**Tuck:** Hey, it’s Tuck, jumping in before the show with a few things, one is that today’s show includes frequent discussion of murder, police brutality and death, as well as brief explicit descriptions of sex, so please take care of yourself. Another thing is that I had this entire episode all edited and ready to go, and I was about to release it this morning, and I saw that the supreme court decision had come out, and so I changed This Week in Gender a little bit, but you may feel like overall, the tone of this episode is more somber than you would expect for this day in history. Finally, the episode that I made with the NPR podcast *Life Kit* will be out tomorrow, so if you’re interested in that, check the feed of NPR’s *Life Kit*. Okay, here’s the show.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music plays]

**Tuck:** Welcome to *Gender Reveal*. A podcast that hopefully gets us a little bit closer to understanding what the hell gender is. I’m your host and resident gender detective, Tuck Woodstock. [Quietly] Weird.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Tuck:** Hey everyone. I hope you're hanging in there, whatever that looks like for you. There is so much going on right now including, of course, the protests for Black lives and against police brutality, the national discussion of finally abolishing the police. And speaking of which, I really hope that you listen to last week's episode with Vidhya Aravind. Vidhya has so much to share about what it would look like to abolish police, as well as how to get involved in activism without being scared of not knowing enough, or making mistakes. It’s an amazing episode and I really hope that you listen and share with your community. Anyway, in addition to that, there are like three or four different news stories for trans people breaking right now, so, today, we’re going to talk through a few of those news stories, and then we’re going to re-listen to our conversation from last year with Alyssa Pariah. This interview with Alyssa is relevant for so many reasons, Alyssa is a Black trans activist, she’s an amazing organizer, she talks about abolishing prisons and police, she talks about how Black Lives Matter shows up for trans lives, and she also talks about her friend Layleen Polanco Xtravaganza, who we will also talk about in This Week in Gender. All in all, it’s one of my favorite episodes ever, and I hope you enjoy listening to it either again, or for the first time.

But before we get to that, I told you I would shout out anyone who donated at least $60 to a Black led organization, these folks all asked to remain anonymous so we could focus on promoting these amazing organizations, they all donated at least $100 dollars, and these organizations are: Black and Pink, which is a prison abolitionist organization that supports LGBTQ and HIV-positive prisoners; this includes the National Queer and Trans Therapists of Color Network; the Transgender, Gender Variant, and Intersex Justice Project or TGIJP; the Detroit Bail fund; and the Black Trans Protestors Emergency Fund, which was set up by Black Trans Femmes in the Arts in collaboration with Black Trans Travel Fund, For the Gworls, and the Okra project. So if any of y'all donate at least $60 to these orgs or any Black led orgs let me know, and I will shout you out on the show.

Not going to take up too much time with this, but we do have all of our Pride month only merch in the shop at bit.y/gendermerch with proceeds going to Black, trans, and sex worker-led organizations, so check that out if you haven't, and if you want to, there's a lot of good stuff in there. Also, I have been out in the streets six out of the last seven nights, yikes, reporting on the protests in Portland. Most of those nights I have been working for myself, for free, for the cause, and the only reason I'm able to do this is because I have consistent income from the Gender Reveal Patreon to pay my bills while I'm doing all this other stuff. So I just wanted to say a huge thank you to all of our Patreon folks for allowing me to do this work that I do not just Gender Reveal but also things like reporting on the protests in Portland. Rewards will be coming your way as soon as possible, and in the meantime just know that I love you so much. If you'd like to join us you can do so at patreon.com/gender, if you do that please donate to Black trans orgs as well, I don't want to be taking away from that, ever.

And this brings us to This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender intro plays]

**Tuck:** Okay friends, let's see how much news we can get through today. There is so much going on there, is too much in gender. First off, some pretty terrible news just broke in the United Kingdom about the GRA reform. I'm going to hold off talking about that right now until we have more confirmed details, so far it seems like it's mostly just one newspaper article that's stuck behind a paywall about what will probably happen, so let's hold off on that and we will get some trans experts from the UK to come tell us more about it soon.

Meanwhile, back in the United States, the Trump administration rolled back non-discrimination protections for trans folks seeking health Care AKA all trans folks. Basically, in 2016, the Obama administration created a rule explaining that sex discrimination includes gender identity, so trans and non-binary folks are legally protected from discrimination. And the Trump administration was basically like, no, sex just means sex assigned at birth, it's super okay to discriminate against trans people and in fact, not only can you deny trans people trans related care you can also deny them any care you want just because you don't like trans people.

