

The Editor's Cut - Episode 051 - Interview with Kim French

Kim French:

It was a very similar type of person that was applying to the roles. And then to be told that oh, we'll just hire the best person for the job was really frustrating because I was always like, well, we don't even have a starting point that is diverse enough. The likelihood is that we're going to hire a white guy because that's who's applying. And I thought, hang on a minute.

Sarah Taylor:

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Hello, and welcome to The Editor's Cut. I'm your host, Sarah Taylor. We would like to point out that the lands on which we have created this podcast, and that many of you may be listening to us from, are part of ancestral territory. It is important for all of us to deeply acknowledge that we are on ancestral territory that has long served as a place where Indigenous peoples have lived, met and interacted. We honor, respect and recognize these nations that have never relinquished their rights or sovereign authority over the lands and waters on which we stand today. We encourage you to reflect on the history of the land, the rich culture, the many contributions, and the concerns that impact Indigenous individuals and communities. Land acknowledgements are the start to a deeper action.

Sarah Taylor:

Today I sit down with Kim French, the creator of Edit Girls. Edit Girls is a collection of career stories from women working in post-production. It began its life as an Instagram page, @EditGirlsInsta, which was founded by Kim French and kept going through the support of Mathew White, and now has a home on its webpage, EditGirls.org. Edit Girls was born out of the frustration at a lack of seeing these stories being told, when Kim knew they were out there. She started her career as an editor back in 2006, and would have loved to have had this kind of insight into how other women started their journeys as editors, visual effects artist, colorists, and sound engineers. Kim started reaching out to editors she knew to share their stories, but it didn't take long for women to start approaching her, wanting to share how they started their careers and give insight into their working life. It quickly became clear that this was a much-needed space, and the response has been so heartwarming.

Kim and I discuss her career journey, and how platforms like Edit Girls are much needed in our society and industry.

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Sarah Taylor:

Well, Kim, thank you so much for joining us on The Editor's Cut.

Kim French:

You're welcome. I'm very excited to be here.

Sarah Taylor:

As you all know, Kim French is the person behind Edit Girls, which is originally an Instagram account, and a website profiling women in editing and post-production. You do some colorists, and-

Kim French:

Yeah, that's right. Colorists are featured, visual effects artists and post-producers as well. Majority, editors.

Sarah Taylor:

Before we dive into the Edit Girls and the process of how that started, I want to know a little bit about yourself. Where you're from, and I'm assuming that you were an editor at some point in your life. Give us a little Coles Notes of how you got to where you are now.

Kim French:

I'm from the UK, as you can probably guess. But I do have a connection to Canada, which is quite nice. When you asked me to be part of this, I was like, yeah, Canada. My career in editing started in Toronto in 2006. I'd moved over there. Basically, I'll go back a tiny bit more. I studied television production, and within that you end up doing lots of different roles, like you direct something, you produce something, you do camera and you do editing. Kind of had a broad view of all the different aspects of TV, but I didn't really hone in on editing there. But when I moved to Canada, which was to, at the time, follow a boyfriend, although I ended up staying and he ended up moving to New York. And that's a whole other story. But I was always very kind of ... Yeah. Just grateful, I guess, for that introduction to Canada because Toronto is like a second home.

Sarah Taylor:

Oh, great.

Kim French:

So, I did one of those ... You know the five-day documentary challenges? Or they do 48-hour film challenges.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah.

Kim French:

I ended up getting involved in one of those because at the time, I was doing lots of sound recording. I was booming on set, and I'd had documentary experience. I was doing student films. I've got a ton of friends who went to Ryerson. Ended up meeting lots of people through that.

Anyway, I did the five-day documentary challenge. I was booming. It was me and two other filmmakers, Alex and Eric. And I was able to edit that. I said oh, I'd really love to edit this five-minute doc. I learnt loads from the director, Alex. And it was, I didn't realize at the time, but my key, pivotal moment into editing.

Sarah Taylor:

Amazing.

Kim French:

Yeah. It was really like, special. I look back on it and the film. I would say, you know considering it is, gosh, 17 years old ... umm, no, 15. It just still really holds up, and I'm really proud of it as a piece of work. It was about a female boxer. It was following her story. We found her within the five days, we created and filmed it within the five days. Yeah. Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

And you cut it within the five days?

Kim French:

Yeah. Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

Nice.

