

[*Gender Reveal* theme music plays]

Molly: Welcome to Gender Reveal. A podcast where we 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* theme music ends]

Molly: Hey everyone, hope you're hanging in there. Please don't forget to check in on your friends and make sure they're also hanging in there. It is real hard to be a person sometimes, it is real hard to be trans most of the time. Uh, we need to stick together and look out for each other. Anyway, no huge announcements this week. I do have an article out in *Podcast Review*, it's a list of trans and non-binary made podcasts. I was gonna say none of them are mine, but I put a throw-away line in the draft that said "also I heard Gender Reveal is pretty good lol" and they just published that? Like they didn't edit it out as I intended them to do, but anyway check it out it's a cute list. The link is all over our twitter and maybe I'll put it in the notes!

Our first round of merch is still available for another week or two, its at bit.ly/gendermerch. We're working on putting together future merch items, so if you would like to contribute a design to our merch store, please let me know. We don't take a cut of the proceeds, its split between you and an org of your choice. Also, I'm still doing trans equity workshops and consultation gigs, so if someone you work with or someone you know is not perfect at treating trans people like people and could use some resources to do better, please hit me up.

On the Patreon front, we are almost entirely caught up sending stickers to all of our new \$5 a month patreons, thank you everyone. We owe pins, and cards, and some other stuff to a few higher level patreons, so thank you all so much for your patience. We only have a couple of those glittery Gender Reveal pins left, so if you want a glittery Gender Reveal pin I would zip on over to patreon.com/gender and subscribe at the \$10 level. Uh, I know that's a lot of money, and I don't expect most people to be able to do that. I will say that thanks in large part to so many \$5 a month donors, I am 40% of the way, or so, to being able to quit my job. Which is the most fuck-wild thing I've ever heard. So, thank you all so so so much for spreading the word about the show, and caring so much about the show, and making this a sustainable thing for me to do.

This week on the show, I am exciting to share my interview with Morgen Bromell - creator of the queer dating app Thurst, thats T H U R S T. The audio for this one is a little bit of a nightmare because Skype is a curse. But Morgen is great and I'm sure you'll have a great time anyway. Morgen and I talk about how dating apps fail queer and trans folks, the unique needs of folks of color on dating apps, how to include aromantic and asexual spectrum folks on dating apps, and the challenges of creating a dating app for a population that needs so much more than just a cute date.

Morgen: It's, it's so trippy to me to focus on creating a dating and connection app when, um, I would say dating isn't a priority within the queer and trans community as much as it is housing as much as it is to human rights, agency around our bodies, and freedom from prisons.

Molly: But first, it's time for This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender trumpeting news music plays]

Molly: This Week in Gender I'm sure you've heard that a hacker was able to access the personal information of 106 million Capital One users recently. You may have also heard that the hacker, Paige Thomson, is a trans woman. Or maybe you didn't hear that. And that's what we're talking about today.

[slow, instrumental background music begins]

Molly: You see, some articles including specific ones written by CBS, Rolling Stone, NPR, The Wall Street Journal, and The US Department of Justice somehow, did not mention that Paige Thomson is trans. They just referred to her as a woman. Which is very cool to see. I will say that I personally didn't see any outlets that put her being trans in the headline or in the lead. These are all great signs that they're not sensationalizing her trans-ness, in a story that has pretty much nothing to do with her trans-ness.

But, some outlets did think that her being trans was relevant to the story apparently, because they wrote things like this: "Friends and associates describe Thomson, who was open about her struggles as a transgender woman, a skilled programmer and software architect" blah blah blah. "Thomson said in chats that she had been transitioning to a woman since age 22 with hormone treatment. She wrote on the slack group that her gender transition may have contributed to her mental anguish". That's the New York Post! Ah, the New York Times wrote two articles that didn't mention her being trans, but then this one that said, "Over months of discussions in online forums earlier this year, Paige Thomson acknowledged the personal challenges in her life, such as struggles to find employment and difficulty she had faced since transitioning to a woman years before". So, clearly some reporters, presumably cis reporters, because I feel like I know all the trans reporters, but if not hit me up, are including her gender transition because they feel like it is relevant because it's a source of her mental anguish. And they think that because she allegedly said online that her gender was the source of her mental anguish. But I don't love the way that folks are wording these things, because they're not quoting her. So did she say, "Being a woman made my mental health bad"? Or did she say, "Being trans is really fucking hard and everyone is transphobic as hell and that makes my mental health bad"? Because here's how Fox News phrased it, "She also suffered from depression, and said online that her transitioning to a woman since age 22 may have contributed to her mental health problems".

