[*Gender Reveal* theme music plays]

**Tuck:** 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, Tuck Woodstock.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Tuck:** Hey everyone, I hope you're all hanging in there. I wanted to get this episode up last week but I'm recording this on Saturday, and uh, I'm really trying to take Sunday off because I haven't taken time off and it's 8:00 p.m. on Saturday and I have to go to work at 9:00 p.m. so I haven't even scripted this episode, I'm just going to try to improvise it and every time I've done that so far, it's gone very badly, so we're going to see where it goes today. I don't even have an outline, so it's going to be great! If you are tuning into this show for the first time, because maybe you heard about it for Pride month, or you heard about it from Life Kit, or you heard about it from me tweeting about the Portland protests, thank you so much for being here. This is not a normal episode, this is not how these episodes normally go, so I would recommend going back to our episode with Alyssa Pariah, our episode with Morgan Givens, our episode with Vidhya Aravind, Danny Lavery, Cyrus Dunham, really anyone except this one, would be great. [laughs] But if you have been around our show for a while then, yeah, here we are [laughs] yike!

So I think you know this by now, but I've been working a few jobs for a while, most nights I go out around 9:00 p.m. to cover the nightly protests that go on in Portland and the police brutality that usually accompanies those protests, and I get home around 2:00 or 3:00 a.m. And then I wake up at noon, and then theoretically I'd be working on this podcast, but what I've been doing lately is working on some stuff for public radio, and trying to figure out how to, like, eat, and also trying to process all the things that I see at night, and trying to catch up on messages about what happened the night before, and then before you know it it's time to go out again so I haven't had a ton of time to work on this podcast. I haven't had time to send out Patreon rewards so thank you so much for your patience if you've joined the Patreon lately, I really really appreciate your support it's like absolutely critical for the work that I'm doing right now, and so I really really deeply appreciate you and I hope that you are willing to hang out a little bit longer before your awards show up. Speaking of which I just realized I forgot to send out a newsletter this week - I will try to get that to you, so sorry! If you do support us on Patreon, $1 or more a month gets you our weekly newsletter, normally, $5 or more gets stickers, $10 or more gets pins, it's good. That's all that patreon.com/gender but don't worry about that too much. Gosh, this is going to be like a fun non-structured rambly thing.

So this week, instead of an interview, I'm actually going to share an interview that Callie Wright of the podcast Queersplaining, one of my favorite podcasts, an interview that Callie wright did with me about media literacy and the myth of journalistic objectivity which we’re all used to hearing about, and the protests going on across the country, and coronavirus and some other stuff. I really appreciate Callie having me on the show, Queersplaining is one of my favorite shows to appear on, that's a weird thing to say, but it's true because Callie is an amazing interviewer and amazing editor, and so I'm really excited to share that episode with you. I hope you like it, it is not explicitly about gender but it's two trans people talking to each other which is rare, sometimes, you know?

And let's see, before we move on I just want to tell you about some other things you might want to listen to while you're waiting for your next episode of Gender Reveal, assuming you are interested in hearing me speak. If not, this show isn't for you [laughs] but anyway, so I had this piece come out in Life Kit, NPR's Life Kit podcast, it's a 20 minute episode that I made with my trans producer, Sam Leeds, and Meredith Talusan, former guest on the show, and ACLU lawyer Chase Strangio who is hopefully a future guest on the show, cross your fingers, we made a piece together about trans equity at work. And it's this 20 minute episode that shares tips for cisgender people who want to do a better job at being allies for trans people in the workplace. But something that I think is really cool about that episode is that like I said, it's 20 minutes long, and every voice you hear in the episode is a trans person, and in fact every voice you hear is a trans person who uses they/them pronouns in some capacity, and so it's just this big episode of trans and non-binary voices talking about how to be a better ally for 20 minutes, and I hope it's helpful. NPR made it into a series of like really cute Instagram stories and shared it onto their Instagram for 3.2 million followers, so I wasn't that hopeful when I first made this piece but I am really hopeful now that it actually maybe effects change somewhere. And there's also a three or four minute version of this piece that's going to be airing on weekend All Things Considered, allegedly tomorrow which I believe is yesterday for you so if you're listening so somewhere out there there may be a 3 minute version of the story as well that you can find on All Things Considered. And then in addition to that, I was on local public radio, I was on Oregon public broadcasting on Thursday as part of their news round table for half an hour, and it might not all feel relevant to you because some of it is about state politics although I tried to you know, apply a national lens to the conversation. We did talk about SCOTUS’ LGBTQ decision a little bit, but I think the reason why I think it's fun to listen to is because like in the second half of the show, one of the other women on the show who is also part Mexican part White, had this wild thing where she was worried about like anti-white backlash, like I don't know, a race war? I don't understand. And so I got to like shut down on live radio this lady’s like really unfounded panic about some sort of anti-white backlash, so it was fun, you know? It was nice because often when those kind of things happen we're all just screaming at our radio, but I actually got to scream on the radio so, so that was cool. Anyway so if you're looking for more things to listen to that star me, Tuck Woodstock, you're welcome to listen to that. Also my friend Cass Adair, dear dear friend of mine has a new trans podcast coming out called Transscripts that I highly suggest you subscribe to, the trailer is out now. And, what else? Last thing I guess is we still have a bunch of limited edition Pride merch in the merch shop, in fact we have new Pride merch for your purchasing pleasure. One of the pieces is by a friend Sasha Reed who made a “dropped out of Hogwarts” t-shirt, because boy do we hate JK Rowling on this show, and 100% of proceeds are going to I forget where, but very cool places. Sasha isn't taking a cut so all of the all of the proceeds go straight to good places and speaking of which, that is also the case with another new Niko Stratis design that says “the first Pride was a riot” and it is a rainbow ending in a pot not of gold, but a pot of bricks which is available as a sticker and a mug so yeah, all sorts of new Pride merch available for the next couple weeks, you can find that bit.ly/gendermerch, and that's it! Wow. Is this how I should do all the episodes I just sort of ramble as one long 8-minute sentence? Anyway, um, I guess it's time for This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender Intro plays]

