[theme music starts]

**Tuck:** Welcome to Gender Reveal, a podcast where we ask intrusive personal questions and hopefully get a little bit closer to understanding what the hell gender is. I’m your host and resident gender detective, Molly Woodstock.

[theme music ends]

Hey friends, hope you've been hanging in there. *I* sprained my elbow while riding my bike naked, so *that*'s been wild. Also wild is that the Gender Reveal Twitter account had a viral tweet about forms where the only gender options are "male," "female," and "prefer not to say." So that was a vaguely awful roller coaster in my Twitter mentions. But the good news is that the tweet led a bunch of folks to the podcast so if you're just tuning in, welcome, glad you could join us!

Personal news aside, this week, octogenarian Supreme Court justice Anthony Kennedy resigned, which is a true American nightmare for queer folks, trans folks, disabled folks, people of color, folks with uterus, etc, etc, etc. So I'm treating myself and you to an interview with one of my favorite people on the entire World Wide Web.

But first, I need to remind you that this show is 100% funded by our very kind, very generous Patreon donors. We had five more donations this week, which is incredible, including someone who is listening while actively hiking the Pacific Crest Trail. Thank you all so so so much for supporting the show. If you'd like to support the work we're doing here at Gender Reveal, you can donate at Patreon.com/gender or make a one-time donation at paypal.me/mollywoodstock, and if you donate $5 a month or more, I will send you some fun stuff once my arm works again.

And with that, it's time for This Week in Gender

[music]

**Tuck:** This Week in Gender, we're checking in on our friends in the UK and it doesn't look great? On July 22nd, UK citizen Christie Elan-Cane lost a court case that called on the government to allow a gender-neutral "X" gender marker on passports, saying that forcing all UK passport-holders to list a binary gender is inherently discriminatory, obviously. Christie identifies as "non-gendered," and has been fighting for genderless passports and other gender-neutral accommodations in the UK for 25 years, which is incredible. To quote the BBC, "in his comments, the judge stressed that his conclusion was reached on current evidence, adding, 'it will be necessary for the government to consider to what extent, if any, in an age of increasing social and legal awareness and acceptance of the importance of issues relating to diversity and equality, the recording of an individual's sex and/or gender in official and other documentation is justified.'"

So in other words, he's sort of like, saying the same thing that a lot of us say, which is, do we really need gender on passports at all? Do we really need gender on driver's licenses at all? I saw on the internet while researching this topic that folks were arguing that we need to put gender markers on passports to prevent fraud, as if the only way to know if someone stole a passport or not was to look at the gender marker, which is *wild*.

It's worth mentioning that Australia, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, India, and Nepal already have a third category on their passport, as does the organization that's in charge of United Nations air travel. It may also be worth mentioning, just as a tiny blip of good news, that the BBC story about the story used they/them pronouns for Christie without drawing attention to it or making a big deal out of it in any way, so that's good I guess.

In other UK news, there's been some drama and controversy around proposed updates to the 2004 Gender Recognition Act. The best that I understand it, the government is planning to reform parts of the Gender Recognition Act in order to make it easier for people to change their legal gender. A bunch of trans-exclusionary women, known as "TERFs," heard this and said, "hey we hate this, cis women should be allowed to have their own space where trans women aren't allowed."

The government responded by clarifying that the Equality Act of 2010 already allows for single sex spaces and that they weren't planning on changing that. At that point, the entire media panicked and said that trans women weren't going to be allowed in women's restrooms anymore. This turned out to be just a misunderstanding, exacerbated by bad reporting. The reality is that technically, organizations and businesses in the UK can, already, ban trans women from women-only spaces or trans men from man-only spaces. But, they have to prove that the exclusion is for a legitimate reason, that there was no other possible way to achieve this objective, and that the decision isn't coming from prejudice or ignorance. So basically, they have to prove that they had no other choice but to deny this service to trans folks. And to be honest, I can't think of a situation in which that would be true.