This feels irresponsible to me because it makes it sound like transitioning makes your mental health worse, which statistically isn't true. And honestly, it also makes it sound like transitioning makes you more likely to steal the credit card applications of 100 million people, also not true. That's not how being trans works. Now to be fair, a bunch of outlets also tried to say the death of Paige's cat made her mental health worse, so they may be just grasping at straws here. But, either way, I think it's irresponsible and dangerous to imply that transitioning makes your mental health worse, when statistically transitioning makes your mental health better. It is living in a transphobic society that makes your mental health worse.

Anyway, it gets worse, because here's a passage from The Seattle Times, "On Tuesday, Thomson's three roommates replayed surveillance footage from video cameras around the house, showing the moment armed agents in camouflage descended on the property. The roommates, who like Thomson are transgender women, said she used to be a systems engineer at Amazon". Excuse me Seattle Times, it's not relevant that her three roommates, who have already been traumatized by living with her and her being arrested, having another roommate who was just arrested for weapons possession, and then having armed agents descend on their property in camouflage. You don't need to out them. We don't need to know this. Seattle Times what are you doing?

I realize that most of you aren't reporters for The Seattle Times, but there are two ways in which this can still be relevant to all of us. One, you can reach out to local publications or write letters to the editor when they do stuff like what The Seattle Times did, or what Fox News did even. But two, we can also watch the details we include in a story and why we're including them. Even if that story is just something we tell to a friend. For example, a lot of folks will specify if someone is Black or Chinese or Mexican when speaking about them, but they don't specify when people are white, because white is the default, white is assumed unless specified otherwise. Similarly, a lot of folks, maybe not you or I, but a lot of folks don't specify when people are cisgender because that is the assumed default. But on top of that, there's no reason to assume that everyone wants to be outed at all times. So if you can avoid drawing attention to someone's transgender-ness in a story in which their transgender-ness is irrelevant, that might be a good thing to do. Especially, especially, especially, especially, especially, if you're cis and not a trans person talking to another trans person about like a cool person who happens to be trans. Because that makes sense to me. But that's not what this newspaper is doing.

[background music fades out]

Molly: This has been, This Week in Gender.

[trumpeting news music]

[upbeat electro-pop background music begins]

Molly: Morgen Bromell is a founder and technologist working to make tech more accessible to people of color through journalist based initiatives and tech activism. Apart from being a founder of Thurst, a dating app for the LGBTQIA+ community, they're also deeply invested in community building and documenting queer histories, particularly how queer and trans people use digital resources and online platforms to navigate our world.

[background music fades out]

Molly: The way we always start the show is by asking in terms of gender, how do you identify?

Morgen: Um, I identify as non-binary, and I use they and them pronouns only.

Molly: I love that, only. Yeah! So you're a queer, non-binary, Black person in tech, and I would just assume that that is kind of hard and, and terrible?

Morgen: [laughs]

Molly: Is there anything that we should know about that? Anything surprising, or anything that sticks out to you? Or just like anything other than like, it's hard? [laughs]

Morgen: Yeah, it's pretty hard. But I think just along the lines of identity there have been a lot of folks who identify similarly so meeting a lot of, uh, Black and Brown and Indigenous non-binary and trans folk in tech, who are really committed to making their presence known and shaping the spaces that they're in in a positive way. Which, I don't think if I weren't in this industry I would have known. So that's something I try to speak out about.

Molly: I'm curious, I've had this discussion with a lot of folks about when to disclose your pronouns or your gender in a business setting, or how hard to push being gendered correctly in a business setting, or what to do if someone who is a client is misgendering you. So I'm curious, like, because you, you know, are the CEO of a company that needs resources and funding, how do you address interacting with folks who you, you know, might benefit from having resources or money from them, but also might not really know how to treat you in a way that's respectful.

