**Jery:** “Queers - queers fear - queers cheer cis tears queers cheer cis tears” is my vocal warmups.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

**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 all still hanging in there. Thank you for your patience last week when I needed to take a weekend off to go spend time with family. On that trip my mom asked me and I quote "What does it mean when you say that you're trans?" and I died and now I'm a ghost, so that's how that went. If your parents ask you what it means when you're trans I hope they're willing to listen to Episode 1 of the Gender Reveal podcast, and if there are any other resources I can create that will make it easier for you to talk to your parents or anyone else in your life about what it means when you say that you're trans, let me know. I am so happy to do this and spare you those interactions. Anyway, this week on the show I spoke with friend of the show and stick to resist founder Jery Che about traveling while trans, sharing stories about trauma, the power of clear stickers, and seeing gender as cultural stories that we learn and are forced to live.

**Jery:** Gender is such a weird concept. It's a made-up story that somebody tells you when you're a kid and then they make you live it. That blew my mind a little bit.

**Molly:** But first I wanted to let you know two very important things. One is that we have new merch in our merch shop. The merch shop is bit.ly/gendermerch. Specifically, Beth Easton has designed up a “Support Trans Media” shirt and if you don't like t-shirts - those don't fit your gender - you can also get a support trans media tote bag. I'm really really excited about this one. We've already had a bunch of sales on them and they're only available for another three weeks or so. So do jump on there when you can if you want one. Proceeds go to Beth and to Gendered Intelligence in the UK. Again, that's all at bit.ly/gendermerch. And speaking of supporting trans media, thank you to the literally hundreds of people who are donating their very own money to support us on Patreon. It's literally changing my life. I love you so much! I have great news, which is that Jery, our guest this week, is a perfect angel from heaven and has teamed up with us to do a special back to school promo sale for anyone who wants to join our Patreon. So between now and September 10, if you sign up at the $6 a month level, you will not only get access to our newsletter and a bunch of Gender Reveal stickers, but you will also get 5 stick to resist stickers, specifically one says “trans rights,” one says “nonbinary rights,” one says “protect trans kids” - that's my favorite - one of them is like the new POC-focused trans and queer pride flag, and then a fifth sticker TBD - whatever Jery feels like throwing in. Again, that is for everyone who, by September 10, is at the $6 a month level or more. And you can do that at patreon.com/gender. So, there's no This Week in Gender segment this week because the top of the show was long. This interview is also long, so we're going to get straight into it. Just a heads-up this week friends - this interview gets pretty dark at times. We have content warnings for genocide, abuse, murder, really anything you could think of is probably in there. I encourage you to check the show notes where I am putting more specific content notes with timestamps, but it's possible I missed something and so if you are not up for this for right now that's totally OK.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

**Molly:** Jery Che runs Stick to Resist, an online shop that sells inexpensive pronoun pins, Pride flag pins, and stickers focused on social change. They are mixed race with Korean and European settler heritage.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Molly:** In terms of gender, how do you identify?

**Jery:** I, uh, I - I identify as nonbinary.

**Molly:** What pronouns do you use?

**Jery:** They - they/them pronouns.

**Molly:** I feel like both of us to some extent are sort of waiting for new language to be invented because like the language right now around gender's limiting. Can you tell me your thoughts about that?

**Jery:** Yeah, I agree. So, I do identify as nonbinary and I do identify as trans but I'm actually pretty uncomfortable with those terms sometimes, some more than others, for a few reasons I guess. One is that they're a very broad, general category that covers all kinds of genders. One nonbinary person's gender might - may be different than another nonbinary person's gender and the same with trans people. And another reason is because both the word nonbinary and the word trans both kind of center on cis people, like nonbinary is literally saying not binary or not cis.

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** And it's kind of the same with trans. I consider trans to mean, uh, I don't identify with the gender I was assigned at birth. I'm not cis. So, both those terms kind of center around cis binary people. It's difficult to compare different types of identity but it kind of reminds me of race, in the USA at least. Black, indigenous, and people of color don't often refer to themselves as nonwhite now. A lot of that reason is the same reason, that non – both phrased “non” white centers white people. And it's also not specific, like, even the term "person of color" is very nonspecific so that, that language is changing as well so. So that's the reason. There's a third reason that I also don't like the term "trans" specifically. I - at least, I think it can do better. And that is because the term trans - it gives a lot of attention to that assignment at birth.

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** And I feel like that's illegitimate and the more we can ignore that the better. So, all that is a way to say that I hope that we continue to evolve our language and get better terms. Like, I learned one new word from you and that, one new way of identifying and that is saying "I'm a They." Which is, I love that! That phrase and I feel like I am a They. Like, that is more specific than saying I'm nonbinary and, or I'm trans. It's one form of nonbinary and it kind of says that I follow a certain tradition of gender that is Western and European settler based a little bit but it's like a more specific subset than just trans or nonbinary. And another way, another thing that you invented, Molly Woodstock invented, I think, is the phrase "They for They" which is -

**Molly:** [laughing] People keep crediting me with that. I'm like "I just thought that was a thing that we were all saying but I don't know that I heard it anywhere." I'm just like "I'm sure everyone's saying this!" But maybe I did make it make it up!