Kim French:

And then obviously, loads of Red Bull and coffee, and you know doing that last stint of the last night. But we did it. You had to film at the end the newspaper, so that they knew that you'd sort of filmed it and done it within the time. So, I had this film. I had, I guess, the beginnings of my portfolio from that. And I ended up doing an interview which at the time, I thought was for a ... Like a job interview. I thought was for more production side of things. Very random, how it came about. But it was actually an assistant editor position. And because I had this film, I was able to show that, and they could see from that that I had that sort of raw, I guess, talent for being able to edit.

And going back, actually, the film won an award for best editing at Hot Docs. At the time, it was I think a particular part of Hot Docs that was more about this particular festival. It's not like headliners, or anything. But yeah, it was like a special little moment in time. And I got my first assisting job from it.

Sarah Taylor:

That's amazing.

Kim French:

Yeah. Yeah. And then from there, the rest is history. I was an editor for, well, an assistant to an incredible editor. If I name drop people. A guy called Dave DiCarlo, who I learnt, yeah, a huge amount from. I've worked with lots of amazing directors. There was all the commercial world, so not like TV and film which ... Again, obviously there's lots of overlap, but they're very different worlds, really, aren't they?

Sarah Taylor:

Totally, yeah.

Kim French:

It was the commercial world that I started in and was most familiar with. And then I got very, very homesick. I was editing there and I was part of a few different post houses, and after about four years I was extremely homesick. And you know it all came to a bit of a crunch, and I just decided to go back. That was 2010. And then I got a job editing at the company I still work at now, but I'm no longer an editor. I started editing there, and then I grew as the company grew. Like as in, grew into a different role. Because I think I was more drawn to, certainly at the time, the producing side of things. And then ultimately where I am is actually in the marketing and sales side of things. So, yeah. I haven't really cut anything for a long time. But I've done a few things in my spare time, but yeah. In terms of making a living out of doing it, it's been a while.

Sarah Taylor:

Being a commercial editor probably really did impact ... Well, obviously got you the job in the company you're at now. And that experience really led to where you are now. And obviously, that was a big interest for you, which is exciting. And I'm assuming because you are an editor, when you're working with different teams you know how to speak the language. I'm sure it makes things so much easier for everybody in the process of creating something. That must be an added value.

Kim French:

Yeah, completely. I mean, I think when you ask someone to do something of any sort of aspect of filmmaking, having even just the slightest experience in it is so important because you just know what you're asking. You know how much time it's going to take. You don't take advantage of people. I'm working on stuff at the moment where I need to make showreels and bits of marketing content, and I'm asking a lot from an editor. But I'm able to quickly get the flex, help them with the music, all of those kinds of things. Yeah. It helps, definitely.

Sarah Taylor:

That's fantastic. And what's the company that you're working for right now?

Kim French:

We're called Preen. That's P-R-E-E-N, for November. It's one of those ones that kind of sounds like an M sometimes, but yeah. Preen. We were originally called Cherryduck, which is a really funny name. But for years, nearly a decade, it was Cherryduck, and then we rebranded at the end of last year for a bunch of reasons. But we're a very different company now. You kind of grew from shooting behind-the-scenes videos, to be honest, and stuff for publishers, and then brands wanted to get in on it. And now we predominantly work direct with brands, or larger agencies.

Sarah Taylor:

Was there one job you got that made you be like, I am a real editor.

Kim French:

Yeah, so... I mean like I said, I was assisting. And I was given the opportunity through a series of events to work with ... I think it was 11 or 12 animators on a music video for R.E.M. They would create individual ... It was like a minefield, but it was so much fun. It was a song called Man-Sized Wreath, which is from one of their more ... I guess, yeah, 2006 sort of album. And each animator had a little section of the track,

and then they would create something in their own style, so it wasn't just one style all the way through. And it was quite like trippy, in many ways. But that was the time where I was like, okay. Yeah. I'm really doing this, in that sort of sense. Because obviously, it's a big name. But also because it was about working out what the story was with all these different parts.

And I ended up doing, from that point, more commercial work that had a lot of green screen and visual effects and cutting things for animation, which meant I was just given sketches of a storyboard and I had to cut things out and paste things. And it was very, I ended up having to be really, really tactile with editing not just from shot to shot, but within the shot itself. And I remember a piece of advice about, you're not just cutting from shot to shot. You're cutting within the shot. What can you manipulate and chain? And I was like, oh wow. So, yeah. So, yeah. I guess that was the moment that my career really took off within that particular time, and I was able to work on some great music videos, and some great commercials with some brilliant directors.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. It's really interesting that you mentioned the cutting within the shot, because I don't know how long ago it was, but I remember watching something ... I think it was Mindhunter. There was a behind the scenes of Mindhunter, and it's very common where they deliberately shoot this way but where they will take the actor that ... Take three, that was on the left side of the screen, and then put it with take five of the other actor. And I remember watching, like, oh my God. I could totally do that. It just expanded all the things that you can do and where your creativity can go in making it the best thing it can be.

