[*Gender Reveal* intro music]

**Molly:** Welcome to Gender Reveal, a podcast where we ask intrusive personal questions and hopefully get a little bit closer to understanding what the hell gender is. I'm your host and resident gender detective, Molly Woodstock.

[*Gender Reveal* outro music]

**Molly:** Hi friends, happy Pride. I hope you’re all having fun, causing a ruckus. This week I am so excited to share my interview with journalist Katelyn Burns. We talk about trans and intersex athletes, we talk about uncovering Capitol Hill as a trans person, we talk about what to do about bad trans reporting — oof, there’s so much bad reporting about trans people. It’s such a good interview that you won’t even notice her mic doing some weird creaking and my voice constantly peaking cus I totally messed up my levels.

Anyway, before we get to that, a few quick announcements. First and foremost, we are now featured on the X-Ray Podcast Network. X-Ray is a local, Portland based podcast network. We’re sharing space with a lot of other rad shows, check them out if you want.

Secondly, we are still being featured on the Spotify Pride playlist, which is incredible to me. And through this I have learned that Spotify really messes up all of our show notes. Among other things, it wipes out a lot of the hyperlinks that I put in the show notes. So, if you’re looking for one of those links you can look at gender.libsyn.com or iTunes or the X-Ray site or anywhere else that you find our podcast should hopefully give you better show notes.

Last but not least, we are 2 or 3 dollars away from our Patreon goal.

[Record scratch]

**Molly from the Future:** Woops it’s Molly from the future saying that we are now $10 away because a bunch of people dropped their pledges because being trans is hard.

[Record scratch]

**Molly, presumably from the present:** So if you would like to step up and support trans media during pride month, especially if you’re someone that has that disposable income to do so (because a lot of trans people do not) please consider doing that at patreon.com/gender to help us meet our goal. And if we go over that goal, we will start working on the next goal, which is to get me out of my job so I can start doing this full time. So, every little bit helps. Thank you so much for all of your support; whether financial or otherwise, it really does mean the world to me!

And with that, it’s time for this week in gender.

[*This Week in Gender* intro music]

**Molly:** This week in gender I want to give you some context for a conversation that Katelyn and I are about to have on the show. We’re going to talk about the New York Times chest binding article.

[Calm guitar music begins]

If you already know about this and don’t want to deal with it again, please feel free to skip ahead a few minutes.

On May 31 of this year, the New York Times (NYT) published an article titled “Chest binding helps smooth the way for transgender teens, but there may be risks,” which is already exhausting to me, because it’s clearly written for people who have no prior knowledge of binding and it’s already being framed in a way that encourages skepticism and concern trolling - and we haven’t even started the article yet. This piece was written Amy Sohn, a woman who, as far as I can tell, has never written about trans people before *or* had really any direct trans related experience, which is extremely on brand for the NYT who solely hires people with no trans experience to write about trans people.

So, in this article they explain what binders are. They explain one single sentence listing tips for safe binding, or saf*er* binding. And then they spend many paragraphs talking about teens who generally ignored the safe binding advice and thus faced some kind of negative side effect. I say teens specifically became in this 1500 word article, there is no indication that the writer realizes that anyone over the age of 24 has ever used a binder. Binding is portrayed as a hobby almost solely enjoyed by the youth, much like listening to soundcloud rappers or juuling, or having decent politics.

So, despite this article being about teen binding specifically, out of the nine people quoted in this article, only one is a teenager who binds. This teen is quoted talking about the side-effects he’s experienced while binding (unsafely), but also says: “In all honesty, I couldn’t have cared less about the damage being created. Just that my chest was flat.” Which is a really important point and one that I think could be misread by most of the cis people reading this article. Because while this entire article can be read as teens being irrational or extreme, having misplaced priorities, putting themselves in danger, all those things we associate with teens, it’s really important to understand that the side effects of binding are usually outweighed by the benefits, which can include: “statistically significant improvement in mood and decreased gender dysphoria, anxiety, and depression.” That last bit is a quote from the article by the way. It’s not all bad, but hold on because I’m about to tell you the bad bit.