And so technically, in the UK, it is possible to exclude a trans person from a single-sex space, but in reality, it is very rarely happening, it seems, because it is almost impossible to justify to the extent that it is needed to be justified. However, I don't live in the UK. If any of our listeners do and they want to weigh in, you are always welcome to reach out to us. In the meantime, I am here in the United States where everything is on fire. This has been, This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender closing music]

[theme music]

**Tuck:** Matt Lubchansky is the Associate Editor of the Nib and a cartoonist and illustrator living in Queens, New York. Their work has appeared in *Vice*, *Eater*, *The Intercept*, *Mad Magazine*, *Gothamist*, *The Toast*, *The Hairpin*, the Nib animated series, and their long-running webcomic *Please Listen to Me*. They are the co-author of *Dad Magazine*. In the few weeks since we recorded this podcast, Matt released a comic as part of the Nib's collection called "Visibility Has Its Rewards: Six Cartoonists on Gender and Transition." We will link to this in the show notes. I highly recommend that y'all check it out.

[music ends]

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

**Mattie:** Oh ho! I would say that either genderqueer or nonbinary is how I define myself.

**Tuck:** Yeah! I'm interested in what made you connect to the word genderqueer, primarily because that's a word that you don't hear as much recently. It seems like "nonbinary" has sort of taken over, whereas "genderqueer" was more popular like 10 years ago, but when I came out like a year and a half ago or so -- I don't know how time is -- I also went to genderqueer! So I'm just curious what attracted you to that word.

**Mattie:** Yeah! I think, there's two things coming to mind. One is that I'm a million bazillion years old.

[Tuck laughs]

**Mattie:** I know on the spectrum of human life I'm a normal age, I'm 32, but on the spectrum of comic artists online, I'm a dinosaur. So that's possible, that that was just a word that I'd heard more times in my life but I think the other thing is -- you know, it's a false narrative to assign that every moment of your life was you yearning to be yourself and you couldn't and this was always exactly there -- that narrative that everything is going to fit into place. But the thing was, when I got the words and the language and the thought process for it, a lot of things did snap into place, obviously. Otherwise why would you come out and change the way you identify to other people? But sort of, I think something about the word "genderqueer" stuck with me and just now thinking about it, I would say, it's less about feeling in the middle for me than it is feeling one way or the other fairly often.

**Tuck:** You mention that you're an old old dinosaur, so I have a question about that. So there's a perception among certain folks that being nonbinary or genderqueer or whatever is a fad amongst the youth --

**Mattie:** Mmm

**Tuck:** And that they/them pronouns are also a fad amongst the teens. Like yo-yos or what the fuck ever, so I love seeing older folks and I don't mean like you're elderly, but you are more than 17 --

**Mattie:** Yes.

**Tuck:** So I love seeing non-teens come out as genderqueer, nonbinary, using they/them pronouns, but I was wondering what that experience has been for you.

**Mattie:** Yeah, on some level it's felt a little like, I worry because I’m not 17. My peers are less likely to know what things are, so I have to do a lot more explaining to people. My parents and grandparents are of an age where it's completely alien to them. A lot of the time now, I will be the first nonbinary person that a person I'm talking to knows. That's very not true for my everyday life in terms of my circle of friends and the industry I work in, but I feel like I do a lot more explaining and justifying the identity as a thing that exists and has existed for a long time.

If I'm talking to someone I know that's 10 years older than me, that's a normal age for me to talk to, like a person in their late 30s maybe or early 40s, like I have some friends that are older. For the most part it's fine, but occasionally, family members or something -- it feels generational in this way where I feel like if I were 17 and living where I do, it would be like, everyone would be like, “oh, yeah yeah yeah, I know what that is.” And I'm out here with a tote bag full of copies of Gender Trouble that I gotta hand out to everybody.

[Tuck laughs]

**Tuck:** Yeah, just slide right in with Judith Butler.

**Mattie:** A book I have not read, but, you know.

**Tuck:** Me either, actually. I've heard that it's pretty much impossible, so I didn't even attempt it.

**Mattie:** That's good. I'm really bad about reading more academic texts, because I went to engineering school because I didn't want to write essays, because I hate them. And I don't like reading books and telling people how I feel about them. I just like keeping it to myself. So.

