárez killings correspond to the physical and political geography of the northern city, its shared boundary with the United States, and its importance as a site of Mexican partnership with global capitalist institutions" (2005: 259).

Where the U.S.-Mexico border plays a leading role in *Forgotten*, its northern counterpart, the Canada-U.S. border, features less prominently in Connie Walker's *Missing & Murdered: Finding Cleo* podcast, though its role is pivotal. *Finding Cleo* is the second season of the *Missing & Murdered* series, which sees the journalist investigate the cold case deaths of Indigenous women. In this season Walker visits the case of Cleopatra Nicotine Semaganis (Little Pine First Nation), who, as the investigation uncovers, died in 1978 at age 13, having been separated from her birth mother and siblings in the Sixties Scoop (Stevenson 2021) in Saskatchewan, Canada and adopted by a family across the border in the United States. Semaganis' siblings and family members were told little of the circumstances of her death, and what little information they had (that she had been adopted by a family in Arkansas, and raped, murdered, and abandoned on an unnamed highway

while trying to hitchhike back to Canada) was a fiction: in fact, Semaganis had been adopted by a family in New Jersey (not Arkansas) and died by suicide in complex and distressing circumstances.

The *Missing & Murdered* podcasts were researched, recorded, and released against the backdrop in Canada of both the National Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008–2015) and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (2016–2019), two large-scale inquiries that ultimately concluded in their respective reports that the Canadian government was responsible for genocide of Indigenous Peoples (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015; National Inquiry 2019). Across the border, no corresponding formal reports yet exist in the United States, though Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland has established the Not Invisible Act Commission, which held a series of public hearings in 2023 with the aims of "improving intergovernmental coordination and establishing best practices for state, Tribal and federal law enforcement to bolster resources for survivors and victim's families, and combatting the epidemic of missing persons, murder and trafficking of American Indian and Alaska Native peoples" (United States Department of the Interior 2023). This lack of consistency across the United States and Canada is just one culturally significant example of how borders figure in a cross-border crisis of femicide and gender-based violence in North America.

Indeed, my analysis begins by summarizing how scholars and international bodies concerned with gender-based violence have shown the U.S.-Mexico and Canada-U.S. borders are key factors in understanding how state responses to this crisis are destined (if not designed) to be ineffectual. These borders and their bordering practices have the effect of maintaining the structural obstacles to addressing femicide, even while the Canadian, Mexican, and United States governments formed in 2016 the Trilateral Working Group on Violence against Indigenous Women and Girls, with the aim of addressing the crisis. At the same time, I argue that these borders have been harnessed – as well as undermined – by journalists, artists, and activists' acts and tactics of resistance to femicide in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. The chapter then shows how "new" media can be read in a longer communications and sonic history that has political participation and community building at its heart, before focusing on how new media and podcasting in particular amplify and participate in activism by literally telling the individual stories of victims of violence and femicide.

My discussion, therefore, intersects North American Cultural Studies, Border Studies, Women's Studies, Indigenous Studies, Sound Studies, and New Media Studies. Its inter- and cross-disciplinary scope offers a way to consider how contemporary communications technologies have been mobilized by journalists and activists alike to better tell and amplify individual and community stories. These stories are heard by podcast listeners who are "less rooted in material communities, regions, and countries" (Spinelli and Dann 2019: 7), and even while there may be skepticism around podcasting's distinctiveness as a medium (Bottomley 2015: 167), I argue that its cross-border potential lies in its narrative malleability. *Forgotten* and *Missing & Murdered* were selected to demonstrate this potential because of their multiple narrative framings as professional journalism, as activist, and as explicitly engaged with histories and structures of gender-based violence. They can thus be read – or perhaps more appropriately, critically listened to – as engaging with storytelling modes that reject the official state narratives surrounding gender-based violence in Canada, Mexico, and the United States. Such official narratives, which deflect from national state responsibility to address the entrenched structures of misogyny and racism, enable gender-based violence to continue across North American borders without hindrance. These podcasts focus on local narrative modes to overturn the official stories of femicide, replacing them with site-specific stories and narratives that foreground individual victims and community calls for justice.