Although Amy seems to have interviewed only one actual transgender teen, she has included quotes from at least two different transphobic cis people. One is the spokesperson for Fourth Wave Now, the online community of transphobic moms that popularized the myth of “Rapid Onset Gender Dysphoria,” or as well call it, ROGDA. The article spends four paragraphs on the feelings of this Fourth Wave Now ROGDA woman, which I will not read to you because honestly who gives a shit. The article also quotes a woman who identifies as a co-founder of an organization called Rethink Identity Medicine Ethics. You’ll need to listen to the episode to hear what Katelyn discovered about this woman and this organization. And please do listen because it’s truly delicious, by which I mean infuriating.

Anyway, this article received a huge wave of backlash from the trans community because, as you know, there’s no reason on earth why the national paper of record should be interviewing TERFs as if they’re experts on trans health, and not just random internet trolls who hate trans people. This article also does a really good job of appearing balanced and objective, while really just enabling NYT readers to concern troll teens about something they, the readers, know virtually nothing about.

Do you know why they don’t talk about older folks who bind in this article? Probably because then they’d have to admit that binding is a valid and acceptable choice that thousands of adults also freely make. Groups like Fourth Wave Now target trans youth because they think they can control trans youth, they think they can stop trans youth from being trans. And every time national outlets like the NYT platform these people and treat them as if they’re reputable sources and prioritize their nonsense thoughts over the voices of actual trans people, they’re making it harder for trans youth to exist freely and safely in the world.

This has been, This Week in Gender.

[Guitar music ends]

[*This Week in Gender* outro music]

[transition music]

**Molly:** Just a side note on this, if you’re looking for someone to come to your newsroom or business or school and talk about how to not accidentally perpetuate transphobia, please reach out because it’s an increasingly large part of my career, and really is one of my very favorite things to do.

Katelyn Burns is a freelance journalist who primarily reports on transgender issues and reproductive health. She has bylines in the Washington Post, Vice, Teen Vogue, and many others.

[Music ends]

**Molly:** Alright well the way we always start the show is just by asking: in terms of gender how do you identify?

**Katelyn:** I am a transgender woman, my pronouns are she/her, and sometimes, when I’m in the mood, I refer to myself as a transsexual. But I’m not one of *those* transsexuals.

**Molly:** [Laughs] Can you explain what you mean by that?

**Katelyn:** I consider myself transsexual because I have had bottom surgery, which I’ve been very public about. So that’s where I identify with that label. But I also understand that there’s this sort of “true trans” political element of people who will sort of glob on to this “transsexual identity” as a way of demonstrating superiority to other trans people who maybe don’t get bottom surgery or don’t transition at all. And I think those people honestly are disgusting. So, when I say I’m not one of *those* transsexuals, I’m not the type of person who thinks that transsexual women are better women than people who don’t identify as transsexual. I don’t have time for any of that garbage in my own life and I think it’s something that honestly should be purged from the community.

**Molly:** Well I appreciate that, so thank you! I wanted to start with a question about the first piece that you published, which was about the intersection of trans identity and fatness. And I was curious why you chose that as the first topic to tackle in a public way.

**Katelyn:** Okay so to set the scene at the time, I was very much not thinking that I was going to become a writer. Basically, I had been in therapy for 6 months working through my life situation, how to facilitate my gender transition, and I just had all of these built up thoughts and feelings that I was having trouble expressing. So my therapist suggested that I start journaling.

I had all these thoughts at the time, I had just lost over [redacted] pounds and I had felt that it was necessary for me to lose that weight before I transitioned because of my own internalized fatphobia. So I had all of these thoughts about the influence of fatphobia and misogyny had on my own self image for a long time. So one day I just sat down and I wrote it. At that point it was like “okay I need to do something with this,” so I asked around to a couple of my friends and they said “why don’t you just throw it up on Medium.” So I put it up there and I expected maybe 5 or 6 people to read it and then I could just go back to my happy, normal, terrified little closeted life getting ready to come out and make this big transition. And all the sudden the piece just took off. At the time I had a very small Twitter account with less than 100 followers, and then just through that article I got 200 or something followers from it. So I was like, you know maybe I have stories to tell here, maybe I should try this again. So that’s how I accidentally became a writer.

