(music playing in the background)

**Tuck Woodstock**: *American Hysteria* is a podcast that explores moral panics, conspiracy theories, urban legends, and fantastical thinking and how they have shaped our culture and politics from the Puritans to the present. After three seasons, *American Hysteria* has covered topics ranging from the Illuminati, to the Gay Agenda, and yes that does involve Tinky Winky. Using sociology, psychology, biology, and storytelling host, Chelsea Webber Smith is a nonbinary poet turned podcaster who takes you down our strange American wormholes, presenting forgotten oddities of history and examining modern events and pop culture to illuminate the long complicated path to our present moment.

Sometimes hilarious, sometimes horrifying, and sometimes even heartfelt, *American Hysteria* wants to understand why we fear the wrong things and believe in false realities and what social issues these distractions act to cover up. The fourth season will cover Americans’ vehicles of hysteria, like true crime, televangelists, trash talk shows, Disneyfication influencers, and horror movies. So subscribe to *American Hysteria* now wherever you get this podcast.

**Jeffrey Marsh:** What is that meme, where it's like talking to Socrates if you're talking to another trans person?

**Tuck**: Yes, I share that meme constantly, anytime I'm making any PowerPoint, about anything to do with this, I always put that meme in there.

**Jeffrey:** So let's talk like Socrates.

[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.

**Tuck**: Hey everyone, I hope you're all hanging in there and maybe bracing yourself for a Trans Day of Visibility on Wednesday. As we all know, Trans Day of Visibility is the one day a year where the clouds part and trans individuals can both see and be seen by cis people, so surely it will be only a good time. We have arrived at our gender reveal season six finale. If you are tuning in for the first time, I highly suggest scrolling around and checking out some of the other very cool folks we've talked to the season, like Torrey Peters, Kai Cheng Thom, Imara Jones, Tre’vell Anderson, Diamond Stylz, Mauree Turner, the list just goes on. We also have starter packs on our website, where we've sorted some of our favorite episodes based on interest. That's at [genderpodcast.com/starterpacks](http://genderpodcast.com/starterpacks). Anyway, this week on the show, it is finally time to share my conversation with author, activist, and influencer Jeffrey Marsh. You might know them from their six-second videos on Vine. RIP Vine. But here on Gender Reveal, we have all the time in the world. So Jeffery could give us their hot takes about things from children's television...

**Jeffrey:** Oh absolutely, and I feel that Mr. Rogers was the original vlogger.

**Tuck**: to gender labels...

**Jeffrey:** the word nonbinary doesn't necessarily mean anything to me.

**Tuck**: But first some fairly significant announcements, so if you normally skip them, maybe don't this time. We are about to go on season hiatus, that means that no new episodes for a couple of months. I will be busy working on putting together season seven, which is going to be very weird, like a fun experimental one, so buckle in for that. I will also be preparing and sending out the 103 Patreon rewards that I owe y'all at last count. That includes stickers for the $5 folks, pins and a thank you note and more stickers for the $10 folks, and a whole box of gay stuff for the couple of people who are wild enough to donate $40 or more.

If you would like to snag any of those rewards or to join our newsletter for just $1 you can join us at [patreon.com/gender](http://patreon.com/gender). Thank you all so much for your patience on those rewards as well as for your generosity. Speaking of your generosity, it is almost April, which means that it is almost time for us to announce our next grant in the mutual aid cycle. So keep an eye out for updates on that. I'm not quite ready to announce it yet, but that information will be in our newsletter as well as on our social media feed we’re @gendereveal on Twitter and Instagram. If you would like to make a one-time donation to our trans mutual aid fund, we are on Venmo and Cash App, and PayPal, and there are donation links in the show notes and at our website [genderpodcast.com](http://genderpodcast.com/).

But we should have a bigger announcement for you within the next few days. Finally, as you know we have a nonprofit merch store stocked with cool trans designs by artists from all over the place. I am going to put that store in a little hibernation in April because as you also know... I do that for free, and it takes a lot of time. So we will not have new designs in April. I will toss a few of our favorite previous designs in there so it doesn't look too empty. If you would like to submit a merch design for consideration when we're back up and running, there is a contact form on our website. If you'd like to take a peek in the store and see what's in there right now, it's at [bit.ly/gendermerch](https://teespring.com/stores/gender-reveal).

**Tuck**: Okay, one more quick thing, we have a piece of Theymail this week. Theymail is a tiny message from a listener, and this one says [*This Review Kills Fascists*](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCS-gdtDevD3G00MsikNOQWg), is a YouTube series about politics in music. Each video tells the story of a different artist and discusses the political and LGBT messages they presented in one noteworthy album. Subjects include the gender neutral pop sensation LP, the anarchic nu-metal band *Nothingface* and the queer core punk band that Elliott Smith played in before going solo. You can find these videos and more at [youtube.com/thisreviewkillsfascists](http://youtube.com/thisreviewkillsfascists). And now it's time for this week in gender.