Femicide, Feminicidio, and the Blurry Borders of Terminology

As this chapter moves to consider some key terms in studies of gender-based violence in Canada, the United States, and Mexico, it is important to avoid simply drawing decontextualized connections between (the many) crimes of femicide. It is easy (and correct) to conclude that all femicides are rooted in ongoing practices of what bell hooks rightly described as systems of "imperialist white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy" (2004: 17). But to stop there would constitute – to return to Small-Rodriguez's comments that opened this chapter – a denial of the rich, complex, agentic, and beloved individual lives of the women and girls who fell victim to these same destructive systems, as well as contributing to the obviation of individual and systemic responsibility for their deaths. Therefore, even while I spotlight the cross-border resonances of these crimes, I also attend to the figurative bordering practices that enable this denial. Paying attention to terminology, I argue, helps to resist reducing victims of femicide to one narrative (as always-already femicide victims) and their decontextualization (their names and stories are blurred together as generic data).

Similar bordering practices also figure when we consider the terminology around key concepts in this particular variety of gender-based violence. The World Health Organization defines femicide as "generally understood to involve intentional murder of women because they are women" (WHO 2012). Other definitions, such as in the United Nations' 2016 *Report of the Special Rapporteur on violence against women* treat femicide as "the gender-related killing of women" (3). These definitions are deliberately framed as broadly as possible in order, first, to be able to traverse national and political border constructs, and second, to ensure that they have the capacity to capture the wide range of activities and actions that might fall into the category of femicide, from intimate partner violence to the activities of a serial killer. Organizations behind such definitions thereby hope they can be usefully and effectively applied to different national and sociocultural contexts to produce meaningful ways of addressing such crimes. But, as Sylvia Walby writes, there is a "tension between universalism and particularism in the pursuit of development and justice" (2023: 11) and these universal definitions, while welcome and meaningful in that they may help to set high-level political agendas, may sometimes be too broad and vague to be measurable or actually useful on the ground. On the other hand, some scholars prefer location- or context-specific particularistic framings of femicide, such as MMIW (a fuller acronym is MMIWG2S to explicitly include girls and two-spirit people), which has itself become a shorthand for the specific femicide and feminicide of Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirit folk across the United States and Canada. But this same framing (MMIW) is not easily transferable to the Mexican context, where Indigenous identities are differently complex and hold a different position in the history of Mexican state-building and sometimes coercive national identity formation (see for example Vasconcelos [1925]1979; Anzaldúa 1987; Toner 2015).

These terminological distinctions are urgent, because, as Irene Mata puts it, "the ways in which we describe the murders becomes vital in making the conditions under which they are occurring visible" (2011: 95). But femicides do not stop while scholars and policy-makers debate the words to describe them, so for the purposes of this chapter, I use two terms when referring to the murders of women (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) across these three national contexts. These terms are femicide and feminicide, and together they make for a useful frame to ensure that both the universal and particular are taken into account in my discussion. Where femicide as defined above is used more frequently in scholarship, as well as in the podcasts under discussion in this chapter, *feminicide*, on the other hand, is a now-common neologism that acknowledges the structural factors that enable gender-based violence in the first place. It is a translation of the Spanish word *feminicidio*, a term that itself was translated and adapted from the English word "femicide."