Kim French:

Yeah, completely. And it's funny, I think again within EditCon they were talking about it, and I'm trying to remember who said it. But there was a scene ... There's a series called Black-ish. Is it Black-ish? Or Black as fuck. BlackAF.

Sarah Taylor:

You can say that, yeah.

Kim French:

We'll just say BlackAF. Yeah. One of the editors of BlackAF was talking about how she was cutting these scene with the mobile phones, and reactions on a FaceTime, you know a FaceTime call. And how they all did that individually, but then she could manipulate the timing between them all. And I was just like, that is a perfect example of editing within the screen, and the power you have as an editor to be able to manipulate, yeah, the pacing and ultimately what the audience feels about it. And I love that.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. And the comedy in that case. What she chose to do with the reaction. It makes the laugh, right? Yeah. We have so much ... Editors have so much power.

Kim French:

Yeah. They really do.

Sarah Taylor:

Did you notice a huge difference when you were coming from Canada with your beginning career as an editor in Canada, then moving back home? Did you see...Was it an easy transition to have the skills that you learnt in Canada and how Canada operates in that world as it is in the UK?

Kim French:

It's a really good question. I remember when I was assisting, I was also helping directors pull together new films and helping them with their creative treatment. And they were always like, oh, bring some of the English. They were just obsessed with British advertising. And well, the reality was I hadn't really worked in British advertising. Toronto was my first experience. I was like, okay. I'll help you make it feel a bit more British. That was the golden, the gold standard for them, anyway, at the time. Although to be honest with you, Canadian advertising and the incredible talent that comes out of Canada you know is something that I think globally the commercial world can really learn a lot from. But I was also on the cusp of film to digital, so I only had a few times where I was running film from you know the grade to the sound, and like obviously all of these buildings were really close together, so all of that was possible. And then instantly was like, okay. Well, we're final cut now and we're going to be doing like digitally, and the footage isn't going to be shot on film any more. It was this cusp of time.

And then when I came to England, four years later, I moved into a really different world. And I found that I was able to apply a lot of the skills that I'd learnt in Canada from this pretty high standard of commercial world that I was in to what we now know as content, and at the time was just online video in its infancy. Yeah. I was able to transition a lot of the skills, but I couldn't give it a direct analysis of how it's different because it was just a really transitional time, I think, in the whole branded content, commercial world that no two companies were the same, in that sense. And everything was quite new.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. You're just growing with it. You're learning. You're creating that world, really.

Kim French:

Yeah, yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

That's really cool. And I love that you had a Canadian connection. When you told me like that, I was like that's so awesome. And Hot Docs, that's great, that's amazing. Now, Edit Girls. When I discovered Edit Girls, I was like, whoa, yes. This is what we need. I've missed this. And every time I'd see a post come up, I'd be like, like it, like it. And yeah, it made my heart happy, my little edit heart happy. First off, thank you for doing that. But I want to know what made you want to start Edit Girls.

Kim French:

It's so nice to hear you say that. Yeah. I think the reason I've kept it going, to be honest, is because of such amazing feedback and how I knew it was, in terms of why I started it, something that had it been around at the beginning of my career, who knows? Maybe I would have stuck it out longer in terms of editing and sound. The reality is it is very male dominated. It can be quite lonely, as a woman. There was just definitely this sense of, oh, okay ... Certainly at the time. Oh, there's one, maybe two women are part of the commercial post house of 10, 12 editors. And even though I had huge amount of support, I

don't know. The way that women are able to come together now is different. It's just different to how it used to be.

So, I mean the real trigger, to be honest, was the lack of women applying for roles at my company. Because we have a team of editors, a real great post department. Whenever we would try and expand the freelance pool or look for new assistants, it was really hard to be honest, to kind of make sure that the initial pool of talent was diverse enough. And that's not just women, obviously. It's Black women, Black men, people with different backgrounds, different socioeconomic backgrounds. It was all a very similar type of person that was applying to the role. And then to be told that oh, we'll just hire the best person for the job was really frustrating because I was always like, well, we don't even have a starting point that is diverse enough. The likelihood is that we're going to hire a white guy because that's who's applying.