**Tuck:** This Week in Gender I was planning to talk about the Supreme Court decision that came out on Monday, but at that point this news is a week old, so I don't know how much you need. And also like I said I didn't write anything down. So I'm just going to share what I think are the key takeaways, and hopefully get things right. So sorry that I'm this way, I just, all I do is work and I'm so tired.

So, as you know on Monday the United States supreme Court decided, in a 6-3 decision written by Neil Gorsuch, that queer and trans people are protected under Title XII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Wooh, still got it. What that means is that there's a phrase in there that says that you can't discriminate against an employee on the basis of sex, and the case was whether or not discriminating against someone because they're gay or queer or trans counts as discriminating on the basis of sex, and there is an old Gender Reveal episode which I guess aged badly, in which I call out Neil Gorsuch, specifically, because Neil Gorsuch is a textualist and like a literalist on the Supreme Court, and so I was like it should be very very easy for Neil Gorsuch to side with the more liberal justices in this and determine that queer and trans people are protected under sex discrimination. But he had been worried at the time that it would create this sort of like social upheaval, so it looked like he was going to rule with the conservatives, and so I yelled at him on this podcast. But, not only did he side with the liberals, but he actually wrote the decision. And so it was a 6-3 decision, as I said, I just keep emphasizing it because it is so shocking to I think everyone that it was a 6-3 decision, I think most of us expected 4-5 or maybe 5-4. Anyway, basically Neil Gorsuch said that “sex discrimination” the phrase covers queer and trans people so that they cannot be discriminated against for being queer and trans.

This specific case was about employment, but it is going to be very very difficult for anyone to argue on a federal level that the phrase “sex discrimination” does not cover queer and trans people after this ruling. So if you look at the recent Trump administration HHS rule that said that it was legal to discriminate against trans people in a healthcare setting that is not like officially undone, but for all intents and purposes like there's no way for them to really assert that they have any standing to make that argument, because the Supreme Court just said that they were absolutely wrong. I said that in the last episode but I'm saying it again.

So, something that I want to clarify, couple things, one is that this is applicable on the federal level, but there are certain instances in which this might not apply. And I am not a legal expert so I cannot tell you exactly what they are, but my understanding is that if you work for a privately owned company there might be religious exemptions to this, and/or if you work for like a small Mom and Pop shop there might be exemptions to this, so it's not one size fits all in terms of that. In addition I think the more important thing to note is although theoretically, you know this applies to folks across the country most people in this country are employed at-will, and so until we end at-will employment, and one big step in that is unionizing our workplaces, until we end at-will employment we can be fired for literally no reason at all. So in order to argue that you were wrongfully terminated, you would have to prove that your employer fired you for being trans, and it would be very easy for them to say in many cases, oh no I fired that person because like they were late once, or because they didn't do a good enough job cleaning up, or insubordination, or literally anything like you don't have to have a reason to fire someone in most of the United States in most jobs. So, the next step is to end at-will employment, I think.

And also, in general, a lot of people are making this argument, just because discrimination is illegal doesn't mean the discrimination won't happen. And I apologize because I'm sure I’ve said this on the show many times, but like I know people who in Portland in 2020 were denied access to healthcare for being trans, and it is definitely illegal to do that here. And so it doesn't mean that workplaces are now free of transphobia, it just means that if and when we are discriminated against for being trans in specific contexts in which we are covered under Title XII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 then we could theoretically find a lawyer who would sue on our behalf. So it's like 25 extra steps, and most trans people don't have access to lawyers or have the time and bandwidth to navigate the legal system and even if you do, maybe you'll get damages or maybe like you'll get your job back in a transphobic environment, but it's not an end all be all solution. That said, this is extremely significant, it is a huge deal it would have been devastating if it had been ruled the other way it would have been incredibly damaging a lot of activists are saying that this is actually a bigger deal for queer and trans people, because remember this this covers queer people not just trans people, it's actually a bigger deal than gay marriage, and something I heard from Vidhya Aravind and other activists is that it's really important to celebrate wins when we can get them, and I do think that this is a really really huge win and that it is okay to be excited about it even though I just told you like seven reasons why it's not going to fix everything. I still think we get to be really really excited about it, and even though most cis people assumed we already had these protections because it is wild that it took until June 2020 to say hey maybe you shouldn't be able to fire queer and trans people explicitly because they're queer and trans, I still think we get to be excited about it.