[Chime music]

**Tuck**: So this week, by request, we are talking about the new Tavistock decision in the UK. You will recall that last December, the Bell v Tavistock ruling established that children under 16 years old cannot fully comprehend the long term effects of puberty blockers enough to adequately consent to them. Instead, a child and their family would have to go to court to receive permission to access puberty blockers. As a result, it seemed that England's national health service would stop prescribing puberty blockers more or less altogether. As would many of the private practices in the area. However in this newer case, Bell v Tavistock, a judge has ruled that while a child cannot consent to puberty blockers, as established in Bell, a parent can consent on the child's behalf. Advocates are calling this a significant rollback of the Bell v Tavistock decision.

However, the judge in her rulings specifically states several times that she is not trying to change or contest the Bell decision and that she in fact agrees with all of it wholeheartedly. She also seems to reference some sort of TERF-y talking points in her decision. She makes a lot of references about puberty blockers being *very new* and *very experimental*, which isn't particularly true and expresses a lot of concern about infertility that I (sighs) don't think it's borne out by science, maybe it's borne out by science, it's certainly not borne out by my anecdotal experiences of trans people just getting pregnant all over the place. But anyway, the judge does ultimately conclude that if a child, their parents, and their doctor, all agree that a child should start or continue on puberty blockers, they should be able to obtain them without going to court.

That is a very significant and very exciting decision. I will note however that one of the two complainants from the original Bell V Tavistock case was a mother suing to prevent her 15 year old from accessing trans care. So in cases like that, the child will still be out of luck. Still, it's a step in the right direction, and the full appeal of the Bell v Tavistock ruling will begin this June. This has been this week in gender.

[Chime music]

[Crossfades to Gender Reveal theme music]

**Tuck**: Jeffrey Marsh is the first nonbinary activist to appear on national television, and the first openly nonbinary author with a major publisher. Their book, *How To Be You*, recently received a proprietary edition, through Barnes and Noble.

**Tuck**: The way we always start the show is by asking in terms of gender, how do you describe yourself?

**Jeffrey:** I'm nonbinary.

**Tuck**: Perfect and what pronouns do you use?

**Jeffrey:** I use they/them.

**Tuck**: Right and per your website, you are the first prominent public figure to use and advocate the use of they them pronouns for trans and gender nonconforming people.

**Jeffrey:** I mean it's a super technical thing but I was the first person to use they/them pronouns on a national TV set, is the way to say. We ended up not saying it on air, or the host ended up not saying it.

**Tuck**: So, if that was you. You didn't see it in public figures so where did you learn about they/them pronouns?

**Jeffrey:** I think you're gonna laugh. Tumbler. When I read about it on Tumblr, it just felt so much like… a relief. I could finally relax. Somebody finally saw me. I was wearing makeup and being cute and doing these Vines about how you should love yourself. And the kids were like, “What are your pronouns? How do you iden-? Are you this? Are you that? Are you this other thing?” So I went to Google, like any kind of semi-old person does. Google led me to Tumblr. As soon as I started reading about being nonbinary and they/them pronouns and just the whole thing felt so... like me, and I didn't know there were others, you know?

**Tuck**: I was talking in a workshop the other day about how when I started the show I envisioned being a resource for like “the youth” and I guess I am. But I also almost feel like I get more messages from people who are like, “Oh, I'm 35---” Or “I'm 55 and I'm just realizing I'm not cis and I'm feeling really lonely.” Do you get messages from folks who are older than the youth as well?

**Jeffrey:** Yes, of course, all the time. There is such a need for community. Whenever I mentioned something like a nonbinary librarian, all the mentions fill up with all the nonbinary librarians who are in their 30s 40s, and 50s, you know? Or I say nonbinary firefighter and then all the mentions or whenever. I say I'm old. Sometimes people think of that as self-hate but I think of it as sort of like a badge of honor. I'm 43 years old, and I've survived some, you know what, some *poop* in this life, and I'm proud of that. And to me, the fundamental need for older nonbinary folks to see themselves is so palatable on the internet. I do love *the youngs*, but if you look up nonbinary on YouTube is going to be almost all young people talking about their experience. So when you're an older nonbinary person you almost think that there aren't others like you. Still in 2021.

**Tuck**: Yeah. Do you have advice for folks like that who feel like they are the only one or feeling not seen?

**Jeffrey:** I absolutely do. One of my favorite authors is Kate Bornstein who is over 70, and in 1995...96 wrote the book *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women, and the Rest of Us.* It just blows my mind that I'm, I didn't know that I was part of this continuum.

**Tuck**: So you mentioned that you know you were this first nonbinary activist to appear on national television. The appearance you’re referencing is on Unfiltered which is on Newsmax TV which is like an overtly conservative station.