And I thought, hang on a minute. I was an editor. I know these women are out there. Where are they? And it turns out, they're on Instagram. In many respects, I was able to connect. I put a few posts up, I think, saying yeah, I'm looking for female editors to share their stories. And I got ... I think one of the first was actually a colorist, a woman called Jen. And she was amazing. And oh God, somewhere in the States. And I was like, wow. She's found this, and she's resonated with it, and she wants to share her story. So, she was one of the first stories that I put up. And that was four years ago now. And I think that ... I counted it earlier. There's been 91 career stories that have been shared.

Sarah Taylor:

That's amazing.

Kim French:

Yeah. The reality is, because it's a side project you know, I go through periods of doing loads, and then I have to stop for a bit because I have a four year old daughter and I have a full-time job. Yeah. It's a lot to keep up. Even though I do have help. I have got a guy, an amazing guy. If anyone wants an assistant, he's looking for a job. Called Matthew, who's been amazing and like helps me with making the posts. But yeah, it's a lot of work to keep it going.

Sarah Taylor:

That's amazing, you being able to profile 91 women doing this work. It's so great. Something you said earlier where you were like oh, there's usually only one ... Back in the day. Or maybe still today. One or two women in a post house. And I remember in my beginning of my career, I was always the only female editor. And I held onto that. I'm like no, there can only be me. There's only room for one. And then obviously as I grew and I learnt stuff, I was like no. I need to be bringing more women into the fold. And it's just interesting how just in our society and in the patriarchy where it's like oh, there's room for an editor that's a woman, but just the one of you. Yeah. But no, it's like all of us need to be. Now I want to work in a house with all women. Anyway.

Kim French:

No, I really resonate with that. You know, I think that you're, you're right. It kind of felt like there was only space for one, so therefore it was harder to then understand that you should, and could bring up other women and promote other women without it being a bad thing for your career. Yeah. I mean, it's a whole, deep conversation, isn't it?

Sarah Taylor:

Totally, yeah.

Kim French:

To work out these things.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. It's a bit of a mind fuck, where you're like wait a minute, I don't need to think this way. But yeah, it was something that I actually had to unpack and be like, whoa. And I was, like, 22. Back in the day, I was young and didn't... I'm like, oh, I'm one of the guys. And now obviously we're all learning a lot more, and especially as of late. Which is why I feel like initiatives like this and stuff like this is so important so that young girls can see all these women in this role. And I know for myself, I'm a big ... I hire female assistants, I'll always talk to grad people in school or who are about to graduate, and try to talk up editing as the best thing. Well, I think it's the best thing. Like, yeah, be an editor. It's awesome. So, do you find women approaching you now that you've done this? And maybe not even just women in editing, but women in general approaching you to talk to you about women in the industries? Especially in ad industry, because I feel like that's not as male dominated as well.

Kim French:

I mean, I guess in terms of the response, like you said, it was just really refreshing to see it. I'd had lots of lovely messages from women saying that they've been able to connect with other women that have then allowed them to ... I've literally had messages like; "Oh, by meeting this person that you profiled I was able to contact with them, and now they're my cheerleader and it's kept me going." And I'm just like, that's amazing. I should probably keep doing this.

Sarah Taylor:

Yes. Please keep doing it.

Kim French:

Yeah, exactly. And I have to be honest, I have a few stories that I still need to share, right now. And it is very much I get a wind of energy with it where it's like, right. I remember a period of last year and to be honest, whenever anyone listens to this, last year was 2020. So, it was the hardest year. And it was this little bit of light for me, and I really was posting a lot. And it was something that ... I started the website in that time. Turns out there's a whole set of other work.

Basically, I've got these stories across Instagram. The way that it works is I share the story and it's like a carousel of the text, but then if it's on the website I then need to copy all of that text within a website. It takes time to get the stories together. Takes time to get people to answer them. Some people are amazing and do it straight away. Sometimes life gets in the way. I totally get it as well. I'll have people that I'm like, please share your story. Because I know people are going to love it, and it's like oh, I'm so busy. And that's fair enough. I think the reason that it works is because I've kept the questions the same.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, that's good.

Kim French:

So, it's just formulaic. I mean, I think with Wendy, actually, I got cheeky and I was like, I'm going to ask her a couple more questions specifically, especially as the editor of...

Sarah Taylor:

A legend.