**Jery:** Well, ok, so Molly invented that. If anyone disputes that, you have 30 days to dispute that or else it's Molly's.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Jery:** But "They for They" is kind of an offshoot of "T for T"

**Molly:** Right.

**Jery:** which is Trans for Trans which has a history on Craigslist and all this, but They is They is, again, a more specific version of that. Meaning, Theys who are interested in relationships of whatever sort with other Theys.

**Molly:** Totally! Love They for They. Love to be one. Yeah, when you were talking about how people of color or BIPOCs' really broad and you specifically identify in a specific way and then we were talking about how that relates to trans identity. I do think they're really similar in that, like, if I'm talking about one specific person I will say, like, a black person or, like, an Anishinaabe person, and not like a person of color hopefully if I know what they are and like similarly if I'm talking about a person who identifies specifically as gay or bisexual I feel like that person is gay or that person's bisexual but when I'm talking about queer people broadly I'll just say, like, queer people. So I think that is actually similar, like, that we have umbrella terms that are useful when we are talking about large groups of people but when we're talking about one specific person it's more helpful to, like, be specific about who that person is and not just be like "They're a trans person of color" when maybe they're specifically a nonbinary Korean-American, right?

**Jery:** Totally what you're saying, and, and - with race for example or ethnicity, we do have the language in most cases I believe to be very specific about that but we don't as far as gender yet.

**Molly:** Totally.

**Jery:** We just have nonbinary or trans.

**Molly:** Um, so speaking of being Korean, I'm curious if you know what, like, Korean concepts of gender look like, like, pre-colonization?

**Jery:** No, not really. In the geographically adjacent cultures like Japan there are different, or have been different, conceptions of gender outside the binary, and the binary gender that is used in Korea and Japan today even. Even though they have been culturally assimilated to a large part to the European norm, the European - what I like to call the capital G capital B gender binary.

**Molly:** Mmmm.

**Jery:** The global gender binary that has been, um, I believe forced upon the world-

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** This has influenced them a lot. But even then, gender means different things in different contexts.

**Molly:** Yeah. We were talking yesterday about how you travel a lot in a way that I really admire and how when you travel you see different examples of how, like, the Gender Binary capital G capital B has been forced on different countries that have been colonized. Do you wanna talk about your experiences seeing that or your thoughts on that?

**Jery:** Sure, yeah, I've been lucky enough to be able to travel quite a bit. I travel for work sometimes and the past few years I've had the time and resources and, I’ve gained the confidence and some skills to be able to travel different places around the world and it's fascinating how the capital G capital B gender binary has influenced people from all corners of the world. Like, I was just in Brazil - it was actually in the middle of the Amazon so there's one city in the state of Amazonas in Brazil. And the state of Amazonas in Brazil is twice as big as Texas and there's one large city and they're called Manaus and then I took an hour flight to a smaller town in the state of Amazonas and then I took a 2 hour boat ride to these little tiny little eco-cabins - it's ecotourism which has its problems but it was the least harmful place I could find to be kind of outside the cities there and into the rainforest. And I saw these tiny villages, about 100 people, and even there you could see colonization of the gender binary. These were indigenous people - you could see clear distinction between men and women and their roles. The men have very short hair and European-style haircuts. The women have longer hair and European settler-style hairstyles. You could see the gender rules in what they were doing. The men were honestly just not doing a whole lot while I was there and uh-

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Jery:** like sitting around, talking, there was a group of them in the community building and I - I was told, I didn't speak the language and they didn't speak English but I was with a local guide from the area there and he mentioned that they were talking about how to actually distribute the money that they received for our little tour group for being there so they ended up making the decisions there while the women were doing work. They were managing the schoolhouse with the children, they were taking care of children who weren't in school, they were doing farm work, tending to the animals, all that kind of thing. The gender roles - they were essentially indistinguishable from if you looked at somewhere in rural England or France or a big city in the United States or even off - a lot of places in East Asia or South Asia that have been colonized either through military force or economic force or all that kind of thing.

**Molly:** Totally. So, we were talking about how you travel and how you've gained skills traveling and I'm wondering if you have tips for other trans folks or queer folks who are maybe, like, visibly queer and trans and who are nervous about traveling?

**Jery:** Yeah, one thing again is that trans people can mean a lot of different things -

**Molly:** Totally.

**Jery:** so my experience will be different than other trans peoples. But I find traveling actually very liberating - even to places that, on paper, aren't very trans-friendly, like the laws aren't trans-friendly, there might be violence against local trans people. Like I mentioned, I was in Brazil and Brazil is kind of notorious for murders of trans people, especially trans women. Like, I was at Trans Day of Remembrance last year where they read the names of people and where they were found murdered and about half of the names were in Brazil. And part of that's probably just because they may record more than other places but it's certainly an urgent problem there. But, as a visitor to that country, I sort of blend in. I have black hair, I have kind of an ethnically ambiguous look, so I'm not necessarily racially out of place, but my dress is, my gender identity is, the way I even walk and all of that is different. It's liberating in that people really see me as a foreigner first [laughs] rather than - or an outsider first, before they see me as a trans person and that's not the case in the USA or other places where my - how I present myself in other ways isn't so out of place. Also - this is kind of sad - but I feel like at least I, and probably a lot of trans people, are very experienced in humiliation [laughs] so on a daily basis I'm humiliated in this society. Whether that's being misgendered, whether that's being stared at, asked questions that people would never ask about my body or other things to cis people so I have the emotional skills to manage that in the way that a lot of cis people are not. I can be in Brazil where I speak only a few words of Portuguese and muddle through, do charades or whatever to tell people what I need. I feel like trans people often feel like they can't travel because they are trans and they don't know how they'll be received which is true but most trans people don't know how they'll be received where they are.

