**Tuck:** Shopping for sex toys can sometimes feel overwhelming or dysphoric. But sometimes, it’s just fun! ShopEnby.com aims to create a better experience for the queer, trans, and gender nonconforming community. I’m looking at their website right now, and I’m just having a great time. They have a bunch of stuff I’ve never seen before. I’m not a stranger to sex toy websites, but there’s just a lot of good stuff on here! And best of all, 2% of all profits are donated to organizations focused on improving the living of queer and trans people of color. So visit ShopEnby.com, and use the code “GenderReveal” at checkout to get 10% off your order, and support the show.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**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, hope you’re all hanging in there. This week on the show, I’m excited to share my chat with Alex Hanna. Alex is a sociologist who works in the field of artificial intelligence and the ethics thereof. So in our conversation, we talk about whether AI memes like Dall-E are secretly nefarious, whether we can use data science to predict who’s going to win *Drag Race*, and how to keep yourself safe online when you’re doing criminalized things, like attending a protest, or accessing abortion care, or being trans. But first, just want to remind you quickly, we’ve still got “Surf Don’t TERF” tank tops and “Trains Flag” shirts back in the merch store, as well as our new “Trans Wrath” stickers and a bunch of other great stuff. And as always, these designs are only available for a limited time. I think you’ve got less than a week left at this point. So grab whatever you want, before it’s all gone, at bit.ly/gendermerch. And now, it’s time for This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes and high-hats plays briefly]

**Tuck:** This week, I present to you a message from basketball Hall of Famer and *Space Jam* actor Charles Barkley:

**Charles [voice clip with live audience]:** I want to say this: If you’re gay, if you’re transgender, I love you! [crowd cheers and applauds] Hey, and if anybody gives you shit, you tell them Charles said, “Fuck you!” [crowd cheers and applauds louder]

**Tuck:** This has been, This Week in Gender.

[Transition sound effect, with low metallic chimes and high-hats plays briefly]

**Tuck:** We’ve got a Theymail message for you this week. Theymails are little messages from listeners that we read on the show. This message is from Queer Kid Stuff, and it says: “Rainbow Parenting is a brand new podcast from the creator of Queer Kid Stuff. It’s a show for anyone who wants to raise the littles in their lives in a queer and gender-affirming way, featuring interviews with queer, trans, and ally experts. You can catch up on Rainbow Parenting wherever you get your podcasts.”

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades in]

**Tuck:** Dr. Alex Hanna is director of research at the Distributed AI Research Institute. A sociologist by training, her work centers on the data used in new computational technologies, and the ways in which these data exacerbate racial, gender, and class inequality. She also works in the area of social movements, focusing on the dynamics of anti-racist campus protests in the U.S. and Canada.

[Gender Reveal theme music excerpt fades out]

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

**Alex:** Oh gosh, umm…yeah, I mean…eh…. [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** Yeah, that’ll do it.

**Alex:** Yeah. I’m a brown, transgender woman. That’s usually how I reply, if it’s an earnest reply. But then, “Eh” is my more honest reply. [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** I love it. You are the director of research at the Distributed AI Research Institute. Can you talk about what makes your organization different than many other AI research groups?

**Alex:** Yeah, for sure. DAIR was born from… some strife. [Laughs] It was born after the founder, Timnit Gebru, was fired from Google for calling out a technology there known as a Large Language Model. Her and the other co-lead of the ethical AI group at Google were ousted. And so, DAIR is an attempt to do something very different, which is to develop technology and call out the harms of technology, really centering marginalized communities, either by working directly with particular groups, or literally just hiring people who are involved in particular sets of struggles. There’s lots of bad things that happen with technology, and we really want to situate and call out those harms, but also try to build towards something new and try to understand what that could look like. So that’s how DAIR is different, and sort of rare I guess, in the AI space.