I think you already knew all of that, but it would have been shirking my responsibilities as someone who does a segment about the news for trans people if I did not say all of that. If you want to learn more, I highly suggest following Chase Strangio on Twitter. He is a trans person who worked with the ACLU to bring that lawsuit forward to the supreme Court, and so that means that he is literally the most qualified person as a trans lawyer who worked on this case, to hear from him, about this case and so, that would have been, see that would have been a more articulate sentence if I had scripted it. [laughs] Anyway.

Yeah so follow Chase and I will leave you with something completely unrelated to any of this, which is that there is a new documentary film out on Netflix called Disclosure, and it is a film about trans representation and misrepresentation in media, and I am being told by every trans person I trust that it is actually extremely good. I won't be watching it tonight ‘cause I'm about to go to work, but I hope you get to watch it and you can tell me what you think. And [laughs] so sorry for the way that I am! I'll sleep one day. This has been This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender Outro plays]

[Music]

So, this is the part of the show where I'm going to play my interview with the amazing Callie Wright. If you enjoy, it please subscribe to Queersplaining and support Callie on patreon, they are also an independent non-binary podcast producer and they deserve as much support as they can possibly get, so thank you for supporting Callie, thank you for supporting this show, thank you for sticking through it in this wild-ass bonus episode and yeah, let me let me know what you think about instead of scripting, me just rambling in my closet for 20 minutes. And, uh, I will talk to you soon! Love you.

[Music ends]

**Callie:**So we’ve already started seeing the think pieces and some of them are pretty horrifying. The New York times, for example, published an op ed calling for brute force military occupation of the streets of the United States.

I can’t remember the news outlet, but I saw an article about an increase in COVID cases that were obviously connected to Memorial day. And so many States letting businesses reopen, but the picture was a picture of one of the LA protests. From last weekend, they think they’re being subtle, but I don’t think they are.

There’s an important conversation to be had here about journalism power, who gets to write what, and if objectivity is even a real thing and spoiler alert, it is not. I wanted to take a break from doing the kind of storytelling I normally do on the show for a really, really important conversation with Tuck Woodstock from the Gender Reveal podcast.

They’ve been covering the protests in Portland. And I asked them if they’d be up for a conversation about media literacy in the midst of being an incredibly busy person at the moment, they agreed.

I wanted to do this because I have been seeing like, we’re to the point in all of this where the longer think pieces are beginning to be written. you know, at first it was very much, at least it read, very much like people were just trying to talk about like, “Here’s the thing that’s happening. Here’s the thing that’s happening. Here’s the thing that’s happening.”

And I’m starting to see like what passes what’s supposed to pass for critical analysis happening around all of this and because of conversations that I have had with you and other folks in, that journalism, Slack that we’re in, I’m starting to see a lot of things that really, really bug me about the way the media is covering the situation now.

And I think. there’s a really important conversation to be had in parsing out why things are being said the way that they are and how people can listen and critically analyze these things to understand, to understand why what’s being said is what’s being said. And to understand that what we’re seeing is not.

Meeting any real standard of objectivity. So as someone who is, who is trained in the ways of journalism and has been watching all of this go down, I’m just, I’m interested in your thoughts on all of that.

**Tuck:**Yeah. I mean, honestly, I have been covering the protests most nights for the Portland mercury, which is a local like lefty pro labor alt weekly.

And they are very explicit that their goal is to document police brutality. And so my first night out, the, the person in charge of the paper was like, Don’t go after looters. We don’t give a shit. What we care about is like holding cops accountable. That wasn’t an exact quote, but that was the sentiment.

And so I have been working with people whose focus is holding police and city council and you know, other government agencies accountable. And I think that they have done quite a good job of framing protests in a way that I think is aware of systems of power. and so I honestly would love to hear more about what you’re seeing on more of a national level, because I have been pretty unplugged in the past week for that, but something that I did think about was a tweet by the New York times, several days ago that said Minneapolis colon, a photographer was shot in the eye, Washington D C colon protesters struck a journalist, a Louisville colon, a reporter was hit by a pepper ball. And so you can see there that when. Police officers are perpetrating violence.

We get a passive voice. And when protesters are perpetrating violence and violence, we get an active voice, right? Like protesters struck a journalist, but a photographer was shot in the eye or, and recorder was hit by a pepper ball. And so I think. You know, I, it hasn’t been that subtle the way that, many mainstream media outlets have used passive voice throughout time, not just now to absolve police officers of their actions.

You know, there’s also a lot of people phrasing things like George Floyd died after a police officer kneeled on him, you know, like in this, like trying to like do the most roundabout way, like, Oh, he, he had an interaction with a police officer and then hours later he died and like really trying to absolve this officer of blame.

And I understand to some extent that outlets feel required to do that because, for the same reasons that they use words like allegedly, you know, like, because if they can’t prove it a hundred percent, they try not to state it. But I just think that there’s like a really clear disconnect between active language and passive language when it comes to protestors or black lives versus, like police actions.

**Callie:** And to be clear with like, when we talk about passive voice versus active voice, what we’re talking about is the idea of someone saying mistakes were made versus I made mistakes.