**Molly:** Totally.

**Jery:** And of course you wanna be somewhat safe. You don't want to go places where you know you'll be in danger, but I believe they're fewer of those places than you would imagine, especially if you're interested in things like sightseeing or going to the beach or those kinds of things that more common types of travel people do. In tourist places, I've found people don't really care about trans people. Honestly, a lot of times people just see foreigners as dollar signs [laughs] which honestly can be freeing as well as far as gender goes.

**Molly:** Yeah, that's actually a really interesting point that I hadn't thought of is that people might see you as just a weirdo American instead of a weirdo trans person which is, like, chiller. [laughs]

**Jery:** Totally. Totally. Exactly. Yeah.

**Molly:** Cool. Great. You mentioned that - not here, but you mentioned in the past that gender can be thought of as like cultural stories that are assigned to us. Do you want to talk about that at all?

**Jery:** Yeah, yeah, so yeah, I'm here to answer your question about what gender is.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Jery:** I have a definitive answer for you.

**Molly:** We're gonna end the podcast. [laughs]

**Jery:** Yep - this is the last episode. Sorry everyone. No, this is how I've been thinking about what gender is for a while now and it works for me. It might not work for other people but I think it's true to me. I thought about this concept of gender based on a tweet I saw in January 2011 - and I don't use Twitter. I stopped using Twitter a little after that so - to me, this is the most insightful tweet I ever read. It was from a website called Gender Fork, which to me was just a ground breaking website that was opened in 2007 by this person named Sarah Dopp. I believe they use they/them pronouns, and they created this website called Gender Fork in 2007 and the site's still around - genderfork.com - and what it was, was – there were some links on nonconforming gender and things like that, but what it mainly was, was profiles of gender nonconforming people, both answering questions about gender, how they felt about gender, and also photos of people who were nonconforming in their gender. And, in 2007 on the internet, this was groundbreaking to me. I - I remember following it when it first started. This was before Tumblr, this was before Facebook groups. This was before podcasts, Instagram, way before all of that. I was looking at this site recently and it's pretty cool looking back in time in 2007, 2009, 2011, wherever, and seeing how the language around gender has changed over time, at least in this English-language website. At the beginning people were talking about androgyny and ambiguity in their presentation and things like that. Pretty soon after that, the word genderqueer started to appear more and more. And, I think, in the year 2011 was also the first time that I saw the word nonbinary, and that became more and more popular. Yeah, it's really cool. I recommend checking it out if you want to see the history of how people identified with gender.

**Molly:** The tweet, I'm dying for the tweet! [laughs]

**Jery:** The tweet. [laughs] So, I pulled up the tweet here. The tweet says, so, "Gender is such a weird concept. It's a made up story that somebody tells you when you're a kid and then they make you live it." Which to me is just like, that blew my mind a little bit. Because, I think it's true. Like, I mean - really there are two stories Like, you're told two stories and you're assigned one of those stories to live - and those two stories are interconnected of course, like, one of the gender binaries relates to the other gender binaries, the stories intertwine, and really I think these are the most intricate stories of all time. They've been passed down, and altered, and added to over time. I mean - people's gender roles are so complicated now, but they are enforced. They are mandatory, compulsory. And like - the stories include like, what you're supposed to wear, or how you talk to other people, how you present yourself, what you do with your time, how you do work, what your life goals are. You could list those but you couldn't imagine what they are. I'm sure everybody listening know-

**Molly:** Knows about the gender roles we're supposed to be doing?

**Jery:** [laughing] Knows gender.

**Molly:** [laughing] Yeah, we're familiar.

**Jery:** It's interesting that these two stories are the capital G capital B Gender Binary. And these two stories are really European stories, even if we're not in Europe. And there are people, I know, listening from all over, and you know very similar versions of these same stories. And the reason for that is that the European version of the gender binary has just been violently, and culturally, and economically enforced throughout the world. From wars, and genocide, and movies, and music, and magazines, and money as well. I mean, if you want to be part of the rich European and European settler-based economy, you need to follow their rules on how to act. I can give you an example of this base on my history, and I guess my family history.