The use of feminicide is preferred by feminist scholars Rosa-Linda Fregoso and Cynthia Bejarano because it offers an Americas-based context-specific term that is able to account not only for the murder of women because they are women, but for murders of women in which state institutions are complicit due to either inaction in solving the crimes, involvement, or, as can be the case, both (2010: 5; see also Stephen, this volume). For example, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in 2009 found Mexico had violated the human rights of missing and murdered women and girls in Juárez, and that this violation was part of a broader context of an institutional failure to prevent harm to women and girls (González et al ("Cotton Field") versus Mexico 2009). This is borne out in *Forgotten*, where Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe interview an expert who witnessed "evidence that the handling of the femicide cases was not in accordance with accepted police procedures, and the assumption is, it is either gross incompetence on the part of the police officials, or it is deliberate" (2020a). In Canada, the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls described the "appalling apathy to addressing the issue" as "amount[ing] to genocide" (2019: 4); in the United States, the Bureau of Indian Affairs admits to significant gaps in reporting data of missing Indigenous women and girls citing 5,712 reports but only 116 cases formally logged in 2016 (United States Department of the Interior Indian Affairs n.d.). These examples of state inaction are evidence of the potency of the term feminicide. Accordingly, using femicide and feminicide together provides a generative approach to examining how the narratives of *Forgotten* and *Missing & Murdered* are framed to advance justice-driven agendas and to maximize audience engagement with these stories.

Reporters and Listeners: Communities across Borders

Much has been written on the development of podcasting as a (relatively) new iteration of computer-mediated communication, and as it began to establish itself as a form of communication technology, podcasting was often cast as a remediation of radio, described by radio scholar Richard Berry in 2006 (two years after its "emergence" in 2004) as a highly "radiogenic" (153) medium that had the potential to disrupt extant communications practices (see also Garcia-Marin 2000; Bonini 2015; Bottomley 2015; Berry 2016; McHugh 2016). *Forgotten* and *Missing & Murdered* build on the successful format popularized by Sarah Koenig's record-breaking true crime podcast *Serial*, which transformed the landscape of podcasting upon its release on NPR in 2014 (Rosenberg 2014). Koenig was, however, criticized for having centered herself in the narrative, acting as a "cultural tourist," and her investigation was described as bearing all the hallmarks of "white reporter privilege" (Kang 2014). By contrast the journalists hosting *Missing & Murdered* and *Forgotten* are eager to ensure that they are working as collaboratively as possible alongside and with the communities whose stories are being told in the podcast, and the flexibility of the format makes it even easier to collaborate with the voices from the community, rather than appropriate them. Walker notes that "I think that the truth is that a lot of reporting about Indigenous people has been done by non-Indigenous people," and she is eager to avoid this extractive practice (quoted in Johnson 2021).

Likewise, in *Forgotten*, Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe are conscious that their subject matter demands that they engage with their more privileged positions as reporters. And indeed, their primary objective is to disprove the title of their podcast to ensure that the lives and stories of the murdered women are not, in fact, forgotten, and like Walker, Ortiz Uribe is a member of the community on which she is reporting. As their investigation becomes increasingly complex and they begin to grapple with the difficult reality that accountability for the murders may not be possible, Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe maintain "the importance of bearing witness, of making the invisible

visible" (2020c) to their listener community, even when the invisible may be their own positionality as journalists and podcast hosts.

It is important to remember that podcast listeners are just one iteration of a long history of modern media consumers, even while they form a unique community. In 1962 Canadian philosopher and communication theorist Marshall McLuhan declared that "electromagnetic discoveries have recreated the simultaneous 'field' in all human affairs so that the human family now exists under conditions of a 'global village'" (31). Where McLuhan's "global village" referred to developments like the telephone, radio, and television, communication technologies as early as the printing press have long been understood as having the ability to create, as political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson famously put it, an "imagined community." Indeed, for Anderson, newspapers "created an imagined community among a specific assemblage of fellow-readers" ([1983]2006): 62). The telegraph, telephone, broadcast radio, and more recent "new media" are often considered to be newspapers' natural allies in unifying a North American body politic. The telegraph, for example, was described in terms of its ability to "[create] a national body" (Gilmore 2002: 809) in the United States, and touted for its "ability to dismantle racial boundaries" (818); as Richard Menke notes, U.S. President James A. Garfield, shortly before his death in 1881, "affirmed the new power of communication to unify a nation so recently riven by civil war" (2005: 642); and as Michele Hilmes explains, across North America, radio offered "the shared simultaneity of experience crucial to Benedict Anderson's concept of the modern 'imagined community' of nationhood" (2012: 351).