Kim French:

Handmaid's Tale, and Queer As Folk. So, I snuck a few more questions in for Wendy. But mostly, they're five or six standard questions. Like I said, last year it gave me so much light and hope and it was just every woman. And the reality is I share, I'm a bit undecided about how to move forward with this. But I really share any woman working in post in terms of, even if she's been doing it for a year. I'm interested in all the different stages, and all the different stories. I don't want to stop that, but I think on the website you can see I've kind of tried to section it in terms of years of experience. So, it's one plus years, five plus years, 10 plus years. So, you can search for women with more experience, or maybe if you're mid-level, someone of your experience if you're searching for stuff. I have not even got a third of the stories up from Instagram on the website yet, because I'm chipping off-

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, yeah. It's a lot. Yeah. But it's out there, so that's great. How do you find these women? I know you said you found some on Instagram at the beginning, and now people are coming to you, which is awesome.

Kim French:

I need to, I think, move away from just finding them on Instagram. What's been great about Edit Con ... And I went to EditFest, which was the American cinema editors last year. Also, the amazing thing of 2020 if we're going to look at silver linings is the fact that these events became virtual. It was like, oh, wow. So normally, I don't know where they would be hosted, but I wouldn't be able to go to them. So, that's been pretty cool. And then I plugged them, basically. I've been plugging it at Girls in the chat, and then people have approached me with stories. People have nominated people, which has been really nice. I've got a ton of like messages that I need to still send questions to. But then there are specific people that I will go out and say, okay. Like Wendy, for example, and an amazing editor called Sabrina Plisco, who edited Doctor Strange. I just like going to get those special stories with women that have cut some incredible, like really well-known stuff. It's super inspiring.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, totally. It's very similar to how I like to look for people to interview for the podcast. What are they cutting?

Kim French:

Yeah, exactly. Yes.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, yeah. And how did they get there? Yeah. There's some really fantastic people out there. You've touched on this a little bit, but it gave you a lot of hope during 2020 to be able to profile these women. But how do you feel personally, creating this Instagram account/website, almost like a platform for women to feel inspired? How do you personally feel, knowing that you've done that?

Kim French:

I think, I mean, I'm super proud of it. Really, it's like a pillar in things that I've done that I think yeah, I'm really proud of that. I'd like to do more. Like I feel as though yes, the Instagram can connect people, but ... And it's not just women, right? I mean, it is for men in the industry to be working with more women, to know that they have a space that they can read their stories, and then hire them. I feel like there's way more to do, and it's connecting with people like you, and thinking about how do we profile more women in the industry to make it so that ... The reality is, it's the whole you can't be it if you don't see it, sort of thing. For younger women to know that there is absolutely a space and a career for them in this world, which I don't think in the past has necessarily been that obvious. It's been seen as something like ... Not that women can't be technical, but it's like oh, it's a tech-y, guy thing. And it's just really guys do it. And it's like, first of all, it's not about tech, right?

Sarah Taylor:

No. No.

Kim French:

It's about the storytelling, and we all know this. But do you know what, what really excites me is the fact that content bloggers ... If you want to call them influencers, whatever. There's crazy talented editors out there. I mean, you just have to look at TikTok.

Sarah Taylor:

I know. It blows my mind.

Kim French:

I know. It's like, oh my God. 16 year old me would have been all over that. At the moment, I'm kind of like, okay. I need to know about it because of my job. And I do, and TikToks great. But you see a lot of women and girls, younger women, producing phenomenal, like amazing edits. Rhythm and pace and really smart transitions, and I love it. And I think that now's the time for them to, I guess, realize that yes, TikTok's amazing, but there's so many other ways to express that talent and to make a career out of it.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. That's totally ... Because, yeah. Even maybe parents of kids who are really into TikTok would be like oh, stop doing TikTok. But yeah, you're learning a skill that you could actually translate into a career. And how cool is that? You mentioned you have a daughter. I have a five year old, and of course she sees me at it. And then there's moments where she's like, we went to this winter festival. It's an outdoor festival. And one of the films I cut was playing, which I didn't know. And I was like, oh my ... And she was like, "Mommy. Your movie on." Which is so cool. But she will take her iPad ... I have to set it to the camera. And she'll record her Barbie dolls doing whatever they're doing.

Kim French:

I love it.

Sarah Taylor:

And I think it's amazing. And I push her to do that. And so... Yeah, I think if young girls are able to see you can be creative and you can take that thing that you're doing for fun, or whatever and make it into something really ... Make it into your life, your career. And for myself, I'm all about sharing stories. That's the biggest part of editing for me, is like sharing stories that aren't heard and stuff. Anyway, I think these young girls, especially now, who grew up with phones, and the technology, they could take over the world.