**Molly:** Yeah, that'd be great.

**Jery:** Cool. So, I think this - this is gonna be a little dark. My mother is from Korea, born in Korea, and my father is born in the, what is referred to as, the USA. And, he's white European settler. Let's go back to the Korean war. This is a story about war. So the Korean war ended - I believe it was 1950, I hope I got that right. And my mother was born at the end of the Korean war. And near the end of the Korean war this was a battle between how the American history books at least, or the USA history books talk about war between the "evil communist" North Korea versus the "freedom loving capitalists" in South Korea. In reality it was - It was like a civil war. At the end of the Korean war, when it was known that the USA won, and even after a ceasefire was declared, the US military along with the South Korean military destroyed - and by destroyed I mean flattened, every city, every town, every village, literally, in North Korea and part of the bordering areas in South Korea. Like, every single one. 25% of the North Korean population was killed at that time. That includes my mother's mother, who was in South Korea but... it was a little indiscriminate at that time. And just as an aside, people make fun of North Korea in Europe and European settler communities, and even in East Asia and that kind of thing. North Korea hates the USA and the west for this reason. They would be irrational not to hate the USA and Europe and like, when our current president says that if they don't submit that they'll have a rain of fire like they've never seen, that is serious. That has happened before and it just makes things a lot worse. But anyway, so that's the context my mother was born in. And then later, when she grew up, she moved to near a US military base where my father was stationed, and she did a job um - doing work for the USA service members. And my father ended up asking her to marry him and move the USA with him. And she's told me she didn't want to. When my father got her the plane ticket she seriously considered just selling it, but it was such a - she had just such a difficult life, that she went along. She moved with my father to the USA, near the Seattle area. Another aside, I have a lot of asides, but, near the Seattle area there are just the wild parallels. This isn't specific to Korea, I'm using that as one example, but you could also look at the Seattle area, the Duwamish people lived in the Seattle area. They had one town near the center of where Seattle is. The European settlers killed a bunch of people, they burned down all of the longhouses people lived in in this town.

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** And this wasn't ancient history.

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** The last longhouse was burned down in 1904

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** I actually lived in an apartment building in Seattle that was built prior to 1904, and I thought about like, there could've been a settler who lived in this very apartment I was in who went for a day of work burning down a longhouse, killing Native Americans, the Duwamish people. They were moved into concentration camps and forced to culturally assimilate as much as possible - it's the people who survived. Like I said-

**Molly:** Mhmm. Mhmm. Into binary [laughs softly] European gender roles.

**Jery:** Definitely, yeah. Very dark stuff.

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** So - So back to my story. So I was born here, and my mother, like many immigrants who don't have much economic or cultural capital, she attempted to assimilate and wanted me to assimilate as much as possible, with pressure from society overall and the rest of my European settler side of my family. I was gender nonconforming as early as I remember. A lot of my memories - earliest memories growing up were pain, and arguments, and being yelled at around how I want my hair cut, what kind of clothes I wanted to wear, what kind of toys I like, what I wanted to be as Halloween. All the kinds of things like that. Yeah, that was a way to assimilate myself into this European gender binary.

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** So yeah, those are two ways this European assimilation happens. Like, one is the societal level, forcing societies to submit to European gender binary and gender roles. A second way is like, with family. Family, as many nonbinary, and trans, and gender nonconforming people know, family can be one of the most difficult and strongest forces in controlling one's gender. A third way that was big in my life was just other people in society. Your peers - so this is gonna take an even darker turn. [Laughs]

**Molly:** Mhmm. [Laughing] Can't wait.

**Jery:** So, I mean - Growing up I didn't really understand or follow the gender binary norms. So I was assigned male at birth, and growing up I remember trying to be friends with people assigned girls at birth, and they would just get angry at me. Like, they would have nothing to do with me. They'd yell at me, I got kicked and punched sometimes when I came near them. Just, terrible things. And I wasn't harassing them, I was just an extremely shy child. I had what was - what it's called now is selective mutism. And that I didn't - I just didn't talk most of the time. But I was maybe a little annoying to them because of that, but I didn't deserve being treated that way. And of course, as they are, boys were a lot worse. For as early as I could remember until at least through middle school I was just - I don't like to call it bullied, because that sounds not very harsh. I was assaulted and attacked like, severely and brutally for most of that time. I was just beaten mercilessly. I often had bruises all over my body. I had cracked ribs. My head - I often had bumps on my head. I'd been knocked unconscious many times. It lasted for a long time. Like, a lot of people don't have strong memories of their childhood, but I remember, when I was a child, not remembering what happened in the past week because of this. And it's hard to tell, but I think like, some of my - the way I talk - and I've had a few just tangents, I have difficulty thinking in a very linear way. That may be because of it, I - It's hard to know. So that was very traumatic of course. The physical violence on a day-to-day basis didn't continue as an adult but - just interpersonal relationships, just so much humiliation and rejection, and all those kinds of things into my adulthood. So, by that terrible story, what I'm trying to say is that there is extreme social pressure both culturally, by their family, and by peers, to force you to live these - one of these two stories that are told to you.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Jery:** It's just extreme.

**Molly:** So when you were going through that, do you feel like you knew why it was happening? Did you recognize like, "Oh, this is because I'm like, not playing by these rules that everyone else is playing by?"