Morgen: Yeah, that's, that's a great question because it's something I struggle with daily. Um, there are so many spaces committed to binary empowerment. So whether it's empowerment of Black and Brown and Indigenous men, specifically or focused on women of any background, but mostly it benefits white women, so I find myself, um, in a space in front of very well-meaning and well-intentioned investors, funders, um, who have never even conceived of a trans or non-binary person in tech. And so I find myself breaking down several barriers, not just around, um, gender, but access to spaces and what influence looks like. So it's, it's been really challenging. I find myself doing more work than expected, usually it's emotional labor for, for these folks to bring them with me [laughs]. So it's been tough, sometimes I do understand that I will be misgendered. I've been on so many lists as like, a young Black woman in tech, and I'm like I did not consent to this, I didn't interview of this!

Molly: Mmhmm

Morgen: But it's often in the space of like, representation politic-ing media where folks just want you to be seen, even if they didn't really ask how you wanted to be seen, or get an idea of like what that framework, um, or what that visibility means for you. The implications of that visibility. So

Molly: So how do you handle it, when you end up on lists of Black women in tech?

Morgen: [laughs] It's, it's, it depends on the publication. So if it's a smaller blog or, or publication, I usually send a message like hey, would you correct this, this seems like intention was good? But this is wrong. I think someone else should be on this list. If it's a larger publication that isn't really directly connected to any communities that I feel a part of, whether it's Black folk in tech, or trans and non-binary folk in tech, I just ask them to remove it entirely without an explanation or an opening to conversation. 'Cause I think power dynamics matter, and their purpose is probably click-through rate instead of actually amplifying the message, so.

Molly: Yeah wow, that's a great distinction. Thank you for sharing that.

So you make a dating app for queer folks of all genders, um, I'm curious, how do you feel that queer and trans folk use dating apps, and other platforms, differently than like straight cis people would?

Morgen: Yeah there's a myriad of ways. I could probably harp on this for hours,

Molly: [laughs]

Morgen: But I think it's so intriguing to me because I think for straight folks, dating is simply dating, and they have the privilege to, um, not blend different aspects of their lives, and have them very isolated or in silos. But, for so many queer and trans folks I know, and I guess its supported research but I don't think that needs to be a validating factor, is that dating can be simply entertainment or pleasure but also for many it can be survival or navigating a new community or looking for resources or all of the above. Um, at any given time. And it's very fluid of saying dating is more than just a romantic goal, but rather, um, how I navigate this world and find my spaces, places, people who can allow me to either move more easily or help me survive. So, there's a lot of grey areas that aren't addressed in very cis-leaning, straight dating apps and dating culture, where we don't acknowledge that we have so many people along different socio-economic lines and situations where we need to have nuance, we need to have, um, safer online spaces, and we need to have the tools to navigate that online, where folks are able to access the resources or the places or the people that they need to more efficiently.

Molly: Yeah, what, what would that look like or what does that look like? Like, how much of this has to be integrated into your own work, or what would you like to see out there?

Morgen: Almost none. I mean, it's, it's reached a space where within my own work, both the vision and what we've planned drastically deviate from what actually exists simply because we lack resources number one, that's a huge thing,

Molly: Mmhmm

Morgen: and we're dealing with also a culture that we can create a tool but if the culture doesn't use the tool in the way that you intend, um, you have to think about the implications of, of misuse or abuse of a tool. When we first launched, we had, you know, thousands of people signing up, but we realized, like oh man, like there are a lot of people on 4chan or reddit down-voting our app to abuse the users. So we're realizing that we hadn't properly, um, scoped out threat, or what violence looks like, or what abuse looks like for folks who have plenty of time and have a technological advantage over maybe us or another user, or are using various tools or harmful tactics to try to target a whole community. So with publicity and visibility came, you know, the target [laughs]. So I think we, and I personally wanted to take a step back and say until we have the resources in full scope to actually, uh, implement and launch the tools and cool features that we have in mind, we really need to take uh, uh, evaluation or analysis of are we creating a cultural base, are we creating an actual platform that can mitigate those attacks, do we have customer support and proper messaging to allow users to say hey, this is my issue, and can you actually resolve it in an appropriate time-frame. And are we actually doing work outside of the app to make sure that we are reaching people that we intend to reach.