**Molly:** You are a writer. You are the first openly trans Capitol Hill reporter. And I am curious, first just how people have treated you?

**Katelyn:** I haven’t run into any transphobia on the Hill at all. Even with people who are very conservative, no one’s really looking for a reporter in that area or situation to be a trans person, so everybody just sort of assumes everybody in the space is cisgender. I shared a bathroom with staffers for congress people who have said really heinous things about trans women. So it’s always a little bit nerve wracking in those situations when you’re close to their offices. But, I have always been a believer in fake-it-till-you-make-it and I just act like I belong in those spaces. And usually people don’t really mess with me.

**Molly:** I’m glad that you’re not getting any openly transphobic nonsense at your job, but you are reporting on an administration that openly does not want trans people to exist. So what has that experience been like?

**Katelyn:** Oh god it’s not easy. As a reporter I have a responsibility to tell the story. It’s my job to keep people informed about what’s going on. And I take that responsibility, particularly when I’m communicating information to the trans community themselves, I take that responsibility very seriously. As a reporter, it’s very much not a good thing to let my emotions dominate, even though I’m a very emotional person. So it can be very difficult sometimes when… I particularly remember the trans-erasure memo that the New York Times broke the story on back in October of last year. I didn’t know how to react to that as a reporter, and thankfully my editors at Rewire were like “look, you’re our only trans employee here. We understand that this is extremely personal to you. So please, make sure that you’re centering your own self care and whatever work you would do for us is not necessarily the priority.” I ended up reporting three stories on it that week, but my editors were really good about giving me the space to make sure I could center myself and report the information accurately.

**Molly:** Yeah. So the unintentional soft theme of this season of Gender Reveal is talking to a lot of different journalists about how mainstream media has this mandate for objectivity — and what they mean by that is avoiding speech that could be seen as political. But of course as trans people our existence has been politicized by the government. So how do you balance that, both when you’re writing but also emotionally having to sort of put yourself in that position.

**Katelyn:** Well part of it is is that I have a reputation coming in on these stories. I think editors, especially now as a freelancer, editors sort of know what they’re getting with me and they know that the stories that I’m telling are not necessarily a “both sides” proposition. And part of that is because the way that I view myself as a journalist is sort of as a community journalist on behalf of the trans community. And I think that's a really valuable role that is underrated about the national LGBT scene. And we’ve seen a bunch of cuts to LGBT media at mainstream organizations. We saw Into close, a bunch of individual LGBT reporters and trans reporters are no longer in full time positions. And I think that we’re losing these community stories. I published a piece this morning for Teen Vogue where it was just a look at how the two regulations announced last week — the HUD rule about trans homeless people and the HHS rule targeting healthcare protections for trans people — how that could possibly impact trans youth. And it turned into, unintentionally, one of the more difficult stories I have reported on because I had an equipment malfunction. So, I did 4 phone interviews and none of them got recorded.

**Molly:** Oh my god!

**Katelyn:** Yah, and I didn’t realize it until I was in the draft writing the piece. But stories like this I’m going in and I’m finding the 19 year old trans boy with unsupportive parents who’s afraid of being homeless and I’m telling that story of where his mindset is as he’s trying to set out into adulthood and transition with parents who he still lives with and they are abusively monitoring his bank account and his mail to make sure that he doesn’t go on testosterone and he just has nowhere else to go. He’s in North Texas, so he’s afraid if he transitions that a doctor will just turn him away for other services besides testosterone prescriptions or gender affirming surgeries. And he can’t leave home because the homeless shelters there might kick him out entirely. So that’s a story that I can tell without necessarily getting into the sort of traditional both sides-ism of, you know philosophy of most media companies because I’m telling someone’s story. I’m not giving a political analysis to this stuff. It’s: here is this person who these policies will negatively affect and here’s how it will happen.