**Tuck:** That's interesting. I'm a journalist, I do word things, but I don't like academic texts because they're just too dense. I'm just like, can you just talk like a normal person?

**Mattie:** Yeah, for sure. When I'm just trying to read up on left politics, I'm trying to read some person who I think is very smart on Twitter and they'll post an article and I'll just be like, well, now I've gotta look up what a dialectic is, I guess.

[Tuck laughs]

**Mattie:** You know, I'm just a big moron. And that's an important thing about me.

[Tuck laughs]

**Tuck:** It's a struggle, because i'm sure that I also am that way on this show though in that I also use language that anyone in queer circles would understand and I forget what's not accessible to other people — yeah, go ahead.

**Mattie:** Oh, I was just going to say, yeah, I very much had that problem. I think of myself as someone who doesn't really use a lot of those kind of things, of language that's not just common words, not a lot of jargon, but I very recently had a lot of talks with family about this stuff and found myself having to talk around a lot of words I wanted to use that I realized would just make it worse or make it more complicated to understand.

**Tuck:** Can you think of any examples?

**Mattie:** That's a great question. I mean, basically, I had to pick one word, and I went with nonbinary and drill down on one concept and not veer around and say other things. Then it's like, "whoa, what's that?" And it's like, "kind of the same thing, but not really."

**Tuck:** Yeah, totally. Words are hard. Speaking of words, what pronouns do you use?

**Mattie:** Oh I'm they and them. And I guess "theirs" as well.

[Tuck laughs]

**Tuck:** You have been using they and them for a little while but you tweeted about it for the first time yesterday. How are you feeling about it today?

**Mattie:** I feel very relieved. That was — I tweeted about — so I've been kind of out to people very very close to me like my wife. And some friends, my queer friends basically, that I've talked to about it. And that's been a little over a year. I didn't say anything about it publicly until like November? And then I was not sure on the pronoun question for a while. It's been two or three months of me trying to put it out in the world very slowly, through friends and things, to get people around me to to use it, and this week was when I — it was kind of a crazy week because I decided -- I talked to my extended family and stuff about everything.

**Tuck:** Oh wow

**Mattie:** I was like, well, now it's at a point where if I want to switch pronouns, I gotta tell everybody what's going on. I can't just be like, hey everybody, use different pronouns for me and no other explanations, thanks!

[Tuck laughs]

**Mattie:** So it feels mostly -- I feel an immense amount of relief for the most part. I have good family and my in-laws are great, so everything's been fine. It's just -- I feel a little drained, you know?

**Tuck:** For sure. It's a rough one. But now you did it! You've had all the conversations.

**Mattie:** I did do it. I think all of them

**Tuck:** You're free

**Mattie:** I mean, I’m gonna have to be doing it forever, probably, right?

**Tuck:** That's what I was going to say, is we get to continue doing it for the rest of our lives. Hooray. Okay, when one types Matt Lubchansky into Google, the first autofill result isn't like, "Matt Lubchansky comics" or "Matt Lubchansky the Nib" or "Matt Lubchansky please listen to me" it's "Matt Lubchansky gender," which is --

**Mattie:** No shit!

**Tuck:** Which is so buck wild --

**Mattie:** Are you kidding me?! I was under the impression it was "Matt Lubchansky dilbert," which I was ready to answer a lot of questions about. Oh my god, it does come up! Holy shit!

**Tuck:** Yeah, so --

**Mattie:** Yeah...

**Tuck:** Now that I'm giving you this knowledge that I didn't realize you didn't have, how does that feel? [laughs]

**Mattie:** It's weird as fuck! uhhh… it's also funny because no Google result helps you. It's literally just a joke tweet about two princes and pictures of tomatoes, because all tomatoes have incredible species names. Everyone knows this. This is me trying to decide my new gender identity between beefsteak hybrid and burpee big girl.

[Tuck laughs]

**Mattie:** I still haven't figured that out. So maybe that's why people are Googling it, because they really want to know... shit man, I gotta talk about other stuff! God...

**Tuck:** [laughs] So, a few months before you came out publicly on Twitter dot com, you started tweeting things like "excited to wake up and do gender tomorrow!" and "ready to get out there and do some gender today?" Were you like, trying to hint? Or...