Molly: Yeah, do you have a solution for how to keep an app that's aimed for queer and trans people from having that type of abuse from folks outside who are trying to make it even harder for people?

Morgen: We do! It's it's been, like, exciting but also really saddening to have a solution but not have the resources and capacity to implement it. I mean, it's, and I think that's the story of a lot of, like, independent or smaller projects in tech, that are run by marginalized folks. It's like, we actually know...

Molly: Mmhmm

Morgen: ... how to solve this problem, it's, it wasn't difficult. Like I think hearing from like larger, straight dating apps, I was like oh it must be so challenging. And then once we figured it out, we were like okay great so this has clearly not been a priority. But the easiest one was simply allowing users to identify danger, and then believing them. It's been very very simple, and when you navigate other dating apps, um, usually there are several steps and processes to get a user banned, and who gets banned for what reason is something that we've evaluated for years. So we have, like, issues where, whether its for lesbians only or straight dating apps, usually trans and non-binary users are getting banned because they deviate from what people perceive as their correct gender. So we really wanted to evaluate, like, time being banned, interview folks that have been banned, uh, and then interview folks who have said hey my abuser is on this platform, I requested it several times and didn't get a follow up, what does that look like? And how can we automate that experience so we simply have functions that are rooted in the idea that we believe you the first time.

Molly: Yeah, I'm realizing in this moment how wild it is that it feels so revolutionary to have a dating app in which, uh, trans folks's abusers get banned instead of the trans folks getting banned [laughs]. Are there other ways that you feel like the dating apps that exist right now are continuing to fail queer and trans folks?

Morgen: There are a few ways, and I think the main one is access. Um, and it's something that I've personally been thinking about in terms of function and form of a dating app. It's the equivalent of me as a queer non-binary person walking into a very straight space and expecting to feel safe. The digital experience is very similar, so we join these platforms, um, with the expectation of safety and often not gauging or being able to communicate that sometimes the same level of access to maybe a straight cis white guy should not be the same. I think it's really beautiful to be able to say I don't want to be seen or see these people at this time in this space. And so we've had the idea of, of varying and shifting your visibility based on timing, location, and space for a while now. It's pretty hard to implement and we just don't have the time and resource to do so. But that's the main on that I think is an issue. Because from my own experience, I really struggled with being hyper, like, people being aware of my presence, hypervisibility as a Black person, and not feeling like I can control the gaze. And I think the psychological impact of that is that you're always being seen and always being watched in a surveillance culture where you can't really control, um, the impact of that on your body and mind.

Molly: Just speaking of being a Black queer person, do you feel like there are specific needs for queer and trans people of color on dating apps? Like is there an intersection of ways that people, that apps are failing not only queer and trans people, but also Black folks and other folks of color?

Morgen: Absolutely, absolutely. I mean, that was one of the main pain points for me when I was envisioning a different dating space simply because race within dating is often conflated with social love. Like, how well we love each other as a community, which, there's so many myths around that. And I don't believe within dating apps we address the fact that certain people can cause harm and violence based on racial fetishes or based on racial targeting that are rooted in a society that supports that. Like, we exist in a white supremacist world that benefits greatly from, uh, the abuse of Black, Brown and Indigenous people. Um, within sexual spaces, sexual violence is our, is rooted in our history, its a tenant of American history. Um, and when we navigate, whether in communities or interpersonally, it really needs to be a topic that's addressed in the forefront of saying hey I might be uncomfortable with this person for this reason, and if I report it as abuse I should be believed. Or, I simply don't want to be seen by these types of people for reasons that are obvious to me but might not be obvious to a white customer support team. So, um, its just giving more space for folks to navigate freely and not have to explain or justify what that looks like for them.

Molly: You have really rad merch on your website that says, uh, decolonize dating, deconstruct gender, and uh, I'm wondering, we talk about decolonization a lot on this podcast, we've talked about decolonizing dating specifically with Caleb Luna, but I would love to hear from you what you imagine it looking like to decolonize dating and deconstruction or...