**Tuck:** Yeah, there’s this essay that you co-wrote with your colleague, Dylan Baker, and in it, you wrote, “DAIR as an AI institute starts from the peculiar position of acknowledging that AI is not inevitable,” and goes on to say, “counter to the dominant narratives of big-tech and AI-first firms, we think that AI is a solution for a somewhat narrow set of social problems. Do we need to spend time developing AI tools for this problem? What are lower-tech solutions that could be considered first?” So I would love some real or imagined, made-up examples, either one, of problems that big-tech firms might immediately try to solve with AI, but could actually more effectively be solved in other ways.

**Alex:** Yeah, what a good question. So I mean, some examples have been on things like welfare allocation: deciding on who sort of qualifies, who is less deserving. This has been talked about by Virginia Eubanks in her book *Automating Inequality*. Another example that she uses in that book, and that others have written about, is trying to assess which households could be accused of child neglect and abuse. Both of those examples—so for one, welfare in the U.S. is completely fucked, and many people have documented the change that happened under the Clinton administration in 1996 to quote-unquote “end welfare as we know it,” that established significant work requirements to receive welfare benefits, but therefore put people who are needing welfare at a huge disadvantage. There’s nothing technological about it. That’s a political problem. The same kind of thing when it comes to child welfare, or how, other people like Dorothy Roberts call it the “family policing system,” you know, disproportionately targets Black and brown youth, particularly Black and Indigenous youth. And most of the cases in which children are separated from their families are cases of neglect that could be ameliorated through social programs that allocated more welfare benefits, or more income to those people to get into safe housing. Neither of those are technical solutions. Those are political-will solutions. Those are solutions about people having sufficient money to meet their daily needs, and to support children staying with their families. And neither of those need to be technical solutions, but this is what we get in this sort of techno-solutionist neoliberal economy.

**Tuck:** Yeah, my memory is that your background is in sociology, so when you started this work with AI ethics, did you go in already quite skeptical of the ways AI was being treated? Or did you become more skeptical over time as you saw the way AI was being used and misused?

**Alex:** Yeah, as a sociologist I have always been sort of studying the ways that different types of people use technology, so I certainly didn’t think that AI was the best thing since sliced bread. And before that I studied social media, and still do study social media and how social media is used in protest. And yeah, I mean there’s huge problems with how people use social media that sort of get valorized, especially in protests. Especially when I was studying with the Arab Spring, there’s people that would just go out and say like, “This thing wouldn’t have happened if it weren’t for Facebook,” and I’m like, “Well…*that’s* not right,” you know? [Laughs] These things would’ve happened just because there were mass amounts of discontent. Maybe it accelerated the process, but it wasn’t a thing that changed the nature or the scale of it in such a way that made it qualitatively, significantly different. And so it’s sort of interesting to see how these things get used and reused, both by people who don’t have power and people who do have power. And so when it came to AI, I was using some AI tools actually in my degree to help kind of facilitate the creation of some of these datasets that we’re using in research, but also did just have immense limitations. And those immense limitations just kind of get supercharged when these things are used at the level of social provison, and hiring, and all the kinds of stuff it gets used for now.

**Tuck:** Yeah, well I want to talk about the protest research that you’ve done, because it’s very personal to me as someone who has been a protest journalist on Twitter.com. While I was doing that, all these questions came up, right? Where on one hand, I am doing this public good by reporting on something that was otherwise not going to be reported on in the same way. Like it just wasn’t being done in news outlets the way that we were doing it, on the ground, directly to Twitter. On the other hand, not only comrades are watching Twitter, you know? The police also have those all up and they’re watching them. So then the question becomes, is there a safe, or responsible, or ethical way to do protest reporting via social media? And so I understand that wasn’t your exact question, but I am curious what your thoughts are, having looked at that so much as part of your work.