**Tuck:** Right?

**Callie:** So one thing in particular that I’m seeing. That, that got some coverage. And I’m always aware of like the bubble that I live in on Twitter. Like most of the folks that I follow are largely politically aligned with me. And so like, I expect to see that sort of stuff called out in my circles, but, maybe not so much, nationally or in the broader conversation. So for example, one thing that I saw was that there was an article. Posted, and the, the name of the outlet escapes me, but it was about the, the increase in COVID-19 cases that, like objectively had to have been related to Memorial day and businesses reopening and people storming the Capitol and all of that sort of stuff.

but the picture was a picture of, if memory serves, the black lives matter protests in LA. And, yeah, so I’m interested in thoughts on that and that’s, that’s. Really really dangerous framing, I think.

**Tuck:** Yeah. I mean, I saw a tweet this morning about this very thing where people were talking about how at the protest that I’ve been to at least, you know, obviously I can’t speak for every protest, but, here in Portland, Solidly 99% of people I see are wearing masks.

I should rephrase. 99% of protesters are wearing masks. Cops are not wearing masks. And also, if you’re a protester and you get arrested and you get put in jail, you, have your mask taken away. So if you are arrested at a protest, you actually do have quite a high chance of getting COVID through that process, but if you’re just marching at a protest, there have been folks that have been out every single night that have gotten tested and have tested negative.

And I think. You know, that’s because people are being really careful. Obviously there is a risk, there is like a fairly high risk of like being around thousands of people and getting coronavirus, but everyone’s wearing masks. they’re always like medics handing out hand sanitizer and additional mass and anything else you might need.

And so I think there’s a lot of thought. being put into that where as, meanwhile, so these protests, like in my state, they’re happening in Portland and they’re happening in Eugene primarily. And meanwhile, the rest of the state outside of Portland is moving towards what we are calling phase two, a free opening, which means that you can have gatherings of up to a hundred people.

And, you know, restaurants have already reopened. I think movie theaters, are reopening, beauty salons have reopened.  Other things, to that effect. And those folks are, are not necessarily wearing masks. And those folks are doing things like, you know, getting, getting their hair cut or like sitting in a restaurant where it’s like poorly circulated air and like taking their mask off to eat.

And so. I know a lot of people who are really, really, really paranoid, not paranoid, who are really, really, really worried about coronavirus and who weren’t leaving their houses and who weren’t seeing anybody and had like really strict safety protocols. And then once these protests hit, they just went out of their house and into the streets because they, and we, like, we didn’t want to.

Get coronavirus because we needed a haircut. We didn’t want to get coronavirus because we wanted to sit in a bar with our friends, but we were like willing to risk getting coronavirus, like to fight for black lives and like an end to police brutality. Right. And so I think because news organizations, you know, are, are threatened by.

this sort of movement towards revolution, the same way that other institutions are. Like, it would be a more convenient truth to them if they could blame protestors on a rise in coronavirus cases, because it’s another reason to say the protesters are bad, but really like we have to hold like everyone in our lives accountable.

And I would argue that like the people going out and like rushing back to like, Boutiques and, beauty salons and whatnot, like as soon as they can possibly open and like sitting there with their friends without mass for several hours, they’re like much higher risk for much lower payoff than people who are out there marching for black lives.

**Callie:** Yeah. I had the same thought because, I mean, I went out to a protest here in Cincinnati yesterday, and there was, one of the marshals of the protests, Actually, there were two of them. There were two marshals of the protests. Like their entire job seemed to be walking around and handing masks out to people who didn’t have them.

And, you know, I’m one person from my perspective, obviously I can’t see everything happening all at once, but I did notice, two or three hours later that there were a uniformed police officers walking around doing the same thing, not in riot gear and they’re like normal police uniforms. And I was like, Oh, hi.

I see, I see what you’re doing here, after spending a week committing war crimes. I see you. And so I think what this gets back to is this idea that largely as a society, I think we want, desperately want to trust that our journalistic outlets are being objective in one way or another. And I think we have a lot of an investment in that.

and yeah. I think what I’m interested in is helping people unpack that and how to spot, when that’s being weaponized against the right side of these arguments and —

**Tuck:** “right side” do you mean correct side ordo you mean it’s weaponized being used by the Right?

**Callie:**Sorry.

**Tuck:** Weaponized towards the correct.

**Callie:** Sorry. Yes. That is a great question. Being weaponized against the correct side of, of these things. So it’s, being weaponized in service of people saying that the protesters shouldn’t be out, shouldn’t be happening that, you know, quote unquote looting and rioting is inexcusable. Just like police killing black people is inexcusable. That kind of thing.

**Tuck:** Yeah. There’s a lot of talk about. The myth of journalistic objectivity, including by some friends and peers of mine who I really admire. So I want to mention, Lewis, Raymond Wallace, and Lewis’s his work with the podcast and the book both called view from somewhere you’re from somewhere as based off the concept of the view from nowhere, which is a phrase used to described.

Describe quote unquote, objective journalism. so Lewis has podcast and book explore the myth of journalistic objectivity and how, black journalists specifically, and other marginalized journalists, including gay journalists have, have fought back against this use of the phrase, journalistic objectivity as an excuse to eliminate activists and other voices for social change from journalistic fears and even points out that like journalistic objectivity was almost sort of invented in order to shut down, a union organizing effort.