Okay but guess what? Turns out the whole Trump administration healthcare non-discrimination protection thing actually doesn't really fucking matter, because today, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that under Title XII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, I want to say off the top of my head, according to that, trans people actually are explicitly protected under sex discrimination. So, basically whole Trump administration, they’re just wrong, that basically just goes away, they have absolutely no ground to stand on that because the supreme Court's decision outweighs whatever the Trump administration says. Now was that supreme Court decision about healthcare? No, it was about employment, but because the ruling by the supreme Court was that the phrase “sex discrimination” protects trans people, you can also apply that to healthcare, you can apply that to a lot of other things. We will talk about this more in another episode but I just wanted to make that really clear right now

[Somber Music]

**Tuck:** Now I want to say the names of two black trans women who were murdered in the last few days. I'm talking about Riah Milton, in Liberty Township, Ohio, who was 25 years old, and Dominique Fells, who often went by Rem’mie, who is 27 years old, in Philadelphia. I really wanted to share more about who Riah and Dominique were in life, but I can't find much about them, so just know that they were so loved, and they were so young, and they deserve so much fucking better. And I also want to mention Layleen Polanco Xtravaganza, the 27-year-old who died in Rikers last year. You will hear Alyssa talk about Layleen’s death in this episode. Layleen had epilepsy and died in her cell at Rikers after being unable to post $500 in bail. New video evidence shows that guards waited an hour and a half before calling for help for Layleen. In fact, some folks are claiming that Rikers staff laughed, laughed, after opening Polanco’s cell door before deciding to seek medical help.

To leave on a good no let me just say that yesterday there was a rally Brooklyn for Black trans lives. It was an enormous, an estimated 15000 people, Layleen’s family was there, Angela Davis was there, it looks so big and beautiful and it gave me so much hope, and today's Supreme Court decision, we will talk about it on an upcoming episode about why it doesn’t magically fix everything, but please allow yourself to celebrate small wins. Please allow yourself some kind of hope, because we need it.

This has been This Week in Gender.

[Somber Music ends]

[This Week in Gender outro plays]

[Intro music plays]

**Tuck:** Alyssa Pariah is a social justice activist and educator in Portland Oregon. She's motivated by her lived experience of oppression as a Black Puerto Rican trans woman born in poverty, and has developed a strong socialist feminist lens with which she perceives and critiques the crumbling empire of the united states. This interview was originally recorded at a live Gender Reveal event at Portland State University in November 2019 and was first aired earlier this year.

[Music ends]

**Tuck:** Uh, my guest today is Alyssa Pariah, who I’m so excited to talk to, and if you could introduce yourself, that would be awesome.

**Alyssa:** Hi everyone, my name is Alyssa Pariah, my pronouns are she/her/hers. I’m the co-chair of Portland Jobs with Justice, and I’m a longtime activist here in Portland. Uh, I’m usually screaming at protests.

**Tuck:** Yeah, so the way we always start the show is by asking in terms of gender, how do you identify?

**Alyssa:** I’m a trans woman.

**Tuck:** Great. I would love to hear first, just, like, I know you’re really busy today. So where are you coming from and where are you going today?

**Alyssa:** I just walked down here from a protest in Pioneer Square in Portland, Oregon, which was calling attention to yet again, uh, Israeli’s siege on Gaza, and their continued illegal occupation and expanding settlements and devastation to Palestinians. And I’m going to a fundraiser where I will be MCing for Critical Resistance, an organization that was founded in part by iconic Angela Davis. That’s an organization that’s dedicated to ending the prison industrial complex, abolishing prisons and police.

**Tuck:** Yes. I don’t know if you’ve seen on Twitter and Instagram, people are doing a lot of, like, 2009 to 2019 comparisons, and in 2009, uh, you were working with the Audre Lorde Project, and I was wondering if you could tell us a little bit about that organization and how it impacted your life.