**Jery:** Sometimes yes because, obviously they would tell me. [laughs softly]

**Molly:** [laughs softly] Mhmm.

**Jery:** They would call me names and, I mean some of them weren't even names. Some of them were insults that I just did not understand. Like, they would call me a girl, they would call me a woman, like, all this stuff like - that I didn't see as an insult? But I knew it was something that made them angry, so I kind of got it. A lot of it was just completely normal to me until I grew up and went through some therapy and realized it was not normal.

**Molly:** Do you remember when you started seeing other people who were gender nonconforming, or nonbinary, or trans, and saw that and, that had spoke to you as like, someone else who was experiencing the world slightly more the way that you were?

**Jery:** I do remember like, the first person that I remember was in school. I went to some cross-school event I - I think it was sponsored by some reading program, and we'd formed little reading groups. And I remember there was one child there, who I didn't know if they were assigned as a girl or a boy.

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** And I was so fascinated by this person, I wanted to be this person's best friend. So I became aware of that a little bit growing up. But as a teenager I found search engines, and started looking around the internet, and I found out about trans people, and at that time the only information I could find about trans people were - was about binary trans people, trans women and trans men. And I had thought I was a trans woman for a while. So, it was difficult for me because as I learned more about trans women, and how they live in society, and their experiences, I didn't really see myself in them very much. In some ways, yes, but in many important ways no. It was really later on, with sites like Genderfork, and then Tumblr was a huge, a huge way I learned more about nonbinary genders. And the internet was such a great resource. And now there are nonbinary groups in real life, there are internet communities, it's - it's just opened up a whole world of possibilities, so.

**Molly:** Yeah. Sort of a hard pivot but, you make so many cool stickers and pins and I really wanna make sure we get to talk about them. So, I'm just curious, how you got into doing that? And like, why it feels important to you? We were walking around Portland earlier today and you were just like, running off and stickering everything and like -

**Jery:** [Laughs]

**Molly:** Even like - 'cause you don't live here, so even when you're not here I just walk around town and see your stickers up everywhere and like - so yeah. I'm just really curious, how you got into it and why it feels fun and important to you.

**Jery:** Sure, sure. I do want to clarify that we *were* walking around Portland but it was a ghost that was putting up those stickers

**Molly:** Oh, I’m so sorry. Uh, we were walking around Portland, and then weirdly we would walk by a sign and a sticker would be there suddenly and we were like “Huh.”

**Jery:** It’s a mystery, I don’t know.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Jery:** But um, yeah. So I got into stickers not that long ago, in the later parts of 2018. It was brewing around in my head for a little bit. So I went – I moved to Sweden for two years to study a master’s degree. Which, for people in countries where university is extremely expensive like the USA and UK and Canada I believe, I would highly recommend looking at other countries. I moved to Sweden where most of their master’s degrees are in English. I didn’t see any trans people in the world. I hardly saw any queer people whatsoever. And, just walking around the city I didn’t feel like there was anyone that I related with. At least as far as gender went, until I started noticing around town these stickers. In a lot of Europe there’s a pretty good political stickering culture. Like a lot of the antifascist action and those type of stickers you’ll see all around Europe. And I saw a lot of queer stickers pop up as well. As well as like, wheatpastes for things like, there’s a local what they call “lesbian breakfast.” So like, a lot of little queer things around town which made me feel like, even though I didn’t know any of these people, It made me feel more comfortable that they were around. It changed the atmosphere and the feeling around town, more that I belonged there. So that was floating around my head a little bit when I moved back. So I moved back to Seattle about three years ago. And when I moved back to Seattle my neighborhood, where I lived for many many years, which was Capitol Hill, which was the traditional queer neighborhood. Prior to that it was a traditional working class neighborhood. It had changed dramatically, entire blocks had been torn down, and luxury condos and apartments came up. Like a lot of long standing gay bars, small independent businesses, low income housing, were all torn down for these luxury apartments. And the main cause of this is that Amazon, the corporation, the corporate office, moved in in the next neighborhood over. So in order to – for the workers there who are generally very highly paid – I saw a statistic that the average, or – I’m sorry, the median, the middle salary of an amazon employee in Seattle is $130,000, so they’re – they’re pretty wealthy people. And the demographic in this neighborhood changed a lot too. It was a lot of business majors and computer science majors and either people who are focusing on making money for a corporation rather than these artistic types, and queer types, and activists, and all of this. And I felt like I did not belong whatsoever. And then I noticed these stickers around town. Like, there were these stickers that were like “F U Techie” “Tech bro go home” “citizens for bro free hill” all these stickers that were resisting against this change, and staking a claim as still a neighborhood for the people who were being pushed out. So that made me feel better like, my people were still there. After a while of seeing these and feeling powerless against these multi-multi-billion dollar forces changing my neighborhood and the only neighborhood I felt really at home in in my city, I started making my own stickers. I opened an Etsy shop, sticktoresist.com, that I’d sell these stickers with. And then I started making some buttons as well. But the stickers I focus on, very political stickers, I like to call ‘em “spicy stickers”

[both laugh]

