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Genevieve Does Canada Proud On Survivor

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Genevieve Mushaluk. Courtesy: CBS.

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By John Powell – GlobalTV.com



Like those before her, Genevieve Mushaluk has continued the New Era tradition of successful and strong Canadian Survivor players. Although she may not have won the game like Maryanne Oketch or Erika Casupanan, Genevieve she had a strong fifth place showing making the jury and the finale. The lawyer from Winnipeg, Manitoba, emerged as one of the biggest threats who cleverly manipulated her way through the game but not without some regrets.

John Powell: It's great to be talking to this morning. How are you?

Genevieve Mushaluk: I'm doing well!

John Powell: Did you go on to the show with any kind of pressure built up because us us Canadians have done really well on Survivor.

Genevieve Mushaluk: (Laughs) You know what? I was unaware. I've watched the seasons but I didn't know there's a stat that I guess nine Canadians (have been on the show)? I did not know that and that would have put way more pressure on myself. I was just out there being like: 'Oh, I hope I'm just not the first one out. I'm probably going to be the first one out.' (laughs) I didn't need any more pressure but I'm glad it worked out okay in the end.

John Powell: Why do you think in particular that Canadians, notably Canadian women, do so well at Survivor?

Genevieve Mushaluk: Well, it's because all Canadians are amazing, kind brilliant people. (laughs)

John Powell: Well, that's what we want them to think.

Genevieve Mushaluk: That's the line. Canada! Canada!

Genevieve Mushaluk: I don't know. I think it's been a good group of people. I don't know if it's the 'Canada' of it all or just a string of wonderful women, which, you know, I'll put myself in that category. If I can put myself with the likes of MaryAnn, sure, and Kaleb was so charming. Give me all the Canadians! (laughs) I wish I was as good as them.



Genevieve Mushaluk and Jeff Probst. Photo: CBS.

John Powell: Last night you were really able to watch things back and you saw what Sam did. Were you surprised by his scheme of throwing you under the bus and revealing that your idol was fake?

Genevieve Mushaluk: I was shocked! I was so shocked! I did not foresee Sam turning on me, which is my own fault. I think that strong relationship clouded my judgment and I wasn't as guarded as I should be but also I had such a high opinion of his game and such a low opinion of my game. I didn't think he would feel worried about that and I thought we could still work together to maneuver the power of the idol and put it on to someone else. So, I was shocked and unprepared for it. Yeah, this is why you shouldn't make friends. (laughs)

John Powell: Were you surprised that you're able to fool people for so long with the fake idol?

Genevieve Mushaluk: Yeah, I was shocked! I would not describe myself as the type of player who would do a gimmick like a fake idol. It was woven organically into Operation: Italy. So, it worked. Sam had the idea of doing a fake idol before Operation: Italy. Just the concern with that was like : When you're on the bottom and you magically find a fake idol, why would anyone believe it? It's difficult to organically and effectively utilize that as a strategy. It was just the gift that kept on giving until my co-conspirator, Sam, told everybody it was counterfeit. Maybe there's something to it. Hey, everybody start crafting fake idols! (laughs)

John Powell: Speaking to past contestants there is always is this conflict when it comes to strategy and personal relationships. How do you blend them both?

Genevieve Mushaluk: I struggled with it so much and I still have not figured out how people do it. It's incredible! I think it takes a skill that I clearly don't have to be able to connect with people and also simultaneously reconcile the fact that it's a game and you have to hurt them. I understand that intellectually, and it's nothing personal but it feels very personal when you're out there and the Kishan response, seeing how much it hurt him, it's hard not to take on board those feelings.

I don't know how people master it. Coming in, I thought I'll have a few close people that I won't hurt and I ended up hurting someone who was one of my closest people. Then, I didn't want to have any close people and then realized I was just hurting myself by doing that. Then, I had close people and then got hurt by them and was unprepared. It's a mess! It's a mess! (laughs) It's hard but that's why I love Survivor because it's like this constant point of tension in a game where there's already many, many different like sources of tension.



Sam Phalen, Teeny Chirichillo and Genevieve Mushaluk. Photo: Robert Voets/CBS.

John Powell: You were really affected by Teeny's reaction at one point. Did it feel like you were babysitting her as an alliance member and friend?

Genevieve Mushaluk: The show displayed the low lights, the dramatic points between Teeny and I but there were so many highlights which I think added context to why that relationship was able to be sustained for so long despite a lot of betrayal and tension. Teeny is one of the people who could access my emotions and Genevieve the person because they're so emotional...Teeny is someone who their social game truly is second to none of our cast out there. It was impossible not to connect with Teeny.

John Powell: You were perceived as a big threat for the longest time. How do you think you managed to survive and survive all the way to the finale?

Genevieve Mushaluk: That is a great question. I'm not as threatening as and as scary as people think, I guess. (laughs)

John Powell: Says the lawyer. (laughs)

Genevieve Mushaluk: (laughs) That's the thing. I think in New Era people are concerned that: 'Hey, if you take a swing, you'll go home next.' That's the cadence we've seen but it's so boring to do nothing and I just get bored so easily. Also, if there are enough big threats and you stoke those fires or choose your timing right, you can make big moves and you can be labelled a big target. It will make your path harder but Survivor is hard from any angle and if you're leaning more into the under the radar path it's going to be hard for you to make your case at final three. So, pick the points you want to be hard in the game and then circumstance and luck will also have their way with you. It was so scary. I was just trying to survive.

John Powell: One of your big decisions with also carved a new path for your game is when you decided to go against Rome. Tell us a bit about what you think about Rome's gameplay, everything afterwards, and how hard it was when it went into the thinking that you know what, he's been an anchor, but I've got to get rid of him.