Kim French:

100%. I mean, I could kind of hear it in your voice as well, and I think I feel the same with my four year old. It's like, a fine line between ... I remember growing up, my parents were like, "How can you watch that movie more than once?" I'm like, are you kidding? I just have movies on repeat. And then I analyze them. And it is like my daughter is the same. And it's kind of like no, I love that. But I get it. Sometimes, it's like oh, should they have so much screen time? Or should they be hearing this? And should they be ... Actually, okay. Of course, there is a balance. But she wants to do videos on your iPad and make things and become really natively familiar with creating things that way, like it's an art form.

And when I was 15, I was bought a video camera, which obviously at the time was like a massive brick. And I think people's phones now, and the quality of that at the time, my God. But I filmed everything. And I've got all that footage, still. I've got in cupboards here, with all these old, skiddy tapes and stuff. Yeah. Of house parties, and I would edit videos for my friends for their birthday. I would do really fun little moments with them. And that's what I see girls and women doing now with TikTok and with social. And I guess the frustrating and difficult thing is when it goes into this realm of comparison, and it's no longer a creative outlet. It's actually a really dark place, right? Well, if we can keep it creative and keep individuality, and individual stories, what it's all about, then yeah.

That whole ability now to have, in your pocket, a camera with amazing quality that you can just ... You could see something in a movie and go, oh, I want to try a horror movie, for example. And just be like, oh, let's just see a few shots and make our own, little film. And you can do it.

Sarah Taylor:

Totally, yeah. The possibilities are amazing and endless. But you're right to touch on the dark side of it, because yeah. But I guess that's what hopefully, as parents, and as people in this industry, we can shed light on that.

Kim French:

I mean, our kids will be the ones telling us you know ... I mean, it's when your four year old says oh, get off your phone, or get off your computer, mummy. You're like, okay.

Sarah Taylor:

No, I get that all the time.

Kim French:

They know more than we do, really.

Sarah Taylor:

That's it. Oh, it's terrible. No, but I had the same conversation with my husband, because I work in TV and my husband works in entertainment. And we were like, oh, this screen time thing. I'm like, but that's my life. I watch TV too. That's part of my life. And I'm happy with how it ... Yeah. It's a very fine balance I suppose, yeah.

Kim French:

It's a balancing act. But I mean at the moment, for us it's ... I don't know if she's too young, but I realized the other day that actually, apparently it is a U, but we've been watching the Labyrinth. And it's like, she's totally obsessed with it. We'll watch it two times a day at the weekend. And just like, oh my God. But she loves it. And then she brings it into her play.

Sarah Taylor:

Exactly, yeah. I think it's an interesting thing I've observed with my daughter, because we've always been like, you know movies and TV, as I said, it's part of my life. It's ingrained in who I am. We're always watching shows. And yesterday, we went for a little cake date, and then we reenacted a scene from some Pokemon movie or whatever. And then she's asking questions, like, well, why does the dad ... What does that mean? And really dissecting and analyzing the film. And I'm like, I like this. Let's keep this going.

Kim French:

That's definitely your daughter. I love that. Yeah.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. Well, you touched on this earlier when you were initially thinking about how you were trying to hire more women, and you couldn't find them. And then also people of color. And so in light of all of what's going on in the world ... Which, I think it's even more important that we talk about this and we make space so that we can have an industry that's equitable and diverse, and we're hearing voices from everyone. Have you thought about that in Edit Girls, and how you can push forward even more diversity and inclusion?

Kim French:

Yeah. I mean, on this I'm very aware that I am a white woman with a huge amount of privilege in terms of how I've been brought up, and the opportunities that I've been given. I think that fundamentally, it is about unpacking a lot of personal bias. You know, I'm not going to pretend I don't have experience in the past that maybe I would look at something in a certain way and think oh, I understand. You know, make an assumption about people, right? And think that you understand who they are and where they're coming from. But actually, until you truly get to know them, you don't. And I think that what I love is seeing so many more platforms now. It's not ...

Yes, I think Edit Girls in many respects is obviously niche because it's post-production, rather like filmmaking as a whole. But certainly in the UK, there's lots of platforms now where it's like, Black

creatives, and different talent that no longer is the excuse; "Oh, I can't find the talent." People have to ... And when I say people, I mean senior people who are responsible for the hiring, who are responsible for making the structures of employees in these companies, whether it is commercial, advertising, which is obviously the world that I'm familiar with, or TV, you know and film. To not make the excuse that they can't find the people, because the reality is, that's really the worst excuse, you know. The talent is there. There's no question. You just have to try and open up all the other doors that are being closed for so long and let them in.