**Alyssa:** Yes. The Audre Lorde Project is a collective of queer and trans people of color that are dedicated to continuing, uh, the feminist, socialist, scholar, thinker, activist Audre Lorde, uh, and her work and her vision for beloved community. And they see themselves as being a, uh, sort of radical edge of what’s acceptable as a 501(c)(3). So, 10 years ago, at 85 Oxford Street in Brooklyn, New York, I was tapped to be part of the Audre Lorde Project’s first-ever TransJustice Community School that was led and taught by Mya Vazquez, who is a, uh, Afro-Puerto Rican trans woman, as I am, who is doing important work to get us – Black and brown trans women, sex workers, who are not yet invested in political change – to learn about our potential power as change agents. Especially in showing up for one another when we get, uh, busted by the police for prostitution and have no way of knowing how to defend ourselves, we learn about how to show up and do jail support for one-another, because it’s very difficult to find that otherwise. So the TransJustice Community School taught us how to do that and so much more, especially teaching us how to, uh, show up for people who are not like us but need bodies and other people who are activists and advocates to show up for them, so we learned about how to start a campaign, how to, uh, lobby, how to, uh, do a protest from start to finish, how to collect people and ask them to be sustainers and members of, uh, enduring organizations. And I’m very grateful, uh, and I’m very proud to say that I was the valedictorian of that class, so… Eat it, bitches.

[Tuck and crowd laugh]

**Alyssa:** Yeah. So, it worked!

**Tuck:** Yeah!

**Alyssa:** I’m still here, ten years later!

**Tuck:** Yeah, you are!

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** Yeah, so you’ve done a bunch of organizing since then, and I know that you do work with the DSA a lot, the Democratic Socialists of America, and one of the things that DSA is talking about a lot is Medicare For All, and I was curious how you think trans justice would look under a Medicare For All system and how we can move towards that.

**Alyssa:** Number one, there has to be a promise by the coalition, uh, local and national, to not allow for any carve outs for trans care, because it is a boogeyman that the right uses all the time to try to convince confused cis people that if they vote for universal healthcare, then there will be all of these surreptitious trans people that are getting all of this superfluous medical attention and draining their pockets at the end of the day. And this is something that has to be fought against right now by people who are advocating for Medicare For All. So that, ideally, there are trans people who will be willing to dedicate their time and their talent to building this movement now, so that when Medicare For All wins, it will be because of a strong contingent of trans people who fought for it. So I want people to be doing that work now, so that when we win, and we will win, uh, the United States of America *will* have universal healthcare, and it will be explicitly in favor of trans people accessing the care that they need.

**Tuck:** I’m so excited.

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** Great. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** I’ll see you at the doctor’s office.

**Tuck:** Perfect. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** Wouldn’t that be fun, if trans people could just go to the doctor and, like, have a good time? [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Oh, yeah. Without a horrible trauma-inducing anxiety attack? I’d love that. Oy.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah, exactly. Seems cool.

**Alyssa:** Alright.

**Tuck:** This is a cool utopian future. So, I was watching a YouTube video from 2016 where you were talking about Black Lives Matter and how you felt like the movement for Black Lives were showing up for trans people and trans liberation in a way that other, just, LGBTQ-focused orgs were not showing up, and I would love to hear more about that.

**Alyssa:** The—so that was at a Trans Day of Remembrance, and they asked me to speak, and I didn’t want to read the names. That—it’s excruciating. So, no. I spoke as a member of Don’t Shoot Portland, which, uh, is the organization that brought the Black Lives Matter movement to Portland, and is named after, sadly, the last words of Michael Brown, who was killed by officer Darren Wilson in Ferguson, Missouri on August 9, and his last words were, “My hands are up. Don’t shoot.” And he shot him in cold blood. And left his body on the street for four-and-a-half hours, making his mother watch in horror as his body was cooking on hot black pavement. So we had four-and-a-half minutes, moments of silence at all of our protests and, uh, continue to do work to try to bring community together to learn how to resist. So I was recruited to Don’t Shoot Portland by, uh, its leader Teressa Raiford, who is running for mayor of Portland, and will win, and will unseat our current mayor, who is… a nightmare. A nightmare.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Alyssa:** So I was asked to speak, uh, to talk about how the work of Don’t Shoot Portland intersects with trans justice, and I think that it does so in a way that I felt non-profit organizations and advocacy groups are really lacking, because the Black Lives Matter movement is explicitly in favor of people having their basic needs met. Without question, people’s human rights and dignity being respected, without question, especially in, uh, relationship to the State, proper, that, uh, we can say, “Fuck the police.” And that resonates with trans people who are enduring poverty who can’t enjoy any of the basic joys that most people in this country take for granted because we’re so targeted for state violence. So, to me, the open arms that the Black Lives Matter movement, locally with Don’t Shoot Portland, uh, where I was able to really feel my power and, and develop my voice and learn how to project it at protests… I scream with every ounce of my pain at every protest because that’s what I can do, and if I don’t have laryngitis at the end of a protest, I feel deep shame.