**Jery:** Because they’re uh – they’re a lil’-

**Molly:** They’re spicy! [laughs]

**Jery:** Yeah, they’re – they’re on the nose a lil’ bit. So I have some stickers that just say things like “trans rights,” “nonbinary rights,” “abolish ICE.” One of my favorites is “trust no bro” and things like that. And then I have a large series of stickers that is my Reject series. I think I have about 22 of them now, that say things like “reject the gender binary,” “reject transphobia,” “reject misogyny,” “reject toxic masculinity,” “reject white supremacy,” there’s a lot of things to reject in our societies. [laughs softly]

**Molly:** Yes. For sure.

**Jery:** And I actually really love those stickers, because they all follow the same very simple format, and my thought process around that is that they’re all interrelated. You could take any two or three or four of these stickers and find connections between all of them. So yeah, I really like those and I feel like with those stickers it’s - it can change the public feeling in a space.

**Molly:** It does. It does change – I, like – I see all the time, people taking photos of your stickers, and posting them because those stickers made their day when they saw them on a sign. And like, those aren’t necessarily people who know you or know who put, like – made the sticker or put the sticker up but they’re just really excited because they feel seen by the sticker, and that, yeah, can really change the tone of an area. Do you have a favorite sticker or a favorite sticker story, or a favorite pin or anything like that.

**Jery:** Um, my favorite stickers right now. I have one that I copied from trans rights activist Don Cheadle who wrote – wore a t-shirt um, on Saturday Night Live that said “protect trans kids,” and I love that sticker, as you can tell from my story I just told about my childhood, where no one protected me. Not my parents, not my teachers, no adults, no kids. Literally nobody protected me. So I think that is extremely important. And I noticed there’s – that the mystery ghost has been stickering those around schools in the Pacific Northwest so [laughs] I think that – that helps change the atmosphere a little bit around those areas as well.

**Molly:** So, I – I didn’t know this until you told me right before we were recording, but you own nonbinaryrights.com. What is your vision for this website? What are nonbinary rights?

**Jery:** Sure. Yeah. So yeah, um, I registered nonbinaryrights.com very recently. And I got nonbinaryrights on Instagram and Twitter and – I don’t know what else.

**Molly:** Isn’t it so weird how many handles are still available? Like, I have genderpodcast.com, I have transjournalist.com right now, I have um – a bunch of bit.ly’s, Like I have like, genderslack and gendermerch, and like, patreon.com/gender and I’m like, really, no ones ever done anything with gender before? [laughs]

**Jery:** Yeah.

**Molly:** [laughing] We all have one, and they’re all available.

**Jery:** Yeah, it’s wild. If you – If you wanna register a domain related to like, computers, or sports, or like, stores, you’ll have to do like, like uh –

**Molly:** baseball.pizzaninja? Yeah. [laughs]

**Jery:** Yeah, so I started thinking – before I registered nonbinaryrights.com I started to think about nonbinary rights. It started because, as of right now, as of recording, Washington state which is where Seattle is, in the settler colony known as the USA, does not allow nonbinary gender markers on state IDs like driver’s licenses. They only allow “F” and “M,” which people are probably familiar with.

**Molly:** The two genders. [laughs]

**Jery:** The two genders. [laughs] Ah, the two genders. So I started just kinda raising a ruckus around that. I just started throwing out emails to people, to our department of licensing which is who issues IDs in Washington state, to LGBTQ-friendly-ish state legislators, and local trans organizations, to try to get information about why we aren’t allowing nonbinary genders in our state. Which is theoretically a pretty progressive state as far as American settler states go.

**Molly:** [laughs softly] Mhmm.

**Jery:** And at that point I started thinking more and more about what rights we need, and what people are not doing. So that is one of them, just being seen on forms and identification as nonbinary. But I started thinking, and there’s a lot of other rights that nonbinary people don’t have, and I think a lot of nonbinary people don’t even think about, because they’re just so used to not having those rights. So I wanted to create a resource, even just a list, of what nonbinary rights we need to be able to fully participate in society, and to get some feedback from other people to kind of brainstorm as a nonbinary community on what these rights are.

**Molly:** What rights do you have in mind? Like, you alluded to that there are a lot of rights that we don’t even think about, and now I want to know what I’m not thinking about.