And it is not just about beings at the very beginning of people's careers. It's about giving the opportunities higher up, like truly just encouraging progression in people that have been systemically oppressed within the system. And I think that until we look at it like truly, and like I said, it's a personal bias thing, and you have to be willing to make mistakes. And you know I've made mistakes. You have to be willing to learn from them, and yeah. Just appreciate that it's going to take work. But the talent is there, I guess is what I'm getting at.

And I'm very conscious of making sure that who I profile within Edit Girls, that they don't all look the same. And it will come to a point where I think, yeah, I've featured a lot of a particular type of woman. Even if it's actually within the niche of what they're working in. I want the stories to be different. I guess that's a bit of an editing role from my perspective, the order in which I share things and where they appear on the site in making sure that it feels really accessible for every type of woman looking their way through it.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, totally. Yeah. That's really great. If you had all the time in the world and resources, what would you want Edit Girls to become?

Kim French:

So, I had this conversation with my husband, actually. And I hadn't realized ... Because again, I've been doing this myself in the evenings. We'll have dinner, and then I'll sit and do an hour with Edit Girls stuff and chip away at it. And all of a sudden yesterday, he became very ... He's always been interested and supportive, but he was throwing these ideas around of what we could do with it. I was like, okay. That's a huge amount of work, but okay. I like the vision. I like the vision. But I guess the space that I'm really comfortable is putting together teams of people. So, if I was able to do it full time, like you said, I would love to be in a position where I can really ... I guess an agency, of sorts. Where it's like really understanding the individual talents of the women, and then putting them when a project comes along and someone says oh, I'm looking for talent for this ... Whatever it may be. For me to be able to go, I know the perfect person for that. So, I guess, an agency.

But then other things that could ... I guess I'm very aware of my own ... Not even limitations, but boundaries. I've had-

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. It's huge.

Kim French:

Yeah, it's huge. And it's really hard. And I'm 36, and it's like, okay. It's taken me this long to get it. And as passionate as I am about it, I almost don't want to take on the world because of my own life. I don't

know. We're talking nitty gritty here, right? But I'm just very aware of all the things that I sometimes say yes to. But if, for example ... And I actually have been approached you know5569

by people who run courses, asking for help in sourcing people that are more diverse. So, I know there's a space for training as well. There's something where we could use it as a platform for younger women wanting to get into the industry. Maybe it's about mentorship and pairing them up. I mean, I'd love that. Yeah.

And then there's the whole line around brands. I mean, I'm a brand person in marketing and I'm thinking, okay. Could there be a sponsorship level where Avid, or Final Cut, or Adobe want to get involved and say they sponsor this particular series of these stories, and then put the money back into it so that we could do more, like on the platform? Yeah. Those are some thoughts.

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah. Oh, there's so much that could be done. I'm in Alberta, in Edmonton, Canada. And we have a group that I've been mentoring called GIFT. It's Girls In Film and Television. And they focus on young women, 13 to 20, in some cases. We did a pilot where it was a week crash course in filmmaking, with high school students. And that went really well, and then they got funding to do a summer where it was like a week in different, smaller cities in Alberta. So, I got to fly to Lethbridge, which is very exciting. And then this summer, they did a feature film. And it was obviously very tricky because of COVID. So, they had a very, very small crew. It was all women. And they made this feature film that had mostly women in the film. There's a couple of male roles. And I'm cutting that film.

But to see that there's been a few of the girls who started at the very beginning in the pilot and they're already working in camera crews on actual shows. So, like these things work. And it's so cool. And those women are now in the industry, and then they could see things like Edit Girls, or they could see whatever other things are out there and be like, yeah. I can see it. And we see ourselves, and here's an example of it. And it's just by ... You know there's two women producers in Alberta that took that initiative to start this program. Seeing Edit Girls really did make me feel a lot like how GIFT is, and how if we're just showing young women at the age where they have to ... What are you going to be when you grow up? You have to decide. In high school, all of a sudden you've got to pick everything. But that that's an option, this creative role. You don't have to just be a teacher. You don't just have to be a nurse, like the typical things that women are often shown. There's way more. Anyway. That was a little tangent.