This sense of an imagined community took on different significance in 2012 when the so-called "Second Age" of podcasting is understood to have begun, and with it came a *general* consensus on its potential as "an emancipating cultural practice" (Spinelli and Dann 2019: 8) because of what was seen as its democratizing capacity: anyone with access to the simple recording and uploading apparatus could create "evergreen" podcast content (Bonini 2015: 23; Spinelli and Dann 2019: 7) – content which, in theory, could last forever. In the case of podcasting, the emancipatory potential can be found in the medium's reliance on narrative storytelling, and its capacity to design or interpellate a community of listeners through the shared, intimate third space of the podcast experience. Podcasts are designed to be listened to on-demand, anywhere, using now-commonplace equipment, creating a space where podcasters and listeners coproduce the listening experience. Because of this, R. Stuart Geiger and Airi Lampinen state that as a medium, the podcast can "act as a distinctive site of intimacy that […] invites audiences to interact with artists, thus potentially lessening the distance between the two" (2014: 338–339). Indeed, media scholars Martin Spinelli and Lance Dann describe podcasting as offering a "more regular and more obvious unveiling of the story-making process and apparatus" (2019: 29), one that makes space for listener participation because "there is something about the form, the mode of address, the manner of distribution, and the topics covered that successfully recreates listening as an active and involved experience" (45). The act of listening is therefore transformed: podcasts have the potential to reshape listening from passive activity to engaged activism.

Stories across Borders: Victims, Their Families, and Listeners

Listeners of *Forgotten* and *Finding Cleo* play important roles in the circulation of information and stories about feminicides. These stories are revealed using narrative modes that prioritize and center the voices of victims and their families, allowing listeners access to information dismissed by official narratives and authorities, and revealing how feminicides are both contingent on and perpetuated by national bordering practices.

In *Forgotten*, the stories told by Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe are not simply those of missing and murdered persons but also about missing perpetrators, and much of the podcast's ten substantive episodes are given over to examining potential culprits and the broader systemic factors that have enabled them to murder women with impunity since at least the early 1990s. To do this, Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe interview former FBI field officers, coroners, academics, other journalists, and most importantly, the surviving family members of the murdered women to ensure that listeners hear not only about the broader contextual factors that set the stage for, maintain, and benefit from gender-based violence, but also so that listeners can learn about the women and girls themselves. Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe consistently return to speak to the families of victims, many of whom have turned to activism and formed collective associations in protest of the feminicides. Listeners are introduced to Paola Flores, the mother of Sagrario González Flores, a young woman who in 1998 didn't come home from her job at CAPCON maquiladora. In translated audio overlaid on the voice and testimony of Flores herself, listeners are told of her search for her daughter: "that very night we began searching at the Red Cross and the hospitals, on the street searching for her. And that night, I grabbed all the photos I had of my daughter. I would pass them out at gas stations saying, I'm looking for my daughter. Can you please help me find her?" (2020b). Sagrario's body was found two weeks later in the desert. The difficulties her mother faced in getting justice for her daughter led her to create Voces Sin Eco, an activist group that sought justice for missing and murdered women in and beyond Juárez.