Like, sorry, you cannot be objective because you are trying to organize this union and thus you will be kicked out of this newsroom. and Morgan givens, is another person who I just repaired. My conversation with him on Gender Reveal last week. he’s a black trans man who is speaking out at like great, great, great personal risks to his own career right now against the myth of journalistic objectivity and how it’s rooted in white supremacy and the silencing of Black and Brown voices and other marginalized voices and newsrooms.

And so, like, I just want to give these people a lot of credit that like these new voices aren’t coming from me, and there are people who speak more eloquently on these topics than I do, but, In general. I think that there is a difference between being objective and being complacent. And a lot of newsrooms really get confused about the two, but I think that, that the best way to be objective is to stay out of it.

Or the best way to be objective is to, try to treat two concepts with equal value. So I actually got into a conversation with another journalist yesterday who was talking about how, To avoid their faces being shown. And so like, protesters have been like, can you blur our faces? Or we’ll like block cameras, right.

Because they’re like, I don’t want our faces, to be publicized. And she was sort of like, well, that’s a slippery slope because if we blur your faces, we also have to blur the faces of Nazis at white supremacists, protests, because now we’re blurring protesters faces. And I was sort of like, I don’t know.

I mean, like, I understand how like, In a vacuum. If you’re a news organization, you just make a rule and your rule is like, we don’t blur faces. but if you’re like an, a human being, trying to behave ethically in the world as a person, you can look at that and say, well, you know, and in one case you have protestors who are trying to avoid retaliation by the state.

because they’re speaking up for black lives and like the. Police have a lot more power than these protesters do. And like these protesters are speaking out against harm and these police officers like will seek to harm them and like, there’s this power balance here. And then on the other hand, we have literal Nazis, you know, and I think that it’s okay as human beings that we hold protestors for black lives to different standards than literal Nazis, but in a newsroom, we have to treat all of those things as, exactly the same or, or it’s not meeting these, these standards of objectivity. And so I think it’s really, really important for people to look out for, how notions of objectivity can lead newsletter, newsrooms to, to completely ignore systems of power and structures of power, because they’re acting as if all, all people should be treated equally instead of treated equitably.

**Callie:** Yeah. that last thing you said, treating, treating things equally, instead of equitably, I’m interested in, in that conversation that reminds me of the, you know, all the different versions of that meme that have been going around about the people looking over the fence.

**Tuck:** That’s what I think about too.

**Callie:**Can you talk more about that?

**Tuck:** So just going back to what I just said. I think that when we create one set of rules and we apply them to everyone equally, we ignore all structures of power and we all ignore the nuances of any particular situation and we ignore, our own. Implicit biases. And we ignore a lot.

We ignore everything because we’re like, look, here are the rules. And we’re just following the rules. We had the set of rules. We wrote them down and we’re going to follow them so that every situation is treated equally, but that’s, that’s just not. I think the way to behave in a world where every situation is incredibly nuanced and every situation is different than the situation before that.

And it takes a lot more time and energy to walk through the appropriate ways to approach any given situation. But if you’re just following the same script over and over again, you’re not stopping to question whether that script fits this situation. And so if you’re an all white newsroom and you’ve covered everything the same way, Hmm.

I’ll give a specific example. So there are many. White reporters who let’s say work for not mainstream news organizations, but maybe let’s say all weeklies. And so their voice at their publication has quite a bit of snark to it. And they’re used to covering things in kind of a jokey way because that’s, that’s their publications voice.

That works a lot of the time, but if you’re a white reporter and you’re going to a protest to cover a movement for black lives against police brutality, that might not be the most appropriate place for you to use your like typical snarky voice as a white person. And I bring this up because that was something that was pointed out to me as like a light skinned, biracial person, because I went out the first night and was sort of making a lot of jokes.

Because I was on Twitter and I’m like, I know my voice for Twitter and it’s like a lot of jokes and it’s not necessarily like jokes at the expense of protesters because I’m not an asshole, but it’s just like, I deal with discomfort through jokes. And so I was sort of just like, you know, messing around a little bit while I was waiting for things to start.

And someone was like, yeah, I don’t think that, I don’t think that’s your place. And I was like, Oh yeah, great call, great call, great call. And so, you know, if someone had pointed out — that out to me, I would continue to cover this situation the same way that I cover other situations, which is like with a layer of humor and remove, and it was then important that someone reminded me that in this case I shouldn’t be covering it the same way that I’m covering everything else. They should actually be like taking a lot of extra thought to think about, the way that I was covering it and the nuances that I was, Needed to be aware of. And so I just think that like when newsrooms, he use the same script for every single thing, they’re not really taking into account the way they actually might need to like, modify their reporting to fit like the, the context that that they’re in.

and this is especially true when you have like a newsroom that is predominantly white, predominantly male and predominantly cis or predominantly straight because like the structures that you’ve built, are not necessarily going to work when you’re covering marginalized groups that you don’t know anything about.

**Callie:**Yeah. And there’s this sense that I see, and it’s a thing that I had to unlearn. you know, when I became an atheist, I immediately convinced myself that I was super logical, rational, skeptical, and was evaluating everything with, an objective and rational, you know, lens, which I obviously like have unlearned that  but I think there’s this sense that we have to do that in order to be fair.