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** So, I talked about that in a personal way, but more broadly, in cities all across the country, because there are coalitions in almost every city in the country that did shutdowns and was calling people to, uh, protest against police violence and racism. Uh, they were explicitly in favor of having specifically Black trans women in the leadership and in the forefront of their movement, and I felt like that was very important, because the organizations that we are all meant to think are our saviors do a very poor job when the time comes to speak out against police violence against our trans siblings, that oftentimes they are in league with the police, and will, uh, advocate for *more* police presence and, and will insist that these police officers have received sensitivity train—oh my God!

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** I don’t—I, I can’t even stand that term! “Sensitivity training.” Oh, wow! Ugh.

**Tuck:** They’re sensitive now, it’s fine. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Insisting that, that—so, that, insisting that the police can ever be safe for us. And then when it comes to poverty alleviation, they are often also sitting on their hands because the people who run *those* organizations are very well-established, usually cis, White gays, who are from the middle-class and are enjoying a very lovely lifestyle. I mean, go to any of their parties, I mean, there are champagne wishes and caviar dreams everywhere you go. And you would think that we are living in two different realities, and we *are* living in different realities, so that when they, uh, have their parties and they, uh, do their mass meetings, you just look around and you’re like, “Where am I? Is this the Chamber of Commerce meeting? With a rainbow flag?” And you know what? Sometimes those meetings do, uh, match up, and they are gay and lesbian Chamber of Commerce meetings, and we’re all meant to believe these people are on our side; they are not on our side. The Black Lives Matter movement did a much better job at being inclusive for trans people than the, uh, LGBT organizations that we’re meant to believe are on our side.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely. I also saw in a different video, you said that, like, identity doesn’t necessarily mean solidarity. Do you feel like you just answered that question, or do you want to talk more about what that means to you?

**Alyssa:** Oh, I can talk about that all day long!

**Tuck:** Please talk about it. I would love for you to do that.

**Alyssa:** No, I, uh, I, I that the, the class question in, in this case is really key. So, I am born and raised in poverty, still endure it, and the people close to me are suffering under it and are dying from it now, because now I’m 32 and my friends are dying all around me, and they *wouldn’t* be dead if we had socialism, and people didn’t have to worry about living under a roof, eating food, not freezing in the street. And, and having money be a barrier for them because they can’t afford the price of life. So I think that the—it’s really important to always bring that out, that, “Okay, I’m, I’m under the LGBT umbrella, uh, just like some millionaire business owner, you know, techie, who happens to be a guy who sucks cock.” And it’s like, “Okay, great, but, you know, uh, if, if I get a little too loud, you’re gonna call the cops on me tonight. You’re gonna go back to your million dollar condo, and you’re gonna continue living your life and you’re gonna feel good about the champagne and caviar fundraiser that I just saw you at, and you’re gonna insist that we’re all fighting for the same thing, but really, we’re not fighting for the same thing. Anybody who calls the cops is not on my side. Anybody who supports the U.S. military is not on my side, that supports prisons and police and occupation; you’re not on my side, so I just want to be able to be honest about that, so that they can’t even get a foothold. And, and insist that we’re on the same side, ‘cause I, I wear my politics on my sleeve, and I don’t ever have to engage with that. So, when they see me coming, usually they pipe down.

**Tuck:** [snickers] You mentioned that you’re 32, and like, 33 is a really significant number for...

**Alyssa:** That’s when, that’s when we die.

**Tuck:** Yeah, trans women of color specifically, and also, you’ve had a lot of friends pass away. How are you grappling with turning 33?