**Jeffrey:** (laughs) Indeed.

**Tuck**: --- and I have been curious whether you intentionally made this national television debut on a conservative platform or if that's just like how it worked out?

**Jeffrey:** That is just how it worked out. The segment producer, I'm almost 100% sure, just googled nonbinary person to talk to you about nonbinary issues. (laughs) I popped up, and my book had just come out. So my literary agent at the time was like this is a great opportunity to sell books... to conservative people. Which I don't know if that happened, but, you know, if people go back and watch the clip, I'm really fundamentally talking to, you know, folks who are at a conservative grandma's house and conservative grandma has the program on. Right? I wanted to reach through that world, into, hopefully, the hearts of people who were nonbinary or trans, and wanting to make a connection in the weirdest way possible. Who knows if I was successful but...

**Tuck**: Yeah, did you hear from folks after that?

**Jeffrey:** Oh yeah, absolutely, because at the end of the segment, Dennis… (Tuck laughs) and I always have to say it like that... At the end of the segment, Dennis said something like you know, “you got 30 seconds… talk about your world” or whatever he said. So that was my golden opportunity to say, you know, all of the things about my mission “you're important,” “you should love yourself,” “there's nothing wrong with you,” all of that good stuff. It really did go through and people were, I guess. Can I get meta upon meta with you?

I think you'll be open to it. Often, in the conservative cable, but also the liberal cable, and just news or just TV in general, they try to have conflict. To this day, they want to have the liberal person and the conservative person duke it out, and that makes quote unquote good TV. But so many people actually wrote to me and said it was riveting TV, because I actually was not playing that game at all. I was just sending out love, and it was so weird and different for conservative cable news, you know?

**Tuck**: So I wanted to ask, you were on LGBTQ&A few years ago, hosted by the other queer famous Jeffrey M, went to queer famous Jeffrey M’s collide. On that show, you're talking about how you were one of only a few adults doing what you do, along with Alocan Jacob Tobia at the time. I'm wondering when you were setting all of your firsts, only a few years ago, did it ever feel lonely? And do you still consider yourself to be one of only a few adults doing that work or do you feel like that landscape has shifted?

**Jeffrey:** I feel definitely like the landscape has shifted on the personal level. I look at activism in general as a matrix where a lot of us are doing a lot of different parts. There is that every day librarian coming out to your mom. You know, who's not like a celebrity or a social media star like I am, but it's more of the day to day contact with people, and I have more of the online contact with people. I think it takes all of us to be able to change hearts and minds. I've actually seen both of those grow and continue to grow in the, you know, intervening years. There’s still a lot of us who were part of the OG crew, you know, we're still doing our thing. But as far as people having an out librarian at their school? I mean I used to never hear about that. But now it's time to hear about it pretty regularly.

**Tuck**: Well I asked folks on Patreon if they had questions for you, and there was a friend of the show who asked something I thought was interesting, they said “What about Gen Z's approach to making content about gender and related topics has surprised you?” Do you have any thoughts on that?

**Jeffrey:** Oh my goodness, that is ultra-specific! I'm a little too old to be a millennial, I'm a Gen X, I think. I don't think about the labels. So I don't know exactly who Gen Z is but that's the youngest to the young right?

**Tuck**: Yeah, they're like, teens and like maybe early 20s.

**Jeffrey:** Yeah, love it. I think it's a semi leading question and I like that. Because of course the answer is how fundamentally open they are. It's like without even thinking about it, they're like “This is my pronouns. I'm nonbinary. I'm a demi boy. I'm graysexual.” Just open on social media. And we had to *the* old’s, being we, because I'm going to speak for all of us. We obviously grew up with a programming that we had to keep everything in the closet, which by the way, I think both of us are in right now?

**Tuck**: Yes, we are literally in our closets (chuckles)

**Jeffrey:** Our respective closets (laughs). Metaphor! After we're done talking, I'm gonna bust out of my closet! (laughs).

**Jeffrey:** To me that was a little surprising because I still have that internal kind of programming voice back there that’s like, *oooh if you want to get a job someday, don't make these videos*. But it's also incredibly inspiring. You know, pre-pandemic I would go around to colleges and give speeches and walking into a room of young adults was such a relief. I didn't have to explain everything. I didn't have to feel like, *oh, how is this gonna go?* It was just, yeah, that's Jeffrey, and what a fundamental relief and what a fundamental gift that is.

**Tuck**: What have you been up to now that you can fly around and talk to different schools in person. Are you doing that work on Zoom or something, something different?

**Jeffrey:** Yes, it's absolutely 100% digital. There's also writing book two, pitching a TV show, and doing you know brand deals on Instagram and stuff like that as part of the whole, the whole package, as we say in France.