Morgen: It's such a broad topic and there are many folks that I've learned from first and foremost. So I'm not gonna claim that the research is my own. It's, it's been a blessing to live in an era where you can easily access, like, folks's thesis, where I'm like thank you for sharing [laughs]

Molly: Mmhmm

Morgen: And I want to say it's, it's centered in the idea that the way we interact with each other, within dating especially, but in general is rooted in this white supremacist value system where desire, our idea of each others' worth and our own, are rooted in beauty standards that are deeply harmful and inflict more violence and pain on those who deviate more far from the center of being white, thin, cis, straight, able-bodied people. You know, we don't really navigate in that sphere of privilege in the same way. Each person has different privileges and I think that, um, dating has been reduced and condensed um into almost a sport for the privileged where the more you're an outlier the more you're forced to observe, and we have various hierarchies that mirror our own world and the way that folks can seek power or seek to enact power on one another through dating. So we don't talk enough...

Molly: Mmhmm

Morgen: ... about the culture of domination in dating. Um, how desire plays into all of that, and how it's deeply rooted in these violent ideals around who is worthy of love, respect, and care.

Um, and my main goal ideally is to, to really address the issue of the folks of the margin, and why is it so difficult, not just within dating, but within our culture to see, acknowledge, and return power to, um, marginalized queer and trans folks, especially Black, Brown, and Indigenous queer and non-binary femmes, who have really lead our movements, lead our spaces, um, but often don't get the recognition and love and care they deserve, so it, it then pulls into dating spaces where we see various types of violences or various interactions that feel harmful for everyone, whether you're a participant or you're a viewer.

Molly: I have a totally different question. These white girls who make this sort of drunk straight dating podcast asked me to come on their podcast for some reason, and they asked me some pre-interview questions, and one of them was "what is your favorite part of dating?", and one of them was "what is your least favorite part of dating?". And I was sitting with these trying to think of something good about dating. I'm gonna steal their questions, so for you, what are your favorite and least favorite parts of dating as a queer, non-binary, Black person.

Morgen: I would say my favorite parts are the genuine moments of joy and surprise. I was just talking with a friend last night about how beautiful it feels to meet someone new and feel affirmed and feel safe, and not expect so much but receive a lot of love and care in that space and really feel recognized for who you are. And I think it's so important to emphasize, like, joy in those moments, and what that means for us as queer and trans folk looking for love in the world or looking for connection or looking to belong within spaces and amongst other people, and I love, well one, I love love, I'm honestly like very romantically inclined, and I do enjoy talking about dating and dating in general, but I think the most important thing is feeling safe and feeling seen. So regardless of whether it's someone I want to date long term or short term it's such a beautiful moment of saying there is a possibility, there's hope there that I could share a moment or many moments with another person in this lifetime. Things that I dislike about dating: there are many. I think [laughs]...

Molly: I was worried when you were paused that maybe you were having a great time and I was like tell me your secrets! [laughs]

Morgen: [laughs] there are many. I think I'll stick to a few, but I think the things that I dislike about dating are the moments when you realize whether its a personal dating experience or viewing someone or hearing about someone's date that the other person isn't dating to, for the same goal. Whether it's to find love or to find genuine connection, rather, to uplift their own sense of belonging or, or, social status or, an intention that isn't rooted in genuine care and love. Um, so we see that a lot within straight dating apps where a lot of folks date to say they've dated many people, or simply many people say hey I've fucked this many people, we have a lot of social capital that's rooted in desirability and dating culture specifically, where folks love to share numbers and tallys because we have become brands and personas, and I think how desired you are, specifically within dating apps, matters a lot to people, to some people way more than actually finding and having meaningful connection with folks in that vulnerable way. And so that's the thing I dislike about dating where I've had friends who are really hurt where they're like I'm opening up and attempting to be vulnerable and I'm met with someone who has me as #57 for the month. So yeah,

Molly: Oh yeah,

Morgen: It's, it's, it's tough to hear things like that so.

Molly: Yeah. When you've been working on the app and getting user feedback and watching people test it out, or use it, have you learned anything about the way that queer and trans people date, or like the functions that they're looking for in an app?

Morgen: Yeah, we've learned so much, and a lot of research is simply kept private because we can't implement it.

Molly: Gotcha.

Morgen: We've also had issues of other dating apps taking our research. We're such a small team but discretion has been super important just because of hyper<unintelligable 27:31> and being a Black founder,

Molly: Okay.