**Alyssa:** Not that well. So… Uh, one of my friends who died recently, and her name was in the news, and I don’t want people to forget, is Layleen Polanco Xtravaganza. And she died in custody. She was at Rikers. Rikers is the... infamous jail that warehouses people who are awaiting trial in New York City. And she could have gotten out, but she didn’t have $500. She’s a person who had to also be born and raised in poverty, and sell sex to eke out a living, and it’s really dangerous, and there are traps all along the way. She got caught up in one and the cops got her. And she had a seizure and died in protective custody, in solitary confinement. And I believe that if you die in solitary confinement, the jail killed you; you got one job, and that’s to keep someone alive who you have the nerve to keep in a cage. And she had a seizure. And they found her body dead. And it opened up a lot for me, because it made me take stock of all of my other friends who have passed away in similar conditions. And it’s very sad and sobering, but I have to grapple with the reality that things are not getting better, there’s not improvement on this. When I think about me making it, I feel a strange mix of happiness and pride that I’ve been able to make it but also guilt, because those are people who are just like me; they’re not different. And they’re dead, and I’m alive. So I’m feeling guilt about even still making it.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Is there a way that you push through that guilt, or do you just…?

**Alyssa:** I… meditate in front of a mirror, in the dark, with a candle, and some water. And try to give myself an honest look and think about what’s coming through, what I’ve been through, and what I would like to do in the future. Forgiving myself for all of the bullshit that I’ve done, and promising that I am not going to give up, even when I feel like that’s the best option, because I’m a person that has some talent. I can hold a room.

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Uh, I can face down riot police and make people who thought that they couldn’t be change agents see that they are. And honestly, I, I want to see the other side of a revolution. I would really like to live, and be able to see that we live in a just world, and if that means that I have to endure a lot of pain, well then, I guess I’ll just be enduring a lot of pain, but I want to live.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I just want to say that if you are justly horrified, bail funds exist. Pay trans people’s bail. Like, it’s really not hard to just pay trans people’s bail, and then this won’t happen in the same way. So, you mentioned sex work, and I think that a lot of people that otherwise, like, consider themselves really progressive and they have really good politics, uh, they think, you know, they think so, uh, don’t know how to show up for sex workers in a way that is actually productive, don’t even know what their politics should be on sex work. So I’m wondering, as a sex worker, if you could talk about what you think we could be doing better to show up for sex workers.

**Alyssa:** In every city, there are coalitions of people who are working to decriminalize sex work, to, uh, keep the local police from even putting on stings in the first place. So if there’s no funding that’s coming from the city to local police departments to conduct stings, then there will be *no* arrests. So I know that, uh, a lot of us are split on whether we want decrim—or, decriminalization, or if we want legalization. Uh, that’s, I, I fall on the decrim side. I just think just keep the police out of our hair and we’ll figure out the rest. But in every city, if you type in, uh, “sex work decriminalization” and the name of your city, you’re likely to find a coalition of people who are ready to use your time and your talents. And if you are someone that is disconnected from that organizing and you just want to do education, you can host an education, you can invite the people who you would otherwise just be going out for pizza with, or something, and just ask them to come and learn about sex work decriminalization. And I think that that could make an incredible difference, because the issue that a lot of us face now is just that we’re so other-ized and people tend to be, frankly, kind of disgusted with the idea of selling your body to somebody else who wants to have access to it. But, uh, that’s something that can be remedied through education, period, so…

**Tuck:** Excellent. So, Trans Day of Remembrance was really recently, and you mentioned – and I agree – that, like, just reading a list of names is not enough, and is really agonizing a lot of the time. Uh, what would you like to see on Trans Day of Remembrance?

**Alyssa:** Well, what they did at Portland State University was dope. They used the theme “trans joy,” where they wanted people to talk about what helps them to keep going, so that, uh, rather than just mourning the dead, and we must mourn the dead, uh, we can fight like hell for the living like Mother Jones said. And that includes allowing people to share their stories, and their hopes and their joys, so that other people can hear about it and maybe be inspired by it. So I was happy that they asked me to come and share my story, and I, I think that that’s dope and I want to see more people like me coming out and talking about what keeps them going so that we can be an army of trans bitches... [laughs]

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** … who are out here, that—fighting for one another, and in a much more real and tangible, material way.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely. I did appreciate—’cause you were here speaking last night about trans joy. And you talked about joy, but you talked about taking joy from activism, and you took joy from, like, situations that could be seen as really dark, and you found a way to pull joy out of that, which I think is so real about being trans and there’s so many times when I’m talking to someone about what it’s like – a cis person cabout what it’s like to be trans, and something frustrating that’s happened, and I start laughing, and they’re like, “Why are you laughing?” And I’m like, “What else can I do? We live in hell!” Do you wanna talk a little bit about that?