Part of Flores' activism involves her painting and repainting black crosses on a pink background in public spaces around Juárez. These serve as both living memorials of victims and as warnings to women. The podcast hosts confirm that "Those crosses are now unmissable, painted on lampposts all over Juárez. They are themselves an echo of the missing women that reverberates around the city" (Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe 2020c). For Flores, sharing Sagrario's story is a matter of urgency: "Every time I share my daughter's story, I feel that she lives on" (qtd in Driver 2016: 46), "The day I shut up I will turn into an accomplice" (qtd in Paterson 2015). In this way, *Forgotten* provides a platform for Flores to continue to circulate the story of Sagrario's life and death and also frames listeners as accomplices if they do not participate. This mode of storytelling, as it seeks to "name oppression and to arrest its actions whether as genocide, racism, classism, xenophobia, or any other type of institutionalized marginalization" is a practice called *testimonio* (Reyes and Rodríguez 2012: 527). According to George Yúdice, in the case of testimonios, "The speaker does not speak for or represent a community but rather performs an act of identity-formation which is simultaneously personal and collective" (1991: 15). Podcasts like *Forgotten* signify a holding of space for the *testimonios* that tell the stories of women like Sagrario González Flores.

If podcasting has the capacity to allow this knowledge to be (voluntarily and intentionally) shared beyond local communities, it also offers an agentic space in which, in the case of *Missing & Murdered*, the stories of Indigenous women and girls can be told without the narrative being reduced to a sensationalist damage-centered headline (Tuck 2009). Where the approach in *Forgotten* is to offer accounts of the lives of multiple feminicide victims in search of answers about their murders, each of the two seasons of Walker's *Missing & Murdered* is focused on telling the story of one Indigenous woman or girl and their case. Walker's approach allows her to explore the life of Cleopatra Semaganis to allow – as far as possible – for listeners to gain a rounded view of not only the teenager, but also the impact and legacy of her death on the families who survived her: as Walker puts it in the episode, the podcast is concerned "Not just about the crimes or the violence, but who [the women] were, how they lived, how much they are loved, and the impact their death or disappearance still has on their communities, and their families, even decades later" (Walker 2016).

Across the podcast Walker occupies a hybrid position: because her investigations entail spending a lot of time with families and communities, Walker is both a journalist investigating and reporting on an MMIWG case as well as a participant and actor in the story she is telling. This deep involvement is consistent with Walker's own stated motivations: "It's the reason I became a journalist, and for the last two years I've been focussed on helping to tell stories of missing or murdered Indigenous women and girls" (2016). At times, Walker reflects on just how similar her experiences are to those of the people she interviews. For example, Walker meets Cleopatra Semaganis' sister, Christine Cameron, who like the rest of her siblings, was removed from her mother's care as part of the Adopt Indian Métis (AIM) program and adopted by a non-Indigenous family. During this first recorded meeting, Cameron notes that she was the only Indigenous child in her community. Immediately after this disclosure from Cameron, Walker comments in a voiceover that "So much of Christine's story resonates with me, because I also grew up a brown girl that stood out among the white students in a small town in rural Saskatchewan" (2018a).

Walker's engaged and empathetic response has two effects: the first is didactic and emphasizes to listeners – perhaps listeners who are unaware of the sheer reach of the Sixties Scoop – that Cameron's (and Cleopatra's) story is not a fluke but part of a broader, intergenerational history that has explicit cross-border implications, not least because Cleopatra was adopted by a family in the United States. The second effect is one of listener community formation: Walker's recognition of also not belonging will resonate with listeners, who may feel that they have been given permission to sympathize and connect with Cameron (and with Walker). Later in the episode, Cameron and Walker allow the audience to listen in on Cameron's phone call with Saskatchewan Social Services, and listeners hear Cameron's emotional response when Kari, the call handler, says that she cannot disclose key information about Cleopatra's file because of privacy laws:

> Oh, well it would be nice to have some sort of information, you know, as a sibling. You know, it's been 40 years. […] And for 20 years you've told me nothing. […] This is my sister. Her body's in the States, you know.

Cameron then makes a direct appeal to Kari, which also serves as a direct appeal to listeners: "Do you have a sister? [..] maybe think about how I feel and really try your best" (2018a).