**Tuck:**Hmm.

**Callie:** And I know it was a revelation to me to figure out that that’s not necessarily the case. and I think it’s important to, to point out the fact that there are times in which, news organizations do this already. like I’m thinking about, you know, for example, like if, If there’s a natural disaster, right.

I don’t know that the New York times is going to print an article saying like, well, maybe the hurricane did a good thing, for example, like, and that may be an extreme example. Right. But like, I think there are a lot of ways in which news organizations and people in general do make those judgements and don’t realize that’s what’s happening.

They’re just drawing the line at a different place at a place that’s more comfortable, that is often in service of, you know, institutional racism and sexism. And I’m interested in how and your, your thoughts on how do we. Push back against that. Cause like, I’m, I’m very aware that like I am a white podcaster with a mostly white audience and and you know, this is not the first time that I’ve had these conversations, but I do think this is a particularly important time to be having those conversations again and, and so I’m interested in your thoughts on like unpacking that, pushing back against that.

**Tuck:**Yeah. So when you were talking about how we. Don’t actually hear both sides of every story. I actually was thinking about a story that NPR ran recently, and I was about current viruses before the protest started.

It was written by Scott Horsley, who from my understanding is like an older white gentleman. and. The original headline of the original story was like bitter taste for coffee shop owner as new $600 jobless benefit drove her to close. And sort of the premise of the story is that this woman had this coffee shop and her, employees were making so much more money off unemployment than they were working for her coffee shop that she had to.

Closed because they had all quit to get unemployment and not a single worker was interviewed in that story. And luckily like thousands and thousands of listeners wrote in, or tweeted in and whatnot to say, Hey, that’s not possible. That’s not how unemployment works. You cannot quit your job and get unemployment.

And so this woman had to have laid off her employees. And in addition to that, like you did not interview a single worker and there was such an uproar from this article that NPR actually got rid of their, like, Public editor, but, they had just another employee sort of write a much longer explainer piece on how this piece came to be.

And in it, Scott Horsley basically said like, Oh yeah, you’re right. I didn’t interview a worker. I didn’t really think that there were two sides to this story. And so like, there are already stories in which people with less power and the structure of power in the story are not being given a voice because they’re not even seen as having a side to the story.

And the thing that’s really, really interesting is in that much longer sort of like explainer slash apology piece, you still never hear from a worker in that entire story. And so we’re already leaving people out. my girlfriend is a homelessness reporter and when she reports on homelessness, she interviews homeless people.

And that should seem obvious, but there are many, many other people who are in the city who are reporting on homelessness and never interviewing homeless people. And so like, again, we all already hear so many stories in which we are not given multiple sides of a situation and the people left out are the people with less institutional power.

**Callie:** Yeah. And so, and so what I’m hearing is, you know, If we’re reading a story like that, we have to ask ourselves who is involved in the story and are we hearing from them and who are the people involved in this story with the least institutional power, especially, and especially, are we hearing from that?

**Tuck:** Yes. And I forgot the original question, so I didn’t answer it, but I think like the Scott Horsley story points to what a, what an answer can be, which is that like, if enough people speak out against a story, like. There will be some kind of response. And like, you know, it is a lot of time and we can’t do that for every single story.

And also, like I said, like it still wasn’t really fixed. Like we still didn’t really hear from workers, but I think the more we do that and the more we speak out, like the better it can, it can be. I think for pushing, I think pushing newsrooms to hire people that aren’t just older, straight, cis white gentlemen, can help.

Because then reporters can catch, can catch those things. but yeah, I think as, as a reader or listener, I think like the best thing you can do is really speak out. I mean, even this week we saw that, Arkansas Senator Tom cotton wrote this like really atrocious, racist, violent, editorial, or op-ed in the New York times.

And there was such a huge backlash about it, from both staff of the New York times, other journalists and readership that like the, the man in charge of the entire op-ed section of the New York times, resigned. And so like, In certain circumstances, like we can actually affect change in newsrooms just by speaking out and like drawing attention to this imbalance of power.

**Callie:** Did you, I’m sure you probably did. Did you hear that? He didn’t even read that op ed, before it was published.

**Tuck:** I did not see that. No, that’s wild.

**Callie:**Yeah.  I think, I mean, I think the first step probably is just breaking that veil that these institutions are, like I think most people would pay lip service to the fact that like, yes, we understand that these are, fallible institutions and fallible people and they will make mistakes.

But I think we are trained. as a society to trust these institutions and, their not only their, intentions, but their methodologies and all of that much more that we should. And I think, I don’t know, maybe just breaking that is a start. Yeah?

**Tuck:**Yeah. I mean, I also think that most people I know who are not journalists, they decide which outlets they trust and which outlets they don’t trust.

And I think in many cases that works fine, but if you have. The time and energy to like be a really active and critical news consumer. I would encourage people to figure out which specific by-lines they trusted, because if you look at something like the New York times, there are people at the New York times who I don’t trust, I don’t read their reporting.

and there are people who I deeply trust and. I think that’s true, you know, even at the, at the local level here as well, like there are people at like individual small papers where there are certain by-lines that I love to read. They’re my friends and they’re, you know, marginalized voices and I trust them.