And I did the same thing with two parents of the trans kids who are trying to raise these children in a world that doesn’t want the children to exist. And I find it really fascinating how these supportive parents are trying to raise their kids to have self confidence in a world that absolutely hates them.

The point was these are community stories about very real policies, and they’re stories that need to be told. I have no interest into turning it into a both sides type of thing, these are these peoples stories. This is the side that I’m telling.

**Molly:** Yeah. So you’ve written op-eds, you’ve written LGBTQ news stories, you’ve written non-LGBTQ news stories. I am curious if there’s a specific beat that you prefer and whether you’re writing about trans topics because they’re inherently interesting to you or because you feel pigeonholed into writing about them.

**Katelyn**: [Laughs] I used to feel pigeonholed. My first spin around in freelancing basically everything that I wrote was trans related, and it frustrated me. In fact, when I applied for the staffer position I was asked about it. They’re like, “It seems like all of your clips are trans related things, what’s going on there?” And I said honestly I think editors have pigeonholed me. I’m very aware of which stories are more likely to get a commission from an editor because I still have bills to pay. I can pitch 100 non-trans related stories and get 5 of them approved, or I can pitch 100 trans related stories and get 30 of them approved. So the math says focusing on trans issues, at least at that time, was the way to have dinner every night. So they were like, “You wouldn’t necessarily be covering all trans issues for us, how would you react to that?” And they were very focused on abortion issues and I explained how in my own personal philosophy I think the two issues are linked, the same basic supply to both abortion access and trans issues for the most part. And I sort of just leaned back from the table in the interview and said, “Honestly, I’m a reporter, I can report on anything.” And they gave me a chance.

So for the last year I’ve been reporting mostly on reproductive health and only very little on trans issues. So having now parted from that publication and jumping back into freelancing, I now have this large body of work on reproductive health. So I’ve found it easier now to be able to pitch on two topics. And actually Teen Vogue has given me the chance to write a couple of times now about reproductive health issues and I really appreciate that. I find a lot of joy in writing about non-trans issues and look forward to keep getting the chance to show that I can report on those things.

But it sort of conflicts with what I talked earlier about my role being a community reporter. There’s doing desires and responsibilities I feel like for me there.

**Molly:** Speaking of your beats, you’ve written quite a bit about sports and trans and intersex athletes. Since you have knowledge of that if you could just talk about the realities of that situation.

**Katelyn:** Yeah, I think there’s a lot of misconceptions born frankly out of common preconceptions about particularly trans women’s bodies. The “common knowledge” of a trans woman's body or trans woman themselves is that we are allegedly men with male bodies who just get surgical alterations to make it look like we’re more female. People assume that every trans woman with breasts had a breast enhancement, which is not true at all. We take hormones and we mostly grow them ourselves. And that’s not to shame people who have gone the surgical route, it’s just people have this notion that we’re all just surgically altered. They have no understanding of how hormones can change particularly a trans woman’s body. And it actually belies their knowledge of their own hormonal profile. If you don’t understand why a trans woman who takes estrogen sees significant body changes, you’re not understanding how your own body reacts to your own sex hormones either.

There’s also a sexist element to this. I noticed this argument gets trotted out a lot particularly by radical feminists who are transphobic. And I actually think they trot out this argument to appeal to sexist men who believe that because they were born in a “male” body that they can just physically dominate every woman on the planet. It’s more complicated than that. Even cis bodies are distributed on a bell curve with these things and athletic abilities are no different. But these men want to believe this is sort of an inborn advantage when it’s really not. It’s largely dependent on hormone levels. So that’s why i think so many people have this gigantic issue with trans women competing with women in sports. In there imagination it's this man who is interlocking into women’s sports and of course “he’s” going to win because “he’s a man and men are automatically better than women at sports.”