Walker's work has consistently returned to the issue of MMIWG, an issue that resonates with her personally, and one that is linked to justice for victims and their families. As she puts it,

> Much of my work over the last few years focuses on unsolved cases of missing or murdered Indigenous women and girls. And in our interviews, almost always, families talk about wanting closure. About how important it is to know the truth about how the wondering and unanswered questions lead to a sense of injustice.
>
> (2018b)

It is significant that Walker's investigations must reach across the Canada-U.S. border to be effective. This emphasizes that the missing person cases and deaths of Indigenous women and girls must be understood in cross-border terms rather than only through specific national contexts. Indeed, Walker writes that her podcasts offer "a way into helping to understand the bigger story about what it means to be an Indigenous person today in Canada or the United States" (qtd in Johnson 2021). The bigger story to which Walker refers is of course the settler-colonial character and history of Canada and the United States (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014; Battell Lowman and Barker 2015),

which has created and maintained the broader systemic structures that make Indigenous women disproportionately likely to be victims of sexual and other violence in their lifetimes (Deer 2015).

In the case of Cleopatra, the violence of being a child separated from her family and community led to her death. The podcast reveals that Cleopatra was adopted by a family in New Jersey and was given the name Cleopatra Madonia. Walker and her team find Cleopatra's gravestone and learn that she died by suicide, aged 13. After an emotional, complex, and drawn-out cross-border bureaucratic process, Walker and Cameron gain access to Cleopatra's belongings, which were still held in storage with authorities in the United States. From Cleopatra's letters, which are revealed partly through voiceovers by Cameron, and partially through the use of an actor, listeners learn that Cleopatra was a vital young teenager, but that she yearned to return home to her family, and she was involved with a 21-year-old man who exploited her. Walker tells listeners this man "told Cleo he knew where she was from. That he had been to North Battleford before. I can imagine for a girl who had already tried to run away back to Saskatchewan, the idea that Barry had a truck and knew where she was from was exciting to Cleo" (2018c). The podcast ends with Cameron's words, foregrounding Cleopatra's life and her agency and directly linking her death to the Sixties Scoop:

> I found my sister's resting place and brought her a gift. My sister was not murdered. She took her own life. She knew where she lived and who loved her. I got to meet her friends, read letters she wrote, pictures she drew, and she came to life at all she left behind. She was a very intelligent young woman who made a choice in a life of no choices. One quote from her I will always remember is, "The government had no right to do this." Across time, at the age of 13, she knew this. She could not reconcile the anguish of being separated from her siblings, including me who was just a baby when we were stolen from our entire family on the Little Pine-Poundmaker reserve. Native American children should be raised by their own people in their own communities. It was the ultimate act of assimilation for us to be part of the Sixties Scoop. It was one of the most horrific social experiments in Canadian history. The government had no right to do this. We will no longer be silent.
>
> (qtd in Walker 2018c)

As they reveal failures of systems and institutions, the podcasts are unequivocal about the structures (and at times the individuals) responsible for the ongoing feminicides. *Forgotten* begins its second episode by examining the case of Lilia Alejandra Garcia Andrade, who on 14 February 2001, never returned from work. The podcast frames her story as what journalist Diana Washington Valdez, a frequent guest on the podcast and an expert on the feminicides in Juárez, calls a "model of these kinds of cases" because Lilia's story showed that the victims of the Juárez murders were not randomly selected, but "there was something organized taking place" (qtd in Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe 2020b). To tell listeners about Lilia's story, the commentary moves rapidly between the two hosts and Washington Valdez, creating an atmosphere of urgency and suspense. Lilia's case was different because, as Woloshyn explains, "Previously every victim had disappeared seemingly into thin air, but witnesses had seen Lilia Alejandra struggling in a car a few days after she was abducted" (Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe 2020b). Washington Valdez provides further detail: "She is seen in a car later in the neighborhood by witnesses, struggling" (qtd in Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe 2020b). Ortiz Uribe notes that on 19 February 2001, "Juárez dispatchers receive several emergency calls. Witnesses report a woman, struggling in a white Ford Thunderbird." All three express incredulity that authorities did not attend the scene for several hours, and by that time the car had gone, so they left. The commentary returns to Washington Valdez, who explains that "the witnesses are concerned that if police had shown up sooner then perhaps they could have