Kim French:

No, I love that. And I love the acronym as well. Is acronym the right word?

Sarah Taylor:

Yeah, I think so.

Kim French:

GIFT. Perfect.

Sarah Taylor:

GIFT, yeah.

Kim French:

But I really believe in mentorship, and the stuff that you're doing sounds like yeah, perfect. You could already see from the glimmer of these young women being interested in something to then be like, yeah, given the opportunity to get that foot in the door. So often, this whole industry is built on nepotism and that feeling of oh, my friend's niece would love, nephew or ... Yeah. Would love a job. And that's good to a degree. I get it. But it puts such a big wall up against a whole section of society that do not know someone who works in TV. Those are the ones we need to give the opportunities to, because from a selfish perspective, there's so much wasted talent, you know if you don't make it accessible to other people.

Sarah Taylor:

Totally, yeah. Yeah. Is there anything else that you're working on right now, or doing right now that you want to share?

Kim French:

Lots of going on with my company. With Preen, we've recently got a new MD, and a new business director. And bearing in mind this is a company that I've been a part of for over a decade, in its many different forms, it's actually given me, certainly, a new sort of lease of life within it. And I'm excited about the future of what we can do, and incorporating the things that I've learnt through Edit Girls in terms of how we put teams together, in terms of the kinds of ... Because we're working with brands to make branded content. And okay, it is not brain surgery and we're not saving people's lives, but there is an opportunity to put a stake in the ground in terms of like what we produce, and how that can be a positive influence on society, basically. We can do that with the people that we show on screen or behind the camera. Yeah. I guess, check Preen out. It's early days in terms of we're going for lots of social changes, but yeah.

But with Edit Girls, I guess you asked me to do this. It's also just given me that kind of focus again to go, okay. How can I do this so that I make it as consistent as possible? Because that's how you build it, right? I mean, we've got 3,400 followers now. And over the last month and a half where I've not been able to give it much attention, it still ticked over and got another 100 followers. Amazing. And really relevant people, I can see from the people that are following it that if I was able to give it that other 10% again and share even more stories, that who knows where I could go? I'm open for being open to doing things and to spreading the message and getting people's input on what they think it could be, you know.

Sarah Taylor:

Awesome. Well, if anybody wants to reach you, obviously you need to set your boundaries. But if someone wants to nominate an editor, or they're like, "Hey, I have a great story, can they reach you on Instagram?"

Kim French:

Yeah. The handle is, if I remember correctly, EditGirlsInsta. You can message me there. Obviously, sometimes when I'm not following people back I don't see it straight away, but the best thing to do is actually email my personal email, which is ... I don't know if I give it here. It's Kim, K-I-M, and then Laoni, L-A-O-N, for November, I-, French, @Gmail.com. But then maybe you can, I don't know, share it somewhere. But that's the best way to get me straight away. And I will be able to send the questions to people or to you if there's someone that wants to share their story. But yeah, definitely get in touch.

Sarah Taylor:

Awesome. Well, thank you for taking the time to chat with us today. I could talk about this kind of stuff forever.

Kim French:

Yeah, well, you're next. You're going to share your career story and we'll get you on the website ASAP.

Sarah Taylor:

Thank you so much. Yeah, thanks again for sharing. And thank you so much for doing this. I understand, I run this podcast as a volunteer. I understand you have a passion for something but you only have so much time in your life and your days, especially having a young child. So, thank you for taking the time, for doing this work. It's so, so important. And you are impacting many, many lives, so thank you so much.

Kim French:

Oh, that's great. And thank you.

Sarah Taylor:

Thanks so much for joining me today. And a big thank you goes out to Kim for taking the time to sit with me, and for creating Edit Girls. Be sure to follow Edit Girls on Instagram, @EditGirlsInsta. And check them out online, EditGirls.org. And special thanks goes to Jane MacRae and Nagham Osman. The main title sound design was created by Jane Tattersall. Additional ADR recording, by Andrea Rusch. Original music provided by Chad Blain and Soundstripe. This episode was mixed and mastered by Tony Bao.

The CCE has been supporting Indspire - an organization that provides funding and scholarships to Indigenous post secondary students. We have a permanent portal on our website at cceditors.ca or you can donate directly at indspire.ca. The CCE is taking steps to build a more equitable ecosystem within our industry and we encourage our members to participate in any way they can.

If you've enjoyed this podcast, please rate and review us on Apple Podcasts and tell your friends to tune in. 'Til next time I'm your host Sarah Taylor.

[Outtro]

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