But when you actually spent back and look at the realities of competition and what we’ve seen, trans woman, I looked this up the other day, trans woman were allowed to compete with women after having bottom surgery in 2003. And people at the time said this is the death of women’s sports. Since 2003, there has never been an out trans woman Olympian from any country. Olympian, not olympic medalist, Olympian. It’s possible that there have been stealth trans woman who have competed, but we can’t say for sure that that’s the case. To our knowledge, there has never been a trans woman who has been medaled at the Olympics. And that’s 2003, we’ve had 4 full Olympic cycles. For something like that to happen, that’s thousands of athletes in hundreds of sports. And the fact that we haven’t seen a medalist yet, I have a hard time with that evidence believing that trans women have this automatic dominating advantage in sports. You’d think if that happened there’d be at least one athlete that could come along and at least get third place in any sport, and there never has been. So I don’t buy this argument that trans women have an advantage over cis women in sports. The argument doesn’t hold any water to me.

**Molly:** Something that I thought was really interesting that you just said was that trans women were allowed to compete if they had bottom surgery.

**Katelyn:** Yeah and I think, I reject the argument, but I do see the argument with that. And that is that they were looking for trans women to remove their gonads, which is really what produces testosterone. So the thinking was if they just did it and allowed people who were blocking testosterone to compete, well they might not take their hormone blocker and they might be able to train a little bit harder and get a little bit of an edge. So I can see the argument, I just reject it because I don’t know any trans woman that would do that. And I don’t know they would get away with it on regular randomized hormone tests that are certified by the IOC.

**Molly:** Totally. So, the New York Times has been extra fucking up. Literally this morning they put this piece out about binders, quoting the most atrocious and irresponsible anti-trans nobodies as if both sides reporting required you to find a random garbage human off the street with an openly trans agenda and it’s like “hm what if we quoted this person?”

All I’m saying is that if this article had been written by a trans person, none of it would have happened. It would’ve been a completely different article. That’s the case so often in trans reporting. As a trans reporter myself, it’s infuriating to me, I’m sure it’s infuriating to you as well. How do you think we as trans reporters, or just consumers of media, can try to fight against this really absurd thing of cis people writing about things in a really irresponsible and damaging way?

**Katelyn:** We only have limited power as trans reporters because there’s only a handful of us and not many of us are even employed full time, right? First and foremost we have to continue to call this out on social media and point it out to our followers when there are these bad practices. I actually contacted the NYT for a statement about that piece because I’m writing my own media criticism already for The Outline, but I pointed out that that one source, Rethink Identity Medicine Ethics organization doesn’t have it’s own website. And I pointed out that the person quoted from the organization, Jane Wheeler, it appears her only qualification is that she’s a commenter on the Fourth Wave Now blogs. So I asked the NYT for comment and they actually got back to me.

**Molly:** Wowwww!!

**Katelyn:** Yeah so they said: according to Jane Wheeler, Rethink Identity Medicine Ethics Inc is a newly incorporated Delaware nonprofit corporation who’s mission is to “promote the highest standards of care for children who are gender variant. In parenthesis the time’s spokesperson says “a website is under construction.” She says, “in that capacity she recently submitted testimony to the Minnesota legislature on the issue of medical treatment for gender noncomforming children. Our story didn’t describe her as a medical professional and there was no intention to portray her that way. Editors thought her point of view was clear to readers from the description and from her own comments.”

So from there I did some research. I did verify that an organization by that name is registered in the state of Delaware. And I also looked up Jane Wheeler’s testimony in the Minnesota state legislature and this is what I found: Her testimony was in opposition to a Minnesota bill to ban conversion therapy on LGBTQ students and children. The NYT is literally platforming campaigners who want to defeat efforts to ban conversion therapy on trans kids. So my follow up said “the only bill that fits that description is a Minnesota bill to ban conversion therapy on LGBTQ students. I don’t think it’s fair at all to your readers that Wheeler is a campaigner for conversion therapy for trans children. That would change the context of the comments presented significantly to your readers. There are no respected medical organization that support the position that conversion therapy for kids represents ‘the highest standards of care for children and youth who are gender variant.’” I said, “Respectfully, none of this is making sense to me as a journalist.”