**Mattie:** I mean, I guess... hint is a strong word, but it was like, it's hard if you spend -- because before I came out publicly -- I came out publicly in November and I had sort of figured it out maybe... last summer sometime … but like, for a solid two years, year and a half before that, it was all I thought about, and nothing else, all day. I'm sure you're familiar with this. It just consumes you. Once you start -- I spent basically the first 29 years of my life never thinking about it. I think I just missed the cutoff for being raised in a way that was thinking about this shit at all. So I spent a full couple years just thinking about it. So you spend all your time thinking about something, it sort of starts to seep out of your brain.

**Tuck:** Totally. You have a long-running comic called "Please Listen to Me" and a few months ago, you have this specific comic called "Compared to What?" which is about experimenting with your gender presentation and I could literally read the comic to everyone but it might be better if you just sort of described it to folks and talk about the experiences you had that inspired it.

**Mattie:** So it's like, just walking down the street and some guy runs over and he's like "hey, I see you're doing something a little different with your presentation," and then he's like "some people, they got a problem with it, but not me! I'm just noticing it in a regular way, which norms are being violated, which ones aren't, and not making any judgement," and someone else walks by and he's like, "hey! check out what this person is doing!"

[Tuck laughs]

**Mattie:** And it's very, like, the reaction I would get from friends and family that knew something was up but did not know what or I didn't talk to them about it or they would just notice. Even with people I was not out to, there was subtle things that I'd be doing all the time and it would creep into my everyday presentation and people would non-judgmentally notice stuff but people like, *really* notice it, in an I-see-what-you're-doing way that is not supposed to feel judgmental but it's the training that we all have living in a society, right, where the whole reason our chimpanzee troop brains are trained to enforce the unwritten rules of how civilization is supposed to work

**Tuck:** Yeah

**Mattie:** So these people are acting as tools for this thing that they don't understand or don't think about and I wasn't mad, I didn't feel judged, but it felt very -- I had this written in my drafts for nine or ten months. I have a little drafts folder that's just ideas and if I have an idea in the middle of the night or I'm out talking to somebody and I think of "this would be a good subject for a comic," I'll write it down or whatever. And I looked at it, and it was just sitting there for months at the top of my drafts, called the "norms noticer." It was just, "hey, check out this. They just love to notice, just very loudly and in your face."

[Tuck laughs]

**Mattie:** Yeah. It feels in the moment a little intimidating, like they're trying to make you back off the things you're doing. But I don't think people know they're doing that.

**Tuck:** Yeah, totally. I didn't see you identify as queer until after you came out as genderqueer so I'm wondering if the way you identify in terms of sexual orientation shifted at the same time as your gender identity or did you just now start talking about it?

**Mattie:** I think it was as it was happening because the thing is if I'm not a man, there's basically no way to be straight, right? So it's the sort of thing where it's sort of thrown the conceptions I had about attraction into sharp relief and it's sort of like, oh, that's a thing that I haven't quite nailed down in terms of where I'm at there. But a) it doesn't super matter because I'm in a monogamous relationship with a person, so it's not like super pressing for me to figure that thing out but it's like, when I was identifying as a man I was identifying as straight, but there's always people existing in that liminal space that you just always thrown out, but if I have a thought that is more straying from what I'm used to, I no longer toss it as incongruous with my personality or existence or identity or whatever.

It's more just like, I had a close friend of mine who was going through some gender troubles at the same time as me. We used to talk about it a lot as -- you don't worry about the overall picture of a thing but just plot the point as you feel it and figure it out later. Just accept the thought or feeling you had and eventually things will make sense. You'll have a picture at some point. But to try to take every thought you have and spin it up into something bigger is kind of counterproductive when you're still going through the journey, the capital-J Journey. But it's sort of like, you know, if I'm here and gender is not real, who cares? [laughs] That's basically where I'm at. You spend a long time trying to construct, to make the pieces of your brain fit with the box you're supposed to be in, you know? But yeah. That's pretty 101 stuff, I guess.