**Alyssa:** Most of my jokes end up being about death. And if it’s on my mind, I’d rather not hide it, and if I can find people that are not mortified, then I’d like to keep them close. So I don’t want to feel like I have to edit myself around people. I think about getting killed by Nazis or the state *every day*. So I’d rather not conceal that, and I guess it is helpful to just crack jokes about it, so that I can just let that energy out while fighting against Nazis and the state, so, let’s go, bitches.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, so, last October, the Trump administration did one of its many, uh, shitty things, I don't even remember what it was – I think they tried to redefine gender as sex and then also got the definition of sex wrong, it was a nightmare. But you made a video about it, and, uh…

**Alyssa:** [laughs]

**Tuck:** … you said, “I hope we get a little bit more honest about what it’s going to take to end trans lib—oppression.” What’s it gonna take to end trans oppression?

**Alyssa:** What the—you did your research. This is very good.

**Tuck:** I do, yeah. Thank you! [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Okay, yeah. Uh, yeah, excellent.

**Tuck:** It’s a good podcast; it’s called *Gender Reveal*. Anyway, sorry. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Everyone should listen.

**Tuck:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Alyssa:** I am frustrated with the state-wide nonprofit that, that does a lot of this work. I’ve seen them in action, at the state capital, when they’re doing their lobbying. When I was doing lobbying for 15 Now, to raise the minimum wage, that’s when I saw a lot of the state-wide, uh, official LGBT™ representatives at, uh, the, the state-wide organization here, very chummy with representatives, who I know work very hard to criminalize people who are houseless, people who are seeking basic services, and making sure that they don’t get their needs met, and I think a lot about poverty and poverty alleviation; I think it’s at the centre of a lot of, uh, the, the problems that trans women like me face. And I know that there are lots of trans people who are not in poverty, who don’t experience racism, but that’s where my heart is at first; I need to be able to be honest about that. So when I see people who are my own, in some sense, getting chummy with reactionaries that are in positions in the legislature, it really rubs me the wrong way, and especially when I read their annual budgets and their reports, and they have the nerve to congratulate themselves. And I’m like, “You know better than I do that trans women who are houseless are being beat up by the police! And are being thrown in jail! And you mean to tell me that your political priorities for the next year are for helping the LGBT Chamber of Commerce?” Yeah, I have an axe to grind against every Chamber of Commerce!

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** No, because the, the Chamber of Commerce, uh, all around the world, they, they are a lobby, uh, or essentially, a, a union of bosses! Of people who are owners, who work together to try to keep their taxes low, to try to increase policing, to maximize their profits, to, to squelch their workers. No! I, I’m a trans woman against Chamber of Commerce, even when they’re rainbow Chamber of Commerces. But those are the people that in every city and every country in the world get priority from the organizations that get funding from the state, that do lobbying. So what that ends up looking like is when someone is, uh, trying to fight for a minimum wage increase, and I see you in the hallway, and you’re on the executive board of the state-wide LGBT organization, and you glare at me, I’m gonna remember that for the rest of my life!

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** So I’m not cool with it, and that’s what that video was about, because I was so enraged. The idea that all of these organizations begin to clamor, to posture and show how outraged they are by Trump – I’m sorry, but Trump is the logical conclusion of any rainbow capitalist.

[audience snaps]

**Alyssa:** Like, that is where your line of thinking goes to if you believe that we can get equality by people being allowed entrance into a, a corporate-dominated system. That’s not the way, because I already see that the little bit of a foothold that some of these people get into this system, what they do immediately is get chummy with the people who would probably like to see them *dead*. But they get chummy with them and turn their backs on me because I’m on the street saying, “Stop killing homeless people.” And looking at me like, “Oh, you’re s—you’re, you’re such a disrupter.” Yeah, I’m a fucking disrupter, and you’re complicit! So who’s worse? You, bitch, not me!

[audience snaps]

**Tuck:** I love Sagittarius season. Anyway, um...

[audience laughs]

**Tuck:** Yeah, this is the part of the show where I just ask if there’s anything else that we haven’t talked about yet that you wanna make sure we talk about it, that you say.