I know we’re going a little off track from your question, but I wanted to talk about this [**Molly:** I appreciate it!] because I’m soooo mad about it. But I think as trans journalists, what I would like to see trans journalists try to do more of is more media criticism. And it’s something that I’m trying to do myself. I really wish a place like Columbia Journalism Review would hire more trans people to write about how trans issues are covered, because I think there’s a very impelling story there that’s being missed. I think one thing we can do as trans journalists is we can, there’s nothing stopping any of us from, in our capacity as journalists, contacting these publications and asking for explanations for why they are writing these stories the way that they are, like this one. And it’s not enough to just be like “ok why did you quote Fourth Wave Now?” Unfortunately I don’t think we’re going to get responses to those types of questions, that would take a bit more advocacy work. But things like this where the organization doesn’t even have a website, the woman appears to be a random person from the Reddit comments. I think it’s perfectly fair in our capacity as journalists to explore how these stories are assigned and reported and edited. And i’s something I wish more of us would do but I also understand that opportunities for writers like us, which should be a hashtag by the way, are limited and doing this work can be very exhausting.

**Molly:** Totally. The vast, vast majority of people listening are not trans journalists. Do you feel like there’s anything that people out in the world can do? Should they also be writing to outlets the NYT demanding more responsible journalism?

**Katelyn:** Yes, I think that would help. I think one thing that we do a very poor job of as a community is, the bad pieces get much more sharing or play within our own community than the good pieces do. And I am just as guilty as anyone else at this, but I very intentionally did not share the link to that NYT piece and that’s a thing that I’ve been doing for most of this calendar year. I have a larger platform for a trans woman. I have at this point almost 32 thousand Twitter followers, that’s a lot of potential clicks I could be sending the NYT’s way which only rewards that type of coverage. And actually in my thread today about the NYT piece, I made the point like yeah we’re all gonna rage share this, every single one of us is gonna rage share this and we should absolutely call it out, but we need to take just as much energy to promote the good stories. Because I’ll dunk on a bad piece of trans journalism and gain 2 thousand retweets, and then the piece that I worked on for a week that’s well-sourced and is compelling or incisive about some issue will get 30 retweets. And that’s a balance that really is not working to our own favor. So I think we need to do a better job of quote tweeting and praising the good stuff more so than raging at the bad stuff.

**Molly:** Alright well I wanna start wrapping up, but I did wanna just let you know that while we’ve been talking, our cool, cool president did a tweet about LGBTQ people and how we should stand in solidarity with LGBTQ people because in other countries they’re punished and imprisoned.

**Katelyn:** Oh my fucking god.

**Molly:** Ahhhh… anyways

**Katelyn:** I’m reading his tweets, and of course he doesn’t mention gender identity. The only time that the president has specifically mentioned trans people is when he was banning us from the military. This is the way this administration works. This is how they sort of offer a, in the shadows, and the media somehow doesn’t call them on it, but if you do watch very carefully the daily news cycles that are happening now, it’s almost entirely based on what the president tweets. There are literally hundreds of political reporters, right here in DC, my colleagues who only report on the things that the president is tweeting. And there is actually a very enlightening quote in a Reuters piece that was mentioned to me recently, let me see if I can pull it up. Yeah so Gillian Branstetter from the National Center for Transgender Equality tweeted this. It’s a quote from a Reuters report. Person being interviewed is David McIntosh, he’s the president of the conservative Club for Growth and a long time friend of Mike Pence, the vice president.

**Molly:** Yeah, another good fan of trans people. [laughs]

**Katelyn:** So this quote is like, very enlightening and is sort of centered in my piece for The Outline. It says: “‘one of the benefits for Trump’s twitter approach is it creates headlines. And that’s what it’s intended to do. And underneath those headlines, everyone else in this administration can go about peacefully doing their jobs,’ said David Macintosh… he goes on to say ‘HHS is really several, very important and significant regulations that change the nature of obamacare, of healthcare with very little coverage in the press.” Like Friday’s proposed rule on trans health protections.

And if you look, what would you say is the single most covered trans-related issue by mainstream press of this presidency?