And then there’s other people at those same papers who, you know, I don’t trust because I don’t trust them to not have frankly like racist reporting or sexist reporting, or reporting that’s rooted and like white supremacy and success, you know, transphobia sexism. So, and so I think that rather than, you know, doing what it is easiest for us and saying like, Oh, you know, The Media is bad and we cannot trust them.

Or The Media is good and we do trust them. It makes a lot more sense to say, okay, like which individual recorders do I see doing good work, which individual reporters do I see lifting up marginalized voices, which individual partners do I see speaking truth to power and like supporting them however we can.

I think that can be like really, really key.

**Callie:**Absolutely. We gotta do the work.

**Tuck:**Yeah, go ahead.

**Callie:**Oh, I was just going to ask if there was, if you had any, any parting thoughts, anything else that you thought would be good to add to the conversation?

**Tuck:** Yeah. I mean, I think that, I mean, there’s a lot, but, I think I have quite a few thoughts, but one thing that I think a lot about, which is a little bit of the flip side of this is that a lot of people who aren’t journalists very understandably, like don’t really understand how journalism works.

And so like, There are many rules of journalism and journalistic objectivity that I do not agree with, but there are also things that make sense to me. And I, I often, when I, when I speak to leftist, for example, like what they really want me to be publishing like is leftist propaganda. And I think that it would also harm our movement if all of the like left-leaning journalists started just trying to publish leftist propaganda.

so I sort of want to parse the difference between being a person with like progressive politics who is doing their best to report in a way that is fair and ethical and, with as much bias for me as possible while acknowledging that we all have bias in the system and, speaking truth to power, but in a way that feels like honest and open and fair, versus, you know, I know that there, there are people who, when one of the reporters who are reporting on police brutality, tries to get a quote from the police Bureau. They’re like, don’t talk to cops. Right? And it’s like, no, sometimes it is of service to get a quote from the police Bureau. And maybe that’s because when they immediately, you know, maybe that’s because when you get a quote and they say, we’re not gonna use tear gas.

And then the next day they use tear gas. Having that quote is very useful. Or when they say like, we’re not going to use force. And then like they immediately use force. Having those quotes are very useful. Even just having an idea of like, What their, what their message is it’s can be useful when trying to counteract that message.

And so I just want to encourage people to remember that we are doing our best to balance, That there are many people who are doing it their best to balance like activism and reporting. And, and, sometimes reporting might include like a quote from someone you disagree with. And that journalist could also disagree with that person.

We don’t just publish quotes that we agree with. Like sometimes we do need to like include the other side and the, the mission is not. To never hear voices from people in power, the way the mission is just to like contextualize that and balance them with folks, who are not benefiting from those structures of power and really highlighting the structures of power in our work.

So that’s one thing. and then another thing would just be to like really pay attention, because there are a lot of, black journalist specifically who are speaking out right now, at risk to their, to their jobs. And so if there’s anything that we can do to support black journalists and other journalists who are speaking out against white supremacy and newsrooms right now, I think it’s really important that we do that because especially with like coronavirus and layoffs, it’s really easy for everyone to adjust, to just lay off all of the reporters that are sort of, causing a ruckus right now.

And we need to make sure they don’t do that.

**Callie:**Yeah, absolutely. I think the, the great example of that was, because that was, that was the pushback against the. The pushback against the pushback in that op ed. And everybody was like, well, we need to know what these people are thinking. That’s why we have to publish this.

We have to publish opposing views. and the very obvious answer to me seemed like, I think it, it’s absolutely news that a member of Congress wants to send the military into the streets to slaughter people. But that doesn’t mean you give him the platform to make his case for that. You just write an article saying, Holy shit, this is what they want to do.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, it’s like covering Trump, right? Like it’s not feasible that none of us, well, I don’t cover Trump, but it’s not feasible that journalists would never quote Trump ever again, but it is feasible that every time they quote Trump, they say, by the way, this has no basis in fact, or by the way, this is a racist dog whistle.

So I think that like reporting and then contextualizing is a, is a more effective tool than, not reporting at all.

**Callie:**Yeah. And not putting the word racist or transphobic in quotes is a great start.

**Tuck:** Absolutely. I mean, that’s honestly like, I mean, this is like a little bit of a tangent, but like that’s a great example of like equality versus versus equity.

And how neither of them can happen in newsrooms. It’s just the way that newsrooms treat trans people. Right. And the way that, like, if, if someone is trans, then they feel the need to go out of the way and say like, who identifies as nonbinary and uses they them pronouns. Whereas like, that’s not how we treat cis people when we report about them, like, or not like Donald Trump who identifies as male and used to see him pronouns. And so often, like even when, when workplaces think that they are treating everyone equally, you can point to, you can point to this and say like, you’re clearly not, this is clearly not the way that you treat other people.

So yeah, I think like just keeping an eye out for that is really important as well.

**Callie:**I’ll end with asking, How do you feel about the direction you see things moving in terms of journalism as a whole? like I think the optimism pessimism binary is not super, super useful. It’s, you know, it’s like a 3D spectrum of, of things, I guess. but like generally speaking to youth, do you see things moving in an encouraging direction?