**Tuck**: Can you tell us anything about book two or does that...? I figure I can't ask about the TV show because that jinxes it but you can give us any book two hints?

**Jeffrey:** No, I mean, I don't worry about jinx because at this point... (sighs) Can I… are we mh.. Uh.. erh..? I'm gonna not ask, I'm just gonna go. It really seems like the TV film industry is designed to keep people like us… out… of it..

**Tuck**: Oh for sure.

**Jeffrey:** Yeah, it's really hard to even get to talking to the TV show. So, I can generally because of my social following and that sort of thing I can get a meeting with an executive. But getting that executive to get past what they see and what they think of me? To then talk about what the project is? That is really hard and I don't mind saying. So you can ask me whatever you want, I don't think it'll jinx anything because, you know, what am jinxing? It's not, it's not happening anyway, so I can talk about that in a second.

**Jeffrey:** But the book is all about taking your own advice. *How to be you*, my first book, was about discovering who you are and being that without shame. Literally, we never got told how to be you without having a lot of baggage attached to it. So that was about unearthing who you are and loving who, who that is. The second book is people understanding that they have all the wisdom they could ever possibly want inside themselves.

**Tuck**: I was just thinking about how last night I was rewatching your TED talk. There's an exercise in the TED Talk where you get to close your eyes and do some self-reflection and find that power and that strength within yourself and do some reframing of, you know, the gifts that you have. It was so nice that as part of my work I got to like sit with my eyes closed and reflect on my own personal strengths (laughs). So thank you for the work that you do.

**Jeffrey:** Can you tell me what you're too much of, because that was the exercise in there?

**Tuck**: Yeah so I was thinking about, this still happens, but especially when I was younger and I wasn't aware of what I was doing. There were these moments where I was feeling a lot of injustice, and the way that I expressed my confusion at that injustice was interpreted as anger, and there were times when adults would be like, “Oh, I felt very attacked by little Tuck.”

**Jeffrey:** Oh sure. So, number one, it's never a marginalized person's job to be perfect, really need to remember that one. But also number two, isn't it weird that people who are marginalized in lots of different ways are generally told “you can't be angry, you shouldn't be angry” and at the same time, everything in your life is utterly unfair? Other people are going to pretend that it's not unfair. So only you can see it. Mh...Seemingly, and you shouldn't be angry. Oh, that's such a hard... Can I tell you a tiny story?

My partner and I have three places for shoes and there's two of us. We have a shoe rack but that's in a different part of the apartment. It's like when you come home and your most used shoes, we got three spaces right by the door. My partner gets two of those spaces, and I get one. So already unfair right? I come home one day and three pairs of my partner shoes are in three spaces, (laughs) all the spaces.

So my partner's shoes are in my space, and I got so angry so…. I didn't take it out on my partner, because I've done a lot of spiritual work and I know to go hit a pillow right and express it, but not take it out on someone. I got so angry like white hot flaming, anger, and I realized what you realized already. It was the injustice, and I realized that, to me, every time in my life I've been angry, it's been an injustice in one flavor or another. To me that seems human and righteous and beautiful in a way. As you said, *threatening* to the powers that be *threatening*. So I never get surprised when a Trans activist is angry at something, because it happens to me too.

**Tuck**: I just say I love that your example was like, I get upset about things, for example, sometimes I'm angry about shoe placement. It just seems like so, like, on brand for us specifically---

**Jeffrey:**---to be angry about shoes?!

**Tuck**: I just, yeah, just because you're like, you know, like there's all these huge systemic issues that you like grapple with every day and then also, you're, yeah, no, no I'm relatable sometimes I'm angry about shoes. Like, oh good, oh good. (laughs)

**Jeffrey:** Well that's the other thing it's like we're supposed to run around pretending we're not human beings who get annoyed and angry and in bad moods? Sometimes it's that other thing about trans people feeling this pressure to be perfect because we're *representing* all of transdom. Oh my gosh, I hesitated even sharing anything online when I was first starting out because I felt like I don't represent all nonbinary people. Then I realized after a while if somebody thinks all nonbinary people are the same. There's not much I can do to help that person. They just need to like Google one thing, you know.

**Tuck**: Well you mentioned your partner and I noticed you have been, you know, sharing more about your relationship lately, at least from my perspective---

**Jeffrey:** His pronouns are he, him, so we can talk about him.

**Tuck**: Great, you've been talking about your partner more. I've noticed you've been sharing more about him... is that on purpose or for any specific reason?

**Jeffrey:** Mhhm, we’ve gone viral.

**Tuck**: Oh, did you go viral for your partner?

**Jeffrey:** *Oh my gosh yes,* several 10s of 1000s of likes. It's some of my most popular posts, actually, and I think it's because young people don't see that they can have a future. So they really love when an adult trans’s posts about just having a life, you know. But anyway, that's another subject.