**Molly:** Military ban?

**Katelyn:** And what is the only trans specific policy that the president has actually ever tweeted about? It’s just the military ban. I don’t think it’s an accident that ended up getting the most coverage out of everything, even though that was not nearly the most devastating policy that this administration has rolled out. Everybody has it backwards, everyone’s monitoring his tweets for news when they should be monitoring the government for news.

**Molly:** Yeah you’re totally totally right. And even to that end, I saw the headline on your Washington Post op-ed that came out this week, “this is the cruelest thing the Trump presidency has done to us” but I saw that and I was like “oh god, I don’t even know what that’s referring to” because I’ve sort of withdrawn completely and I see on Twitter everyone panicking and I’m like “yep, I’m sure everything’s bad” and shove it into a closet and don’t look at it. So what’s going on that I should be panicking about that I’m just hiding from?

**Katelyn:** Oh god… so the Obama administration implemented policies and administrative rules that represented the largest step forward for the trans community in terms of governmental policies in US history. At this point, I think all but maybe one or two of those steps that the Obama administration took for us have been either wiped out completely by the Trump administration or proposed to be wiped out completely. It’s pretty terrifying honestly. Despite the fact that I cover the news I don’t typically deal with my own existential dread around this stuff very often so you kinda tripped me up here. So the biggest thing is last Friday’s announcement on the HHS nondiscrimination rule. So basically the administration is proposing that any healthcare provider or insurer can just refuse service to trans people, or they can condition, this is probably even more cruel, I’d rather be turned away, but they can condition treatment on our de-transitioning.

I have become friends with quite a few trans women who transitioned decades ago and then went stealth in their lives. And it’s interesting talking to them because they talk about how difficult it was to be out in the ’90s, but it was easi*er* to be stealth if they could pull it off, because trans people were not on anybody's radar back then. We were bad men in dresses in movies, which is still true, but Republicans didn’t care about trans people back then. We were marginalized, yes, but we were also ignored. And there was a safety in being ignored, like in a weird sick, twisted way, and that’s gone. We are firmly in the crosshairs of not only this government but the entire Republican party. And that’s a very terrifying place to be with an unreliable media keeping them accountable and tepid support from the minority party in government.

Not to terrify your listeners completely.

**Molly:** No it’s really important because, because I think me for example, I know this directly affects me and most people that I care about and also I cannot engage with it. But it’s important to sometimes engage with it. So I appreciate it.

Alright so the way we always end the show is by asking: in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Katelyn:** Oh my god. Full bodily autonomy and full freedom to self-define in any way that you see fit. And when I say full bodily autonomy I’m not just talking about trans people. That is a world where abortion is safe, legal, and available and contraception also is safe, legal, and available, and gender transitions are safe, legal, and available. And that type of world, from a political standpoint, it should be cheap and easy to change the gender markers on your government IDs. These are all things that are achievable, right? It just takes some political power and will to make it happen. And I don’t think I’m asking for much, I’m not asking for a world free of transphobia necessarily. We should live in a society that does not care about gender stuff and what people are doing with their own gender stuff.

[*Gender Reveal* outro music begins]

**Molly:** That's gonna do it for this week's show! If you want to read the Outline piece Katelyn refers to throughout this episode, which I highly recommend you do, you can find it in the show notes (or if you’re listening on Spotify you can find it on all the other show notes). You can also find Katelyn on facebook at Katelyn A. Burns or on twitter @transcribe. You can support her important trans journalism at Patreon.com/KatelynBurns. You can support *our* important journalism at Patreon.com/gender. Please please please cis people, support trans media with your good cis dollars. As always, you can find us at genderpodcast.com, you can find us on twitter and instagram, on the Gender Reveal slack, on the X Ray podcast network, on the Spotify Pride hub. It’s Pride, we’re everywhere.

This week’s episode was edited by me, Molly Woodstock. Our logo is by the talented Michelle Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder, Additional music this week by Blue Dot Session. Special thanks to Tish and Z and Beth and everyone that helped me think of activities for teens.

We'll be back next week with more feelings about gender. Throw a brick at a cop.

[music ends]

**Molly:** Next week on gender reveal, Molly talks about being misgendered by the NYT. Also, we share a good interview. It’s gonna be good.