**Jery:** Sure. I mean, I don’t wanna do a – try to do a full list right now.

**Molly:** Totally.

**Jery:** By rights, I mean – don’t only mean the legal rights, but social and cultural rights as well.

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** So, like I mentioned, one example is on forms. Not just your ID, but other government forms, other – other forms by companies and organizations; if we aren’t allowed to state our true gender, then that is not allowing us to participate fully in society. Other things are, public accommodation, one obvious place is bathrooms, that most nonbinary people struggle with on a day-to-day basis. Binary gender restrooms are a nightmare for us nonbinary people, and they are unnecessary. There’s a law that was passed in Seattle, and I believe in some other places around the world, that single person restrooms cannot be legally gendered. They have to be nonbinary. And that’s an easy law, there’s no reason single-person restrooms, there’s no – there’s no justification that The Cis can come up with for those to be gendered. I actually narc’d on a business in Seattle that had binary restrooms, and within a couple weeks they covered up their binary signs with nonbinary signs. So the system worked in that way at least. So tell all your lawmakers to pass these laws. Even multi-person restrooms, um, at least in, I know Portland and Seattle, and I’m sure other places, there are some establishments with gender neutral multi-person restrooms, and they work fine. Nobody has problems in them. Some people who aren’t used to them might be a little weirded out and think it’s a weird experience, but they can use the restroom just fine. In – I mentioned that I lived in Sweden for a couple years, and more often than not in Sweden there are gender-neutral restrooms. Genders – Binary gendered restrooms are actually the minority there. And typically these gender-neutral restrooms have single-stalls and a common area with sinks for everyone to use together. And those work great, they don’t have many issues there. And I’m sure it’s actually cheaper than coming up with two restrooms for the two binary genders. I mean, that’s not the only issue right?

**Molly:** Right.

**Jery:** There are so many different areas, from the wage gap, nobody talks about nonbinary people and how we get paid less than cis people. Any other areas in society and just thinking about them you can come up with dozens and dozens of different areas where there is binary gender segregation. Airports are a uh – particularly traumatic form of binary gender segregation that leads to intrusive pat-downs and other searches for some trans people.

**Molly:** I mean like, even banking, like, banks are legally required to assign you a binary gender. Like, including credit unions. And, so I tried to join my local credit union that’s supposed to be really progressive, and on the form to sign up online I had to check male or female and I like, refused to, and so I talked to them and was like “Hey, If I come in in person, like, what would – how would you handle this, like my license has an X on it?” And they were like “Oh we have to give you a gender, but if you come in person we’ll like, do it for you?” So basically they’re like “We’ll misgender you so you don’t have to misgender yourself.” And I’m like, hmm, yes, the best solution. [laughs]

**Jery:** [small laugh] Wow.

**Molly:** So, anyway yeah.

**Jery:** Um, yeah but I – there, there are other areas of social gender segregation that people don’t think of, like clothing stores for example.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Jery:** Nearly all clothing stores at least, our society are – are gender segregated, and there’s no reason for that.

**Molly:** Right.

**Jery:** It’s easier for cis people to follow their gender stories by just going to the side of the clothing store that works for them and pick out whatever they want and it’ll follow their story. Whereas for nonbinary people, even coming up with clothing choices in this society where almost all clothing is binary gender segregated, is just such a problem to navigate.

**Molly:** Almost every single thing in society, I would argue. [laughing] There’s not really anything set up for us.

**Jery:** Yeah, exactly. And like – Yeah. So, if you could think of other areas, I’m gonna go to nonbinaryrights.com, I’ll have a link to send me an email, and I’ll add it to the site.

**Molly:** Nice.

**Jery:** And if you have any resources as well, there are some pretty cool resources. There was an author, a legal author who wrote a, from my understanding, a pretty groundbreaking paper in the Harvard law review called “They, Them, Theirs” I believe. It’s about 100 pages of legal thought on how to pass legislation that would allow nonbinary rights in society. I didn’t read all of it because I’m not a lawyer and I don’t understand a lot of it. I could understand a lot of the basics, but I loved near the end, and I’ll paraphrase here, it said. It said “just a few years ago, nonbinary rights seemed like an impossible task, but now it seems like an inevitability.”, which I love, and I think is true. We are going to get our rights, at least, many of them, and I think it will be faster than we think as long as we keep the pressure up and we demand them.

**Molly:** Yeah, yeah. Well this is the part in the show where I say: What else did you want to talk about that we haven’t talked about yet?

**Jery:** Um, one thing is, so I talked about some pretty depressing stuff and some pretty traumatic things, and I know a lot of trans and nonbinary people now don’t like to center traumatic stories about being trans or nonbinary. They would rather focus on positive stories about trans people succeeding, and living happy lives, and having happy childhoods, which is great. I’m not saying we shouldn’t have those stories, but there are still emergencies [laughs softly] in our trans community that really need to be addressed, and we really need to keep focus on those. Not sole focus, we should focus on happy stories as well, but some of those are this kind of childhood trauma with families and peers, that’s still going on. It’s getting better in some places, like Portland, but in many places it’s still just as terrible as described. And my story was very bad, but I survived it. A lot of people don’t. I don’t wanna quote statistics, but self-harm and suicide rates for trans and nonbinary people are astronomical. There are many, many awesome people who would be listening to this right now who aren’t because they are no longer alive. So that is an emergency that we need to keep addressing. And there are many other emergencies. Black trans women in the USA and other places in European colonies are being subjected to terrible violence and murder. Indigenous people and Latinx people as well. The United States Immigration Customs Enforcement Agency (ICE) has a concentration camp for trans women in the American southwest. At least one trans women there has already died. The group of trans women who are still there recently wrote a letter detailing the abuses and torture they are facing. Those are emergencies, and there are many other trans emergencies as well. So as trans and nonbinary people, and allies and accomplices listening, I think that we need to be good members of our community and focus on these emergencies and improve the situation as much as we can.