**Tuck:** I mean, I think, like you said, like it is three D and so on the. X axis we have, we have. Diverse voices in journalism and voices that are challenging systems of power and voices that are telling stories that we haven’t heard told to mainstream journalism before. And on that front, I’m actually very hopeful.

I am really encouraged by the number of historically marginalized voices that are moving into journalism right now. but then on the Y axis, we have employment for journalists and I am extremely, extremely pessimistic about that because as, as you know, but again, I don’t know that all listeners know, journalism, it has largely been funded.

By ad revenue for a very long time. And even before Corona virus, many, many, many, many, many publications were failing because, it is just increasingly difficult to sell ads in a world in which Facebook and Google account for the literal majority of all ad revenue — are all ads sales. Like people buy an ad from Facebook or Google or Instagram instead of buying an ad from like your local paper.

And so, you know, like I know. So many talented black and brown and queer and trans journalists. And also, so few of them relatively are still employed. like there are newsrooms that have been really diverse. And then when, when budget cuts came, they let go of all of their black and brown and queer and trans voices first.

And they kept all their white guys who are now left covering the George Floyd protests. I possibly the worst people to cover those protests. So, yeah, I think it’s, it’s really hard to say because like, I think that their voice is doing really, really beautiful, incredible work. but if we look at, I don’t know that you are like trying to be a journalist, but I just want to point to, like, you do really incredible work and also like, you are like, self-funding in your home.

Right. And so like, I would love to hear like, voices, like you like have more. More power and more resources behind it. And so it’s, that’s why I’m like, Hmm. It’s a, it’s good and bad.

**Callie:** Yeah. Yeah. Awesome. Well, I know, I know you’ve, you have, you have very important things happening locally that you need to, to cover.

And, so I sincerely appreciate you taking the time. I think it’s a really important conversation and I think, people just need to be more educated about how the media works so they can parse out bullshit because we’re definitely moving into the propaganda phase if we haven’t already. So.

**Tuck:** Yeah, absolutely. And it’s really hard to, because there’s, there’s so much quick information. I know you’re drinking. You’re like, it’s time to go. And I’m like, no, I have another class, but no, I appreciate it.

**Callie:** No, I want to respect your time! I have plenty of time. I know you don’t and I want to be respectful.

**Tuck:** I appreciate that. yeah. I mean, just one more, more thing that I think about for my friends who aren’t as media literate, is that well, one that we really failed everyone at teaching the media literacy, but also that in times like these, there are a lot of rumors that get started really easily, on Twitter and Instagram and other platforms and can spread like wildfire and can spread like wildfire rather. And when we don’t trust the media at all, as an institution, there is no way to fact check those rumors.

And so I think it is more important than ever to like get to a place where we can trust the media and, and, can trust them to, to not be producing, you know, pro cop propaganda, because otherwise there’s no one left to fact check when there are like rumors running wild, better, like also hurting our community because we’re spending a lot of time and energy trying to figure out if anything we’re seeing on Instagram is true or not.

so yeah, I just want to encourage people to, to hold the media accountable and also, you know, try to think critically about like tweets and Instagram posts that you’re seeing as well, because, there’s so much misinformation from — coming out right now and it’s coming from all sides. And I know that it’s like takes a lot of time and energy to try to parse all of that, but we just like, we have to do the best we can.

**Callie:**Absolutely agree. Thank you again, my friend.

**Tuck:** Thank you so much.

**Callie:** Thanks Tuck and thank you, my friend for listening. I can’t recommend enough. You should definitely check out the podcast and the book, The View From Somewhere by Louis Raven Wallace. And if you don’t follow Morgan Givens on Twitter, you definitely should.

He’s @optimist\_mo. He has so many really really great things to say about journalism and, how so much of what we see in modern journalism is in service of the status quo and white supremacy. So you should definitely check him out and support him as much as you can. we all need to be holding news outlets accountable and this time.

And, those are two really, really great places to go from here to continue learning. Morgan also makes an incredible podcast called Flyest Fables that you should definitely check out as well. It feels weird. To talk about Patreon in the midst of all of this. But the fact is that is how I keep making the show.

And it’s a big part of how I pay my bills. So if you have anything to spare, please consider heading to patreon.com/queersplaining and considering a donation to help keep this thing going. Even the smallest donations matter. Thank you friends. I love you. Before I go. I want you to know that if you’re lost, you’re hurting, you’re scared.

If you feel like no one cares and no one understands you need to know there’s a community out here that loves you cares for you knows that you’re capable of amazing things and that you are worthy of love. If you’re struggling, please, don’t be afraid to reach out. And so next time, friend, my name is Callie Wright, and this is Queersplaining.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music plays]

**Tuck:** Hey it’s me again, I have a question, would you be interested in a bonus episode where I just talk about what's going on with the protest in Portland? Because due to occurring trauma it's kind of the only thing I want to talk about, so tell me if you're interested, and in the meantime: our logo is by the talented Ira M Leigh, our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder, you can support the show on patreon.com/gender, you can follow us on Twitter and Instragram @gendereveal, I'm also on Twitter @tuckwoodstock covering the protests, and [pause] we'll be back real soon with more feelings about gender! I don't know when, just as soon as I can possibly pull something together. Throw a brick at a cop!

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]