**Tuck:** Well, we're recording this in June and this is your first Pride since you came out, so happy Pride! How is it going?

**Mattie:** Oh, thank you. Happy Pride to you. It's going good, it’s been fun so far! I don't know. There's sort of something, just walking around in the air. I live in New York. It feels -- “celebratory” is not the most appropriate word, but it's also kind of true.

**Tuck:** Yeah

**Mattie:** It's a celebration, it's a commemoration of a lot of less good things. It doesn't feel like mine quite yet, you know?

**Tuck:** Mm-hmm

**Mattie:** I'm trying to enjoy it and take in things but I still feel like asserting myself, trying to speak for what it means or anything still feels iffy. That's just me and how I am. But you know, it's been fun. I've been going to the queer bar a lot.

**Tuck:** Aww!

**Mattie:** Which has been nice

**Tuck:** That's nice. It takes time till you ease into it for sure. I think literally everyone is like, oh, I don't know if I'm valid in this space. and then you just sort of get more and more used to it until eventually you're just shouting about how queer you are, which is great.

**Mattie:** Yes

**Tuck:** You'll get there. So you've made a few jokes and comics about the tension between wanting to present as queer and buying queer-ass shit and celebrating that and also not wanting to buy into capitalism and supporting big corporations who are profiting off of queerness --

**Mattie:** Yes

**Tuck:** And I was wondering if you could talk about that!

**Mattie:** Oh, sure. Yeah, it was very specific. This was my comic for The Nib last week. On Monday, when I was looking for something to write about, I was reading the news all day on Monday like I normally do for my comics that run on Wednesday, I saw that on Tuesday, Nike was putting out a line of shoes with pink triangles on them and my first thought was like, "oh cool," right? Your first thought is, "isn't that nice, you can buy a shoe with a pink triangle on it." And immediately, four seconds later, it was like, well, they better be donating 100 percent of the profits to ACT UP or something, right? And then I went and looked at Nike's website and they were donating "some" of the profits to "initiatives."

[Tuck laughs]

**Mattie:** And I was like, "Ooooh, *initiatives.*" What does that mean? It could mean anything! And I'm like, you know, it's the sort of thing where this is a very specific example, but you see this everywhere. And it's like, I've been sort of waiting. Last month, I was like, I'm just going to wait for July because some brand is gonna fuck up and I'm gonna be able to talk about the rainbow capitalism problem or some police car is going to show up painted like a rainbow, there's going to be an ICE van --

**Tuck:** Yup!

**Mattie:** -- with the fucking pride flag on it and it's like, well, this is a month to celebrate being queer but it's also a month to hate cops. Like every month! But it's especially a month to hate cops. Cops are very bad. A cool thing about cops is that none of them are good and if you are a cop you're bad.

[Tuck laughs]

Tuck**:** I will say something buckwild that happened was that the Portland police bureau on Twitter and all social media changed their little icon to a rainbow flag police badge

**Mattie** (horrified whisper-scream): NOOOOOO. Goddamnit. The Portland police also occupies a special -- I have a real hatred for police departments in this country that have cool logos or cars, because it's like, how dare you. Portland's right up there. They got a neat car.

[Tuck laughs]

**Mattie:** It's very upsetting, I don't like it. Them and Salem Massachusetts are very upsetting.

**Tuck:** I love that you have the list

**Mattie:** The Salem one has a witch on it and it's like, how fucking dare you.

**Tuck:** Yeah, seriously [laughs]

**Mattie:** It's just egregious to me. No, so, but then I was just, this sort of thing where specifically the usage of the pink triangle is super offensive in a way where just a rainbow isn't. The rainbow flag has been around for 40, 50 years now. I think '69 was when it was first used. '68? The Nib actually ran a piece about the history of it yesterday. Go read the piece in The Nib by Max Dlabik. It's very good.