**Tuck**: Yeah, no, but that I mean that's kind of where I was going to. I saw an interview with you, maybe four years ago now, where they were like, “Oh, do you hope to like one day have like a partner and you're like I have a partner,” and we've been together for like six years at that point.

**Jeffrey:** It's so funny because I think I know the clip you're talking about. I think the interviewer even was like, “you know I hate to have such a traditional mindset but do you hope to have a partner?” It's like what are you talking about? We're human beings. Anyway.

**Tuck**: I'm very traditional, but do you hope to experience love (laughing)?

**Jeffrey:** ---to pay bills and I don't know what. What do you wanna talk about now?

**Tuck**: Well, I was just wondering how that's been? Having your relationship be a bit more public and also more celebrated?

**Jeffrey:** Yeah, it's been great. I have, of course, had that thing that a lot of trans people have, where I didn't want to share because I thought it was, you know, quote unquote representing and I had to be a perfect representation. I was just having such anxiety about needing to be perfect. Which, by the way, is really real. There's a lot of pressure there, because a lot of not good cis people are waiting to nitpick every single thing you do and use that for bad faith purposes. But also, can we just get down to brass tax, I didn't want to subject my partner to “burn it with fire,” “gaaaaaay,” “you should kill yourself.” Right? All the stuff that we get as creators.

My partner and I had a talk and my partner said, but, you know, you should show them love and you should show them the future. You should show them us and there's a way you can do that without tagging me and keeping me kind of out of it but keeping me in it as well for the good ways. So that's the balance we're trying to strike now and you know if the TV show happens and I become even more of a celebrity. He understands that he's going to have to be a public figure, probably in certain ways, but we'll see.

**Tuck**: Yeah, we are going to go back to that. Tell me about your vision, like in your ideal world, what does your TV show look like?

**Jeffrey:** It is creating a world of unconditional love for people. You could call that... I'm not, I haven't signed paperwork with anybody, I'm just going to tell you, Mr. Rogers reboot is a way that you can think of it. But it really is going to fundamentally be a Jeffrey Marsh show. Right? We're not trying to get the rights to Mr. Rogers or anything like that. It's going to fundamentally be a safe place for all people to be loved and cared for and that's kind of something that's missing right now.

**Tuck**: Yeah, I mean I love that Mr. Rogers comparison. I don't think it needs to be a reboot for people to know exactly the energy that you're talking about and that energy is so rare, which is why he has been so beloved for so long. So I love the idea of having that content more.

**Jeffrey:** Oh absolutely and I feel that Mr. Rogers was the original vlogger, in the sense, of talking directly to the camera as a friend. I mean that is the space that he created that I feel, or that I've witnessed, everything is built on after that. They're great wonderful YouTubers who just look at the camera and are like, “how are you doing today?” You know, who are sort of just in that tradition and Mr. Rogers was the OG decades ago doing that. OG means original generation, just to catch you up.

**Tuck**: Well, you know you've referenced a few times like talking about surviving some *poop*. I know a lot of your work involves you telling your life story and the trauma and violence and like suicidality that has happened in that. Do you have times where you're like, “Wow, I just don't feel like recounting my childhood trauma for work today?”

**Jeffrey:** No, and I'll tell you why. Well first of all, I learned a long time ago, don't do something you don't want to be doing. So I really could, you know, do my work without talking about that stuff. But it's so fundamental to the second step of what I need to talk about, which is how to move beyond that stuff. So I really realized at a certain point, I have to be able to share all of it, so that we can talk about how to be a healthy, happy, wonderful, *gorgeous*, talented, adult human being after that stuff.

Yeah and for the longest time, I wanted to keep it private, for a really simple reason, that trans people were stereotyped as being traumatized. I don't want to add to that stereotype. But also, I got all this trauma and I don't want it to be shrouded in shame all the time. That in itself sends a message and I want to send that message.

**Tuck**: So, clearly your life's work is helping trans people and everyone loves themselves for who they are. If we magically could already do that, do you have other passions, you would want to explore with all of the free time that has been created in this new world we're envisioning?

**Jeffrey:** Oh my gosh, there's so much fundamentally interesting about your question and how you phrased it, but if that happened, I have no idea what I would do. Honestly. I might go back into a monastery, because that's the only other thing that I've really felt I'm so destined to be and do was spiritual practice. They're kind of related I guess but I could go live on a mountaintop with a bunch of monks and be very happy. But I looove what I do and I looove connecting with people and I love making content. So I really couldn't imagine much outside of that.

**Tuck**: So I don't have a specific question about Buddhism for you, but I did want to give you some space. Is there anything about your experiences with Buddhism, that you would like to share?