Morgen: I will say that we have learned one key component which I think just requires other apps paying attention is that queer and trans folks, especially those who are radical and have a political inclination that's rooted in love work understand time. So there's a lot of myths around everything has to be quick and you want to move through as many people as possible. Um, but we're seeing the opposite...

Molly: Ohhh

Morgen: where a lot of folks are taking their time ,they want to get to know someone. The depth of messages is different, the amount of messages is different. And the content, from our feedback, we don't actually view messages but we do allow folks to share their experiences, is different. So folks are saying I'm more invested because I haven't been in a space like this and I want to contribute to a culture and space like this and hope that it grows and allows other queer and trans folks to potentially find, um, what they're looking for one day. So a lot of folks are invested in community building in a way I don't see straight cis people having to be invested in. So we get a lot of messages from people saying we support you, what do you need? thank you for creating this space. Also we're here for the long run, feedback-wise um, testing-wise, ready to, to support in ways that I don't think straight people have to support their own spaces..

Molly: Yeah

Morgen: ...so that's been beautiful.

Molly: Yeah, well speaking of which, how can people support you, and how can we all, you know get involved, use the app, all that stuff.

Morgen: Sure, I mean, I think it's helpful just downloading the app and sharing feedback and critique. I mean, I really go through every single feedback email, and keep note of what's important, how often it's said, and, and the urgency of the issue. Because I think listening has been something that's shaped me as a founder and as a technologist that's trying to adapt an inherently binary platform to include more people. So yeah that's the first step, and I think the second is just telling people. Like asking folks like this is what exists, how can we make it

better? Um, and what is our culture apart from this app look like and we really challenge ourselves to do better.

Molly: So I am on other dating apps right now, and all of them allow me to select my own gender, but then it also in addition makes me misgender myself. And I'm sure you know what I'm talking about. So it's like yeah you can list you're like gender identity but also do we show you with men or women? [laughs]

Morgen: [laughs]

Molly: So, um, how does your app get around that?

Morgen: And that's been a tricky point simply because on the function side or more technical end, it's difficult to navigate so many data points and match multiple random data points but without having a parameter of saying this matches with this and creating a rule for that. And so it's been a challenge because we have to create other parameters of matching that are greater variables than gender. So whether it's location, or distance or age, or amount of times logged into the app per month, it creates more work for us and a bit of instability where we're saying actually create a ratio of one cis guy to one cis women, because that inherently fails so many people but also is wrong. 1:1 doesn't work and that's not how life works in any space, so we're looking to, and this is gonna take many many years of research and work, but ultimately create a space that is a mirror of our real world. So when we enter a space that's a party, a club, a friend's home, there are so many variables that come into play and how do we best match the most important variables by that person, time, or space that make them feel like hey this is actually the match I'd rather see right now.

Molly: Yeah. This is the part in the show where I ask you what else you want to talk about that we haven't talked about yet.

Morgen: Sure, um I think there are a few things I, I'd really like to talk about access to resources via dating apps and what or how I think dating differs to straight dating culture, because I think there are a lot of myths that propped up by mainstream liberal media that queer and trans folks are dating in very similar ways. So focusing on hetero tropes of relating whether it's non-poly relationships, and I say non-poly because I think there are many different types of relationships that are anti-poly or have a phobia of multiple partners that inherently deny the queer nature of how we form connections whether that be romantic or not. There's a focus on romantic relationships that completely erases the complexity of what romantic space or a loving space could be. And I think within queer spaces we've learned not all love has to be romantic, and not all value is placed on sexual connection, and so that's something we're trying to emphasize now is what does it mean to shift from dating to rather connection platform that empowers folks that are aromantic or asexual or in any space that they simply choose but don't want to label, to find other people who validate and affirm their experience and existence.

Molly: Yeah, and that makes a lot of sense to me, also because I met most of my friends through dating apps...

Morgen: Yeah, right.

Molly: So that if a queer person is moving here and they're like how do I meet other queer people I would say go on dating apps even if you're not trying to date. So that makes total sense to me. Are there other myths that you feel like are perpetuated by the media?