**Alyssa:** So, I’m the co-chair of the Portland chapter of Jobs with Justice, and, uh, without just promoting, uh, our organization, uh, I want people to think about what our mission is, and it’s very basic. When I meet people out at protests, and I bring uh, our contact cards, they’re pledges. And the pledge is really simple, and it’s just, you agree to show up at least five times a year for somebody else’s struggle, or for an organization that is in a different part of the struggle, because it really has to be treated like one. So, uh, usually it’s, uh, about labor disputes, so it’s putting onto picket lines. Never cross a picket line! How ‘bout that for, like, uh, a message? If there are, are workers or community members who, uh, have the nerve to organize themselves and say, “Do not patronize this place, do not support this place,” and they form a picket line: Do. Not. Cross it. Those people are fighting for everyone; they’re not just fighting for themselves, their, their wages, their benefit packages, or what have you. They’re fighting for everybody. Even if they don’t know it themselves and there are some people who are deeply transphobic who are members of labor unions, and it’s my work to engage with that. Uh, but I think that when people get it in their minds that while, for example, where I came from today—I’m not a Palestinian, I’m Puerto Rican. But I show up to *every* protest against the Is—*illegal* Israeli occupation of Palestine. I’m not a prisoner, I have—I’ve never been one, hopefully I’ll never be one. Oh, God!

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** My FBI agent is licking his chops. “I can’t *wait* to put you in prison!” But I show up to everything that Critical Resistance does. And I hope that if my work does anything, it’s to help people turn on a light in their heads and say, “Okay, this thing doesn’t affect me directly, but these people are fighting for justice for all. And that’s what I wanna be a part of.” And that’s where an organization like Jobs with Justice comes in. And we’ll send you notifications whenever something that we endorse, uh, is coming up, and if you can fit it in your schedule, you come out, you put your body in the place, you get counted, uh, you yell and holler, you leaflet, you hold a sign. And when they write the history of how people won dignity across the world, and they *will* write that history, they’re gonna see your lovely faces. They’re gonna see that you were one of the people that helped make it happen. And even if you can’t get out there, you call any of the organizations that are doing this work and you tell them about your special talents, and if they’re any good at organizing, they’ll figure out how to plug you in. And suddenly, you’re being an active member of a community of people globally who are fighting for social justice. Let’s go!

**Tuck:** So good. Do you feel like you just drop the mic every single time you say anything, it’s so powerful, and just like, uh, another amazing thing!

**Alyssa:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Tuck:** Do you—? Yeah, good. Good! That’s the answer! So I just have a follow-up question about that, which maybe you just covered it, but like you said, like, there are transphobic people in unions.

**Alyssa:** Yes.

**Tuck:** Like, a lot of unions are, like, mostly, like, shitty straight cis White men. And I love unions, but I don’t want them to be the only people that have access to unions, and, uh, it can be frustrating, I think – maybe this is, like, really selfish – but like, it can be frustrating when you’re already organizing for all these people who, like, don’t give a shit about you.

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** Uh, do you feel like there’s a way to use the power of union organizing to mobilize for things like trans rights?

**Alyssa:** Yeah. The AFL–CIO, the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, which is a, uh, overarching, uh, umbrella of organization that most unions affiliate to in the United States. They have a program called Pride At Work that is better in some places than others, but foundationally, it’s about getting union members to connect with one another, and to try to pull the rest of the AFL–CIO to understand that the working-class is multi-gendered and multi-sexual, and that people who are represented have to understand that when you’re a member of a union, that means that there are people who you’re going to be interfacing with who are not like you, and you would do very well to use that opportunity to learn about how to be a decent human being. And when you do that, you strengthen the working-class, because it is going to be a battle – a real battle, a class war; they didn’t call it that for nothing. It will be one, and you’re going to need queer and trans people who have, uh, a different kind of creativity – not to establish a hierarchy here, but I’d say more creativity – to help you win your strikes, and your campaigns against bosses, and it’s incumbent on people who have the gift of gab, if somebody listening now, uh, is somebody who can hold a crowd and who can make people listen to them. If that’s you, then think of it as your burden to help educate people about us, so that people who cannot do that, who are just too hurt by transphobia and homophobia to do that, well then, yeah, it is your duty. It is our duty to fight for our freedom. It is our duty to win. We must love and protect one another. We have nothing to lose but our chains. Assata Shakur. Busted out of prison, lives in Cuba, they can’t catch her.