**Jeffrey:** That is so Buddhist you're like, “I'm not going to ask you a question. I'm going to ask you the anti-question.” I don't think so because explaining... I mean I've always found explaining Buddhism is like a fish on a bicycle. I mean it's just really a thing that's beyond language and words, and you try, but it doesn't really get anywhere. If you get almost every single human being and trans people especially. Not a lump everyone together, but here we go. You'll see why. We were all taught that there's something wrong with us, and that the way to fix what's wrong with us is to hate our guts and trans people tend to become... *talented* at doing that.

Extremely enthusiastic about self-hate. Very good at it. It's automatic. Our brains do it, we train ourselves into it on a fundamental deep level that it seems like there's almost nothing else in the universe that can exist besides self-hate. I don't know if this is familiar to anyone listening, I'm obviously talking about my own life, but I think it's relevant here. What Buddhism does is gives you a context without self-hate. But our culture, society and our language is built on the tenets of self-hate and keeping us in self-hate. So you almost can't talk about it, you just show it. That's me putting on makeup and a dress. You know, getting out my Diva ring light and doing a video and just loving myself, it's showing it not explaining it.

**Tuck**: We get advice questions sent to the show all the time. I was wondering if I could have you answer one that I think is really up your alley.

**Jeffrey:** Sure.

[bell dings]

**Tuck:** “I'm a trans nonbinary person, and I find that once a month or so I will get sucked into Twitter threads or YouTube comments from TERFS, etc. I feel like my armor is so fragile and I often get sucked into spirals of self-doubt about whether I am really trans, whether I will regret my decision to get top surgery, whether I am just a pathetic snowflake. I know these things aren't true, and I wouldn't hesitate to tell my friends they were wrong if they said these things about myself. But knowledge can't always beat insecurity and anxiety. How do I avoid going down these rabbit holes, and how do I grow a thicker skin, so they don't get to me so intensely?” And that's from Adrian.

**Jeffrey:** Okay I'm going to give you the Jeffrey answer but you knew this was coming. You're probably never gonna grow a thicker skin so I would give up now. Meaning, you're going to begin to love your thin skin, and take care of yourself, your thin skinned self. That's the only way that I can see. I wouldn't encourage you to have a thick skin because there's wonderful things to get through that thin skin that quote unquote thick skinned people can't experience. They don't get the joys of either or the connection or the whatever else, that can't get through a thick skin. So no, no. But of course there are like 23 different things in that question that I want to address, and let's just start with spending your time with TERFS and mean people and internet comments.

I think it's a dick... Well, I'll speak from my own experience... It used to feel really magnetizing and addictive for me because I felt like I was part of something. A conversation or group, part of the community, you know. I just realized, oh goodness, there are other ways I can find community than internet comments. That's a really inefficient way to be doing this. So I would encourage you to start to wean yourself away from reading the comments at all. Frankly. I've really gotten skilled at finding the really good, wonderful loving things that people want to say to me, and filtering out the other folks.

**Tuck**: Yeah, I agree, I… (sigh) see the trans folks online who feel, for whatever reason, like they're compelled to have these arguments over and over again. I, personally, I don't know, I think there are other things we could do with our one wild and precious life---

**Jeffrey:** Amen to that.

**Tuck**: ---but to each their own.

**Jeffrey:** No, no, not to each, no no (laughs). I know you're trying to be nice and inclusive. But this is really, really fundamental. It's not going to get you anywhere and it's not going to work. That's really the baseline. Can I tell you the other beautiful thing about this person's question? I just realized this recently and I'm so glad I get to talk to you about it. everything that gets thrown at a trans person boils down to, see if I'm wrong, Everyone, let me know, tweet at me. Everything that gets thrown at us, fundamentally comes down to the accusation that we are fake. That is the obsession. That is what everything comes back to, from, I just don't get it to, kill all trans people. It's just fundamentally, you're fake, you're false, you're deceiving, you're a liar, you're wily. I don't know what the synonyms are but all of them.

The irony is, we are the ones telling a fundamental truth about how humanity works. In order for the there's only two genders' belief to maintain itself. We have to be the liars. We have to be the liars. I bring that up because so many trans people get sucked into the vortex. Am I fake? Am I real enough? What if I get top surgery? What if I go on T? What if I change my hair color? Is it trans enough, you know? You just get sucked right into, am I *real* enough? So let me say for the record, to every trans person listening. I see you. I love you. I love how real you are. I mean this, I know people don't talk like this but I do, I do.

**Tuck**: So I want to go back to those people who are leaving the comments, like trans people are fake nonbinary people are fake. Where do you think their feelings come from, because maybe I'm naive, but when I see someone who really hates trans people and spends a lot of time actively fighting against them having rights. I tend to assume that that is more about that person and their fears then about trans people,

**Jeffrey:** Oh my gosh, yes. So fundamentally, I represent breaking the rules. They are wound up tight around the rules that they have for themselves. Could be about gender or could be about how to be a good Christian, I don't know what they're wound up about. But they have been told their whole life you must follow the rules. Then all I'm doing is like “Heeeey I got cute earrings” on my social media channel. It breaks the rules and they *must* do something about it. It's how I know you know anybody that's coming after me is not happy, because they're projecting onto me their own, you know, crapola as we say.