**Molly:** So, sometimes when, say like a Black person is targeted by the police and there’s like a really horrific video going around, Black folks will say like, please stop sharing this because it’s like, traumatizing me just so that we can hope that white people are gonna be guilted into helping but, if they aren’t guilted in at this point, it’s not gonna change. So, do you feel like the value of sharing stories is to shock people into helping, or to educate them, or to remind them that it’s still going on, or like how we can do this in a way that is being genuinely helpful without just like, retraumatizing people?

**Jery:** Honestly I don’t know. I wish I knew how to fix these problems and I don’t know. I do know ignoring them is not going to help, so if anyone has better ideas than to try to keep raising awareness of these issues, please make those tactics known. [laughs softly]

**Molly:** No, I mean, I think you’re right and I think that there’s a huge difference between, for example, sharing an article that talks about the concentration camps that trans Latinx women are in right now, versus like, sharing a video of them dying. Like, those would be two different – totally different things to me. So I’m not saying you’re wrong at all, I was just curious because I think that’s something that I struggle with. On Twitter for example, I don’t retweet as many stories of this as maybe I should, because in my head I’m like, think of all the trans listeners who are like, please stop. Like, they tell me, they’re like “stop sharing content that is upsetting I don’t want it”. But I also think your point is incredibly, incredibly valid and me not sharing that story means that other people are literally not gonna hear it, so I’m just trying to figure out where the line is and what I should be doing, and I’m not [laughing] trying to say you’re not right.

**Jery:** Yeah, I – Twitter’s tough, and I haven’t, like I mentioned, I haven’t used Twitter since 2011-

**Molly:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Jery:** [laughs softly] so I’m not sure the best way to tweet. But in general, content warnings are fantastic.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Jery:** If people don’t want to read something, if you hide it behind a content warning they don’t have to.

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

**Jery:** So, I started this interview talking about the two stories we’re told and forced to live, what is – what is colloquially known as the gender binary. I believe it is important and vital for us to create our own stories.

**Molly:** Mhmm.

**Jery:** And allow different options for people to have. Not just one of the two binary gender stories, but new stories that we create for ourselves. And honestly they’re gonna be better stories because the current two stories are thousands of years old, and things have changed. So I – I think our stories will be important and good. [laughs]

**Molly:** [laughs loudly and heartily]

**Jery:** So, in addition to that, the future of gender – So, there’s an elephant in the room when we talk about gender, and it’s a big elephant, it’s the biggest elephant in the history of rooms. The biggest elephant in the biggest room in the history of indoors. And it is one of those gender binary stories that has been responsible for the majority of violence, oppression, war, genocide, and it needs to be stopped. And I’m sure you can guess what I’m talking about, and that is: men. And people phrase this in certain ways, like toxic masculinity, and while that is true, there is this elaborate story around men, this gender story, and we can try to chip away at the worst parts of that, but you have to ask: is that story worth keeping around? And I’m not talking about the people. I’m not talking about violence towards people, but we need to create new stories for men as well. That’s another one of the emergencies I talked about. We need to stop men from being terrible, and the reason they’re terrible is because gender. That’s it. It’s because of the capital G capital B Gender Binary, and the story they were assigned that is a awful story, -

**Molly:** Yeah. Can’t wait to –

**Jery:** so let’s end it.

**Molly:** [laughing heartily] reinvent men.

**Jery:** [laughs softly]

[*Gender Reveal* theme starts]

**Molly:** That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. You can find Jery on sticktoresist.com, on Instagram.com/sticktoresist, and at nonbinaryrights.com. If you want to find us, we’re on Instagram and Twitter, we’re at genderpodcast.com, and you can also hang out with us on Slack. Slack is super fun, but don’t take my word for it –

[record scratch, *Gender Reveal* theme music stops]

**Jery:** But the best way to find me is a Slack created by this cool podcast called Gender Reveal

**Molly:** Whaaaaat?

**Jery:** Yeah I – I hear there’s a new URL called bit.ly/genderslack

**Molly:** Yeeeeaaaah.

**Jery:** And um, if you don’t know what Slack is, that’s okay, I didn’t know what Slack was really before I started joining the Gender Reveal podcast. It’s like a series of message boards or chat rooms, that is limited to people, in this case who join the Gender Reveal Slack, and it’s such a fantastic community right now. I’m on there every day, I’m on there too much. It is my favorite gender related community right now. If you’re on Facebook groups and things like that, it puts them to shame probably. [laughs softly] So I highly recommend joining that.

**Molly:** Yeah, thanks for explaining it, because I never do. I’m just like “Get on it!” and then people are like “What is it?” And I’m like “Mmm, show up! Figure it out!” So I appreciate you telling people like, what it is. [laughs]

**Jery:** Yeah that’s a – It has a learning curve if you have never used it, but you can – you can get through it.

[Record scratch, *Gender Reveal* theme music resumes]

**Molly:** Don’t forget to check out our new “Support Trans Media” shirts and tote bags at bit.ly/gendermerch, and also don’t forget that if you wanna take advantage of Jery’s special back to school pledge drive, you can join us at the $6 dollar level by September 10th for five extra stickers. Today’s show was produced and edited by me, Molly Woodstock. Our logo is by Michelle Leigh, and our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. We will be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]