Morgen: Yeah, I think that there are so many, and I could talk for for hours about, um, representation and visibility politics. It's something we've been really trying to dispel because it's so rooted around who's most desired and for what reasons. And we see that a lot of platforms allow queer and trans folks with privilege to navigate a bit more safely, and by privilege I mean power access and money primarily, so various forms of capital that can be exchanged. And so there are a lot of trans folks with power right now who have power, who have visibility, who are able to enter cis straight spaces, and so that's been used as a gaslighting tactic, or method, or message to deemphasize the issues within our community that we still need to address. It's, it's so trippy to me to focus on creating a dating and connection app when, um, I would say dating isn't a priority within the queer and trans community as much as housing and access to basic resources...

Molly: Mmm

Morgen:... as much as to human rights, agency around our bodies, and freedom from, from prisons. You know, we don't talk enough about...

Molly: Yeah

Morgen:....encarcerated, uh, queer and trans folks who date, who navigate apps, various apps, whether it's dating or not, find resources, connect with the people who can support them in real tangible ways. And not to say that digital ways are not as valid, but we still have a lot of folks in our communities who are in and out of various volatile situations who are also dating. Like we don't talk enough about likethe folks who aren't mainstream, you know, appealing, or aren't super attractive with money, but we talk, we don't emphasize queer youth who, I'm in New York city, you know, navigating some new spaces of, um, that are rooted in legacies of queer homeless youth. You know we don't embrace these stories, and, and really think about how these folks date and how they navigate online spaces, and how they find love and connection but also like, procure resources. Um, that's been something I've been trying to rely on other folks work in research for, because I think within our communities we're doing a disservice by not acknowledging there are folks that are more marginalized than us, I don't think one identity is more marginalized than another but I do think we have a real commitment, or we should have a real commitment rather to queer youth in various areas who actually need us to show up in various ways other than a like or a swipe or whatever. And so I'm hoping to figure out a way to do that on a platform or on an app in a way that doesn't feel tacky, for lack of a better word.

Molly: Yeah, well I'm not gonna ask too many questions about that because I'm not gonna ask you to give away your secrets but I am very excited to see how you continue to approach that because that is really really important and I really appreciate you bringing attention to that and, you know, working towards that with the work that you do.

The way we always end the show is by asking: In your ideal world, um, what would the future of gender look like?

Morgen: Ah, that's a really great question. I think the future of gender, um, would look like no gender prisons, in, in my ideal world. So I mean no confinement by gender and no restriction by gender, and the absence of gendered-based oppression. Um, but other oppressions that deeply intersect with gender, which I think just requires a full abolition of all of our oppressions, and, and what we think of like the end of the world, rather. The destruction of, like, this colonial state, but, yeah that's a lot to ask for but that's my ideal world.

Molly: Yeah! No that makes sense, so in your ideal world, um, we've, you know, decolonized the state, it's been great, um...

Morgen: [laughs]

Molly:... what do you think dating looks like in that future?

Morgen: Oh wow, that's, honestly that's something I haven't thought much about, because it feels so fantastical, it feel so dreamy and intangible...

Molly: Yeah

Morgen:... but I think dating outside our colonial reality would be something just rooted in real love and bliss? Um, it almost feels like something I can't touch right now, but I, I dream of or imagine on a regular basis, um something that's deeply affirming in that is rooted not only in healing but uplifting. I'd, I'd like to see more communities and people genuinely uplifted, not just for resistance, but at the end of the world what does it look like to simply, you know have a more harmonious collective space or spaces rather.

[*Gender Reveal* theme starts]

Molly: That's gonna do it for this week's show. Don't forget to check out the THURST app and let Morgen know what you think. Thanks everyone for sticking through that wild Skype audio. If you enjoyed the episode or learned something, please pass the show along to folks in your community, it really is the #1 thing you can do to help the show. If you love *Gender Reveal* and you want to spend more time with us than just half an hour a week, you can find us on slack at bit.ly/genderslack, you can find us on Twitter and Instagram at [@gendereveal](https://twitter.com/gendereveal), you can find me on Twitter and Instagram, you can also find us on genderpodcast.com, you can find our merch at bit.ly/gendermerch, again only a couple more weeks to check that stuff out so take a look when you can. What else, today's show was produced and edited by me, Molly Woodstock. Our logo is by the talented Michelle Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. Additional music this week and most weeks by Blue Dot Sessions. We'll be back next week with more feelings about gender.