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** Chris Christie, the governor of New Jersey – I’m from New Jersey. Chris Christie, the governor of New Jersey lobbied Trump to try to get Assata to get extradited from Cuba as a part of, uh, him getting the presidency. It didn’t work. Assata’s still living and thriving in Cuba. You can’t catch her, period. So, yeah, it is our duty to fight for our freedom, it is our duty to win. So if you have skills, I think that it is your burden to use them to contribute to, uh, a larger global movement for social justice.

**Tuck:** Absolutely.

**Alyssa:** Yeah.

**Tuck:** I just want to thank you so much for being here, for speaking with us. We are going to ask this last question, and then we are going to take a short break to applaud for you for a long time, and then we are going to shift gear a little bit, but while we’re doing that, people can send you money. What’s your Venmo?

**Alyssa:** [laughs] Uh, alyssapariah, A-L-Y-S-S-A-P-A-R-I-A-H, thank you in advance. I’ll send you back a lovely love note.

**Tuck:** [laughs] Yeah, so if you feel like you learned some—obviously learned something, I’m not even gonna say that. You learned something from Alyssa. You can compensate her for that. So, the last question, the way we always end this part of the show is, in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Alyssa:** Total abolishment. When the doctor slaps your baby’s ass...

**Tuck:** [laughs]

**Alyssa:** … to make them breathe…

**Tuck:** Yes.

**Alyssa:** … them looking at the genitals is not going to mean one thing or another. There are not going to be disgusting gender reveal parties anymore. People are going to understand that, uh, when your baby learns language, they will *tell you* what their gender is, and you’ll accept it, and there won’t be so much trauma and pain that you end up carrying for the rest of your life. You’re not gonna be looking over your shoulder when you’re walking down the street, you’re not gonna be afraid to get on the bus, you’re not gonna be afraid that somebody who you date might murder you once they fall in love or something like that. Protect yourselves! Trans women, please be careful when you deal with these cis men. Because even though you might feel real [calm?], real pussy, just like, “Ooh, he likes me so much because I look like every cis woman he’s ever been—” Maybe you do. But you know what? The world doesn’t love you like they love those cis women, and that’s going to end up really getting to his heart, and you gotta be real careful about how he’s gonna act to you once that starts to weigh on him. Most of the trans women who I know who’ve been murdered by men are murdered by men who they were dating who knew that they were trans. There was no trans panic, they didn’t see her cock and suddenly think, “Oh my God, what am I doing?” No, no, no. You sucked it, you rubbed it, you loved it. And now, you’re dealing with secondhand transphobia, because maybe someone in your life found out that the woman that you’re seeing and loving is trans, and it makes you nervous. And they’re killing my friends, your friends, *our* friends, our friends and family. That’s what’s really happening. So, just watch it. These cis men are the most dangerous people to ever live, so, be careful.

**Tuck:** Alright, Alyssa Pariah everyone.

**Alyssa:** Hot take.

**Tuck:** [laughs]

[*Gender Reveal* theme music begins] **~54:30**

**Tuck:** That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. Please share the episode with a friend and other members of your community, and please donate to bail funds like Black and Pink. I just want to mention that it is a really good time to talk to your workplace about getting equity workshops going, so if you’d like to talk to me about your organization hiring me specifically for either gender equity trainings or general equity trainings, you can reach out about that via sylveon.co or tuckwoodstock.com. I really cannot stress enough that I am not trying to profit off of discrimination, I just want everyone’s workplaces to get their shit together. Don’t forget to send Alyssa money for her work, there are also Gofundmes for Dominique and Riah and Layleen’s families, and you can support all of our work at patreon.com/gender.

You can also find us on Twitter and Instagram @gendereveal, you can find my reporting on the protest, including some wild videos of me getting smoke thrown at me, on twitter @tuckwoodstock, and the podcast is also at genderpodcast.com. We’ve got some weird and wonderful merch in the store through the end of this month, with the proceeds going to support Black and trans and sex-worker led organizations. That's all at bit.ly/gendermerch. This week’s episode was produced and edited by me, Tuck Woodstock. The original Alyssa Pariah interview was produced by Zee Griffler. Our logo is by the talented Ira M. Leigh, who I know wants you to donate to the Okra Project. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. Additional music this week by Blue Dot Sessions. We will be back extremely soon with more feelings about gender. Happy Pride, throw a brick at a cop.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]