saved Lilia." Ortiz Uribe confirms that "despite the multiple calls, the entry in the logbook for the night is 'nothing to report'" and Woloshyn is excoriating about "the police's inexplicable failure to respond to the emergency calls" (Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe 2020b). Woloshyn, Ortiz Uribe, and Washington Valdez's outrage is, of course, justified, but it also serves as a signal to listeners to share in that response.

The stories of Sagrario González Flores, Lilia Alejandra Garcia Andrade, and Cleopatra Nicotine Semaganis may emerge from different contexts, times, and geographies, but they provide listeners with real-life figures to cleave to, and expose listeners to the ways in which local and national authorities have a history of neglecting women and girls. In Canada, the National Inquiry concludes that

> the common thread weaving these statistics together is the fact that violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people is not an individual problem, or an issue only for certain communities. This violence is rooted in systemic factors, like economic, social, and political marginalization, as well as racism, discrimination, and misogyny, woven into the fabric of Canadian society.
>
> (2019: 56)

The systemic roots of feminicide in Canada find a parallel in Mexico: it is a matter of common knowledge that the feminicides are closely linked to the proliferation of maquiladoras. In an episode devoted entirely to examining the role of the maquiladoras in the femicides, Ortiz Uribe explains, "In the beginning, the Juárez femicides were known as the maquiladora murders because so many of the murdered women worked in the factories. Women were actively recruited because of these sexist stereotypes like they are more docile and nimble-fingered" (Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe 2020b). These stereotypes underpin official narratives of the femicides, which tend to blame victims for their own murders, as when the spokesperson for the maquila association, Roberto Urrea Loreto, asked "Where were these young ladies where they were seen last? Were they partying? Where they on a dark street?" (qtd in Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe 2020b). But Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe do not participate in these narratives, instead enquiring after the broader structures and patterns to understand the cross-border connections of the feminicides. As Ed Vuillamy asserts on the podcast, "there is a direct line from that atrocity right up to the boardrooms of Wall Street" (qtd in Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe 2020c), leading Woloshyn to conclude that while "the femicides can appear as a self-contained tragedy […] from a vantage point, up on high, it becomes clear how [Juárez's] position in relation to the US, creates the conditions for its violence" (Woloshyn and Ortiz Uribe 2020c).

These podcasts, then, offer compelling arguments for how borders figure in ongoing cross-border femicides and feminicides, and as they tell engaging stories of women and girls, provide listeners with information and narratives that center voices calling for justice. Tracey Lindberg (Cree and Métis), Priscilla Campeau (Cree and Métis), and Maria Campbell (Métis), in their examination of sexual assault of Indigenous women in Canada, acknowledge that "Talking […] provides us with possibility. The possibility of seeing our struggle mirrored in other women. […] There is a possibility of hope" (2012: 87). Their comments illuminate the generative power of talking as it connects victims and listeners across national borders and individual experiences. This method of making meaning constitutes the most basic characteristic of a podcast: narrative storytelling.

The stories told in *Forgotten: Women of Juárez* and *Missing & Murdered: Finding Cleo* are told using methods that resist the official narratives that would relegate women and girls like Sagrario Flores, Lilia Alejandra Andrade, and Cleopatra Nicotine Semaganis to anonymous,

decontextualized data points, singularly responsible for their own deaths. In the absence of formal accountability, these podcasts hold listeners responsible for making space for and knowing the real stories of these women and girls, and in so doing, forge intimate and participatory listener communities whose self-identification as listeners resists national bordering practices. As I have demonstrated in this cross-cultural study, because the reach of podcasts is not delimited by national borders, they occupy borderless spaces where the structures that lead to femicide and feminicide can be exposed, decried, and dismantled.

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