That was a thing that was invented or designed with in mind that it was about gay pride and it's about celebrating queerness or whatever so if you put a thing that's a rainbow, which is a motif in a lot of art already -- there's other flags that are rainbows already, there's a Peruvian one, there's the Italian PACE flag, other flags are rainbows, so if you put that on there, it's annoying that you're trying to profit off of something that ten years ago you wouldn't touch with a 10 foot pole. That's not fair to queer people to suddenly want -- it's the nature of a corporation, right. They're there to turn capital into more capital. They're going to be able to, if something's socially acceptable now, they're going to do it. In the same way that they market to non-white people that they probably wouldn't have in the past, different companies. But a rainbow flag is annoying but also as a motif is fine, I guess, maybe.

But there's something about the pink triangle specifically that's really offensive because they put it on homosexual men in concentration camps in the Holocaust and then they would put it during the AIDS crisis -- everyone knows this -- ACT UP was using it during the AIDS crisis to combat an actual genocide being perpetrated by the American government against an entire generation of queer people. There's something about that being transmogrified into capital for Nike that's very upsetting.

I'm glad it didn't happen but I was really worried about people being like, well, they're a progressive company, they gave so much money to marriage equality in Oregon. I guess that it is true that they gave money to marriage equality in Oregon, but also I was looking up Nike's political action committee, and they basically give the same amount of money that they do to Republicans as they do Democrats. I think last year it was more to Republicans, overall, all the Nike PACs combined. And the Nike board, I don't know how progressive they are but it's going to be, on balance, older, whiter, maler, than society at large, and even if it wasn't, even if it was perfectly reflective of every gender and race and thing, it's still going to be rich people, right? Who are on the balance more conservative, regardless of everything else. So you're putting money in the pockets of these people who give their money to Republicans, who are trying to kill us.

So, it's like, well.... it's more a corrective to people thinking that buying something is a solution than that buying something is bad. If you want the shoes get the shoes, I don't care. There's definitely a class or a category or person rather, that thinks they can just spend 20 bucks on whatever, spend 80 dollars on shoes, and think that they've helped. Whereas I think that things like direct action are better than buying shoes.

**Tuck:** Totally.

**Mattie:** It's a controversial opinion!

**Tuck:** Well and also, if you wanna buy some cool-ass merch with a pink triangle because you're a gay man because you wanna reclaim that, you could buy it from a queer person, you know?

**Mattie:** Or spend your money at a queer-owned business

**Tuck:** Exactly.

**Mattie:** If you really think that voting with your dollars is the thing, which, I don't think it's all of it

**Tuck:** No, but queer and trans people are dying because they don't have access to income and jobs, and so if you can --

**Mattie:** Yeah, we still live in hell and people need money.

**Tuck:** Exactly, it's not even just I'm voting with my dollar so much as I get this cool thing and another person who's struggling to exist under capitalism gets to have money and great, we did it! [laughs] We did a tiny thing. As opposed to, cool, now Nike has money and I have cool shoes.

**Mattie:** Yeah. You can give $80 to the Ali Forney center and then draw a triangle on your shoes.

**Tuck:** Exactly! Exactly. That's what I'm trying to say. Gosh. [laughs] capitalism!

**Mattie:** It's bad too! Cops, they're bad, capitalism is bad. I'm glad I got to go on this gender podcast and just talk about the things I talk about anyways.

**Tuck:** I mean, yeah, that's why it was a great fit. So, you're a cartoonist at The Nib and elsewhere.

**Mattie:** Yes

**Tuck:** From my perspective, not being in that world, it seems like there's a disproportionately high number of trans and nonbinary cartoonists. Is that real or do I just know all of them?

**Mattie:** I think so. I will say, cartooning for a long time was very white, very male, like a lot of things. In the last 20, 30 years, comics on the whole, I don't know. I can't speak too much to your mainstream superhero comics but even those comics are catching up at an astronomical rate.

I think it's completely off-balance by like, all the small publishers and independent people and all the self-published stuff. The gender -- I think in 20 years or something, I think we're at binary gender parity in comics or even, men might be outnumbered now. Like, I go to the small press expo in DC every year or every other year I'll go to the Toronto Comics and arts festival, which are two of the big big indie shows. That's where you'll go see your Drawn & Quarterlies are there and things like that. You go to those things and it's just a ton of people who are not men. And there's a lot of queer people there and there's a lot of trans people there and it's kind of amazing to see, even in the time that I've been in comics, which has been about nine years now. I've only been doing it professionally maybe four.