Genevieve Mushaluk: What nobody saw is the first night I was really sick and Rome stayed up all night with me, like consoling me, helping me. I saw a side of him that other people didn't and I was able to communicate with him in a way that other people in the tribe just didn't get to that point with him.

He was not shy about constantly looking for idols and advantages so it's great, right? It's like: 'Okay, we get along. Well, if there's power to be found you'll find it because you're looking all the time, people are then looking at you.' All these things make it great for me to work with him and give me another life in this game. When we got to merge, I think he sort of was the author of his own demise in that he just in Rome fashion wanted to play so hard like he always had been.

Even after the game, he asked me: 'Why wouldn't you just give me a heads up? I could have played my Shot in the Dark or something.'

The challenge with Rome is I just didn't trust him enough to not be chaotic in that moment and have it blow back on me like we saw Emily do that for Kaleb (on Season 45) and it worked out. I didn't trust that Rome would have that restraint and that it wouldn't blow back on me. While I really valued working with him and saw value in keeping him in the game, I couldn't take the risk of of having my head be the one on the chopping block if he wasn't on it so it had to be him.



Genevieve Mushaluk Photo: CBS.

John Powell: Is there anything that you wish the producers would have put into your edit, would have included in your journey so people could have seen it?

Genevieve Mushaluk: Oh, my God! I feel like everybody saw too much of my journey! I wish they would show less, right? (laughs)

What else? I wish they would have shown more of the highlights of the relationships I had with Sam and Teeny because both of those played really big in that they were game-shaping roles on my game and my journey out there. We've talked about some of the highlights with Teeny and there were times when the vote could have gone either way and even though Teeny is like furious at me, they're still kind of steering the vote away for me to help me.

Sam and I...I remember it so vividly and my memories of the game aren't great because it just was a haze of anxiety.

On Day 18, Sam and I are sitting in the hammocks, and I go: 'Sam, Day 18. Can we start talking game now? Is it too late?' He was like: 'Yeah, let's talk.'

From then on it was the most honest conversation I've had. He told me everything. It was the first time anyone had that type of interaction with me and from then on I was sold on Team Sam. This guy is incredible to work with and so much brainstorming, like before Operation:Italy, the ideas he had, I wish they would have showed a bit more of that too and both of those relationships but it's not the Genevieve Best Friend Story and if it was really short, because I only had two friends. (laughs)

John Powell: Would you ever come back and play again and if so what did you learn from the first time you played?

Genevieve Mushaluk: Oh, my gosh! Well, I will say playing the game is difficult but it's easier than watching it back. I don't like watching myself on TV or watching it back and I get a lot of anxiety about that. That said, I think if anyone is lucky enough to get a call and the opportunity to play Survivor, you should, everyone should say Yes! It is an incredible experience!

I really view it like the time out there was MY time. The time now is like the fans time. Watch the show, enjoy the show, be entertained and have opinions. It's all for you. I am also a fan of the show.

What I've learned or what I would do differently? Oh, I would try and find like my Sam on Day One but as I say that but then I would be the same as the Sam and Sierra duo and we know how that went. So it's like, I don't know. I don't know if you figure it out. Tell me. (laughs)

John Powell: What were some of the things, the aspects that were going through your mind as a fan about who you would like to be declared the winner of this season?

Genevieve Mushaluk: That's a good question and no one's asked me that. I think the interesting thing about the Survivor jury is the criteria is your own. Who wore the outfit you liked that day? (laughs)

What I value is all of the pillars of the game, social, strategic and strength and I think there's a minimum threshold in all of them. If you just knock one out of the park that wouldn't necessarily get you my vote. I think you need to show like a minimum level of confidence in all of sort of those fundamental pillars and then control, because I'm a

control freak. I look for who who held the pen the most, who shaped Season 47 the most with control?

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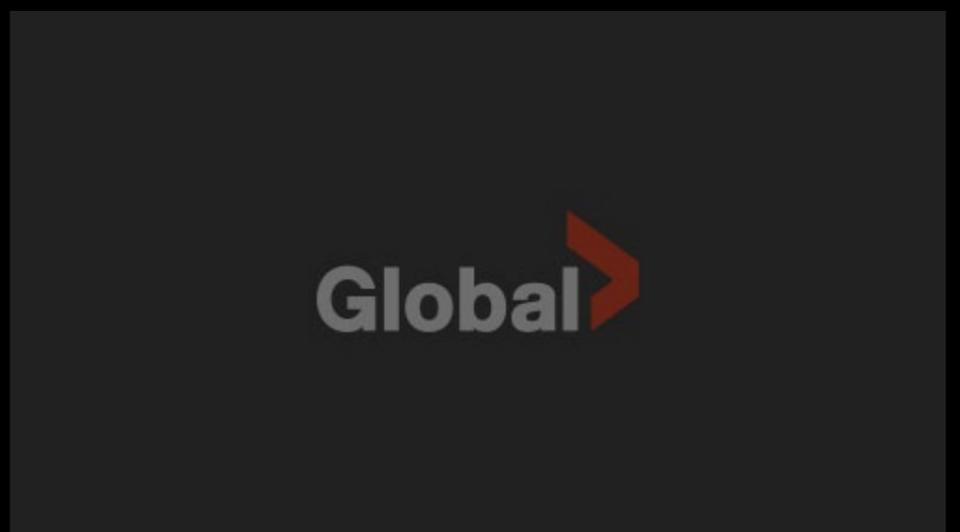
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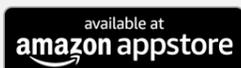


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