**Tuck**: A lot of your job, and a lot of my job includes doing a lot of gender 101 work, right? Like what does nonbinary mean? What are pronouns? How do we use them? Say, now you're in a room with graduates of gender 101, they are people who have listened to 90 episodes of a podcast about trans people. Is there a topic or a thought about gender, or queerness that you don't always get a chance to discuss that you might want to talk about in this space?

**Jeffrey:** To me, and again this will sound really spiritual or real Buddhist, there is no fundamental you. And that includes gender. This is also the double standard of our time, in the sense that, because cis people are human, they are also constantly cycling through different identities. You say one thing to grandma, that is different than you say to your broskis down at the, I don't know in COVID times you don't go down anywhere, but you know on your zoom, on your broski zoom. You're different people in different places, and around different people and you're a different person when you're alone, right? So, this happens to all of us and we cycle through all of these I’s, it's actually a capital letter “I” with an apostrophe letter s, I’s.

We've cycled through all of these identities, and none of them are the real you. Trans people do the same thing, but layered over top of that is “Oh my god, if I can't be fundamentally one me all the time, it must mean that I'm fake because everyone tells me I'm fake from birth.” Right, so we have this extra anxiety we keep around, and that's the 401 stuff is like what is the nature of identity, anyway? What is the nature of a you? Who is this “I” you keep talking about, because there's no their there, so what is there?

**Tuck:** I love that, because that's something that I come back to so often talking about folks who, and I say this a lot on the show, but I think people do get so fixated on like solving for their gender like it's a math problem and they will get like the one static right answer and then things will be better. I just think that is such the opposite way from how we can sustainably live in a world, you know? (laughs)

**Jeffrey:** Oh my gosh and I love you know we talked a little bit about Kate Bornstein, but there's also the gender workbook or My Gender Workbook, I guess it's called. In that book, it was like, draw a picture of how gender feels (laugh). It’s just a totally different, like part of your brain. We've talked a lot about cis people, and another like trans 101 thing, that cis it's not a bad word. Like I don't hate cis people. I love cis people actually, but a lot of cis people are coming at us. So we want to be able to say “Tumbler said my identity is real,” and have that in the conversation, but of course that doesn't work.

Once you have your label, I hope that you love it, and it makes you feel good. But is it going to make a bigot stop being biggoty? Is that a word? Being their bigot self ? It's not. It's not. If you expect it to, you know, in the trap is you feel like you didn't do a good enough job of finding your label, because the bigotry didn't stop. But of course, you know, it's not your fault.

**Tuck:** Right, and I think that's the beauty of a label like queer right? Is it doesn't require you to define something tightly? You can just be like I am queer, great. I will now move on and never think about this again. Not never think about queerness but never think about like, trying to define neatly who I'm attracted to because I think that's also like a self-defeating exercise.

**Jeffrey:** Oh yes. Can I tell you something *dangerous*? Because of this obsession like people are fake, nonbinary people are fake, the word nonbinary doesn't necessarily mean anything to me.

**Tuck:** Absolutely.

**Jeffrey:** You know I talk about it as part of my job and so on and so forth, but one of the things I love about the word, is that it basically confuses cis people... a lot. So then we got to cut through all that, and they have to ask me about my experience, which I think is the better, bestest, funner conversation to be having. If it was a word that just automatically made sense to everybody, we wouldn't get that really wonderful, beautiful, wild and fun conversation about the deeper stuff you know?

**Tuck:** So something I'm trying to do this season of the show, because it's an extra wild plague time, is to ask everyone to share something you're looking forward to?

**Jeffrey:** I'm looking forward to a time when what I say seems old fashioned. Because we are still in that 101 kind of phase and I'm looking forward to 50 years from now. Let me do the math. Yeah, I could still be alive. I do yoga. I would love to just look back at my social media posts and be like, oh gosh how boring, not in a judgy kind of way, but just in like people like me are just seen as so mundane, I'm looking forward to that.

**Tuck:** Right and we are living in a time when all of this is evolving so rapidly. You know that better than anyone. You know, I look back on episodes of the show that were made three years ago and I was like *wow like the way that we're talking about gender is so different now* and that was three years ago so yeah of course it'll be different and I do also hope that that we can look back and feel that way.

**Jeffrey:** I want to pick your brain, because to me that feels very intra-community. That is true, we talk to each other, traveling at light speed. What's the opposite of intra? Ultra?