I've been around the scene since I was in my early 20s and even in that time, it's been kind of incredible to see. It's possible you know a lot of them but it is kind of staggering and amazing. It's really so great to see this big change that's happened, the amount of people out there that are now able to tell our stories. There's such a rabid hunger for it. You go to these conventions, too, and not just the creators, it's the crowd -- it's really neat.

I'm exhibiting in a show here in New York in August, Flame Con, that's just for queer people

**Tuck:** Aww!

**Mattie:** It's a whole con and it's their third year! Fourth year? They've been around a while and it's a great show. Not every single person that exhibits is queer but it's very close to that. And like, not the whole crowd is close, but most. It's so centered on it in this way that it doesn't really matter. The vibe in there is so fun and great and welcoming and it's really cool. It's super not out of the ordinary to see -- you go to a small comics convention now and they just have a stack of pronoun badges at the door

**Tuck:** Oh, yay!

**Mattie:** I think it's neat

**Tuck:** It think it's cool because also folks who have a lot of feelings about gender can draw themselves the way they want to be seen which I think is really really powerful.

**Mattie:** Yeah, for sure. There's something very affirming there. Certainly when I'm too pressed for time or lazy to think of somebody to put in there I'll just do me because I've drawn the character of myself so many times so the fastest thing I can draw is my own face because I'm a narcissist.

[Tuck laughs]

**Mattie:** And over time, I realized, I was looking back at comics, it became this way for me to express where I was trying to reflect my daily reality but it was also nudging myself in a direction, you know?

**Tuck:** Yeah.

**Mattie:** And it was interesting to see. I found it very freeing to be able to draw myself the way I wanted to be seen.

**Tuck:** Yeah, of course.

**Mattie:** It was very cool.

**Tuck:** the last question, the way we always end the show is, in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Mattie:** Oh! that's a great question. That's really hard to answer. To say that it doesn't exist anymore is not necessarily -- that's never gonna happen. I don't think that's a plausible reality. Nor is it -- some people feel very attached to their gender and I don't want to take that away from anybody, certainly.

I'm hopeful for the future of it. I think at some point people will be able -- it will be more built into our society to self-determine at some point. It's the sort of thing where it all ties together with thinking about voting with your dollars. There's the sort of thing where people think they can change society completely by not allowing their child to know their gender until they're seven or whatever. And you can try to keep the world out, but society is going to creep in through the gaps where the windows join to the rest of the walls of your house.

It's just sort of -- individual choices aren't a thing that necessarily affects change and we shouldn't rely on that, but I hope in the future, it would be more baked in that you don't necessarily put expectation on kids anymore to feel like they have to express themselves in a certain way. And that's coming from everywhere. That's not just what a parent says to their kid. I know a lot of parents that are very good about this stuff and their kids still ends up -- they go to school and watch TV or they see a movie or read a book and it's just, it's the air that we breathe. It's everywhere.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I've definitely heard of parents who are like, my daughter is never going to watch a Disney princess movie and then the daughter comes home and recites the entire plot of the Little Mermaid from start to finish and they're just like, like?

**Mattie:** Where did you learn that?

**Tuck:** So obviously the solution to gender is to ban The Little Mermaid. Everything will be fixed.

**Mattie:** I think that's the main -- did I not touch on that? Yeah, that's the main thing for me.

**Tuck:** That's the takeaway from this show.

[closing music starts]

**Tuck:** That's gonna do it for this week's show. If you had a good time, please send the link to a friend or 20 friends or 100 friends. We don't market this show at all, so the only way we spread the word is by you telling your friends, sharing it on social media, putting stickers on things, all of that stuff. If you have questions or comments about this week's episode, or questions about gender in general, you can always email us at gendereveal@gmail.com or find us on Twitter. You can find Matt on Twitter at @lubchansky and find their work at thenib.com. Our logo is by the talented Michelle Leigh and our theme song is by the legendary Breakmaster Cylinder. We'll be back next week with more feelings about gender.