**Tuck:** Inter---

**Jeffrey:** Oh, you're right, inter-community. Anyway, amongst the cis, they are really asking me the same questions they did, like, 5, 6, 7 years ago… about being nonbinary---

**Tuck:** Really! (sigh)

**Jeffrey:** Yeah, of course.

**Tuck:** Wow.

**Jeffrey:** Do you want to hear what they are? Aren't you just a man in a dress?

**Tuck:** (under breath) oh my god.

**Jeffrey:** I just can't use they for one person. Aren't you just doing it for the attention?

**Tuck:** Oh my god! (laughs)

**Jeffrey:** Like I love attention, of course, I wouldn't be on a podcast, for example, if I didn't love attention. You know it really tells me how your parents treated you, that you think wanting attention is a bad thing. Really tells me what you had to do when you were a kid to get any kind of loving kind attention from your parents. But in addition to that, not only is attention not a bad thing. We're not bad for wanting it. It's a human thing. And, like we were talking about a second ago, I wish the way I look, the way I went to the post office or whatever, was mundane and didn't get attention.

**Tuck:** Right.

**Jeffrey:** I wish! You know? That I could put on a ball gown when I want to but also could just exist in life as a trans person. Can I brag for a second? I get messages all the time, that say, you know “Your video saved my life” and I love those messages. I also got this message that “I didn't know how to come out to my mom, so I sent her your video.” I love just being up a wave, because who we are is not so rare, but I can tell. I mean, I know there are clinical studies done about trans people and etc. etc. but, you know, one of the fundamentally beautiful things about my job is that I get to hear from all these trans people who are like *that's me too, that's me too, that's me too, that's me too* and I don't feel so alone.

**Tuck:** Yeah, of course, of course, and that's like the whole goal of this podcast, right, it's like to have people not feel alone.

**Jeffrey:** I think you've helped me realize that part of the trans experience is fundamentally feeling alone… as a way that's like programmed deep into our soul. In the sense that growing up, probably, unless you're very lucky, nobody in your family is trans, nobody at your school is out trans, nobody in your church is out trans, you know, whatever your spaces are.

Nobody at your shul or synagogue is out trans right, whatever your spaces are you don't encounter other people, even if you're this youngest generation. So you feel fake, and you feel alone. That is really not a good starting point (laughs)! Ahhh! I don't mean to stereotype trans people, but it just makes my heart hurt a little bit because none of us deserve to have so much of that heaped upon us. And yes we transcend but, you know, that's not fair that our lives need us to transcend all the time. You're a strong person if you transcend but I'm sure some of us just would rather have a life.

**Tuck:** The way we always have the show is by asking in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Jeffrey:** Every single person feels loved and cared for and included and certainly, like there is nothing wrong with them.

[Theme music plays]

**Tuck:** That's gonna do it for this season. If you have a good time or you learned something or you think someone else will learn something. Please share this episode, and this podcast with your community. You can follow along between seasons via our newsletter, which is $1 at [patreon.com/gender](http://patreon.com/gender), or on Instagram and Twitter where we are at @gendereveal. I am @TuckWoodstock on Twitter when I'm not getting mass attacked by Nazis. We do have fun, this internet is good.

Anyway, our website is genderpodcast.com where we have episode transcripts, starter packs for new listeners and FAQ page and more. Our merch shop is [bit.ly/gendermerch](http://bit.ly/gendermerch) and our online community is at [bit.ly/genderslack2](http://bit.ly/genderslack2). All links in the show notes.

Rose Eveleth, Julia Furlan, Helen Zaltzman, Zee, Rich, Tehya, Arlie and everyone else for you know why. Thank you Isaura Aceves, Babette Thomas, Cassius Adair, Alexander Charles Adams, and the rest of our official and unofficial team this season. And you know what, thank you to Lil Nas X for Montero this week. This week our logo is by the talented Ira M. Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. Additional music this week by Blue Dot Sessions. We'll be back very soon with more feelings about gender.

[Music ends]

**Tuck:** God, why did my brain just shut off. Uh. Sorry, so sorry, I should always have every single other window muted when I do this because I have ADHD and anytime an alert goes off, I'm like, AHH, question. It's all gone I heard what you said but what was I gonna say?

**Jeffrey:** No this is a fundamental opportunity, because there's no need to apologize.

**Tuck:** (laughing) Okay, Thank you, Jeffrey, I hear you.

**Jeffrey:** Did you get that?

**Tuck:** (laughing) I hear you.

**Jeffrey:** As trans people we tend to always, and keep this in do not edit this out, do you hear me?

**Tuck:** (laughing) Okay. It might be the post credit sequence but I'll keep it in.

**Jeffrey:** Oh man, oh trans person, oh man, woman, they/them. I am telling you that as trans people we tend to apologize for our very existence all the time. It shows up linguistically but it is part of our fundamental nature and we need to unlearn the habit.

**Tuck:** Oh, you're right. You're right.

**Jeffrey:** Okay, consult your notes, what were you going to say?