**Alex:** Yeah, I mean that’s a huge problem, right? Even doing this kind of research on protest events can be very ethically *icky*. There’s sort of this tension that exists for protesters’ goals, because protests…. Some protests are meant to be very visible things, and they’re meant to get a lot of news coverage, and they’re meant to spread to other places, and that’s sort of an intentional tactic. But then there’s a lot of aspects of movements that are hidden and are not intended to be big, flashy things. They’re intended to be doing things like direct support to people, mutual aid, things that are more fugitive-oriented, how to kind of escape things. And there’s elements of this where there’s sort of meant to be destructive and disruptive. And some of those aren’t also meant to be visible, or if they are, then they’re supposed to be done in a way that people can evade any of the intense surveillance. And so, this is a really long-winded way of saying that the responsibility of a journalist is, one, to say, “Okay, what parts of these are intended to be for broader consumption? But what parts of these are meant for disruptive action, or direct provision through mutual aid, or strategies of refusal and rejection?” And it’s sort of like a negotiation between protesters and also observers of what that is. The responsibility I can speak more to is the responsibility of the researcher. And the responsibility of the researcher is to understand what the differences are between those things are, and also to understand how bringing to light certain kinds of protest actions also puts some people at immense risk, especially when you’re bringing together a lot of reports in aggregate.

**Tuck:** Yeah. Well I think since we’re already talking about journalism a bit, I was thinking while I was reading about your work, about my work in journalism, and how there are so many marginalized journalists arguing that there is no such thing as journalistic objectivity—because there’s not. And then we have these wealthy, white people in power who are like, “Actually, what’s objective is my perspective, and everything else is subjective, and I’m right. So you need to live up to my standards of objectivity…which, oops, means never questioning the status quo.” [Alex laughs] And I know a lot of your work, as it says in your bio, is about the ways data exacerbate racial, gender, and class inequality. So I was just wondering if this thing about whether data is inherently biased feels similar to this, “Is journalism inherently objective?”

**Alex:** Yeah, I mean that’s a great analogy. And it’s super related too, because many of the datasets that are used in AI models come from journalism, or come from newspapers. So a lot of data that’s used to build Large Language Models, they come from nearly all internet sources. So that can include, not only the New York Times and the Washington Post and mainstream coverage, but they’ll also include like, Reddit comments, and all kinds of gross cesspool types of places, right? And some of these things are kind of baked in. So for instance, one example of this that’s interesting and came up sort of in my research, when I was developing these classifiers to characterize protests, is the prevalence of the word “homosexual.” And so, “homosexual” was the word of choice by the New York Times until 1987, when the editor in chief either retired or died. [Both laugh] I don’t remember which, but he was a pretty stalwart homophobe. So he would say “homosexual” everywhere, and it wasn’t until, I think ’87 or ’88 when the New York Times stylebook actually changed to use the word “gay.” And so I actually, that was significant in my research because I had all this New York Times data, and I was actually seeing which word sort of predicted if there was a protest. And it was homosexual/gay, at some point, but there was sort of this change at this temporal point. And that, kind of how AI works, is it just takes these patterns and it makes an association, right? So if you’re building from something that has a negative connotation—it could be Reddit, it could be the New York Times—it’s gonna have this negative association. And there’s people that have done these types of empirical studies, that have studied these AI data sets, that have associated words like “gay,” or “Black,” or “Jewish,” or “Arab” across a dataset, and saw how frequently it loads on negative words. And you know, no surprise, it’s kind of what happens. And so there’s actually quite a direct tie there between journalism, and this idea of how there is no neutral or objective journalism, just as there is no neutral or objective dataset.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I mean that reminds me of the recent New York Times piece where they used “patient zero” to talk about trans children. It’s just like… the language that you use, it’s not neutral!

**Alex:** Oh jeez…what the hell?!

**Tuck:** Yeah, [monotone sarcasm] very cool and good! [Both laugh] But speaking of, I mean we’re talking about the New York Times, and earlier you were talking about AI regarding child abuse, so we’re sort of circling around the fact that, I mean, obviously trans people are under intense scrutiny and being targeted by state and non-state actors, including the New York Times. I’m just wondering what the people who listen to this show, who are majority trans, should be thinking about with regards to AI maybe being used to target trans people in some way, whether intentionally or unintentionally, I suppose.

**Alex:** Well, there are different kinds of ways in which this can happen. So for instance, there’s an article that came out in Slate a few weeks ago by Alejandra Caraballo, about kind of this idea of remote learning, and the kind of surveillance that is embedded in remote learning technologies, and how many of these technologies will flag LGBT words. So then, you know, there are these bills that are in the state legislatures all around the country that are preventing trans kids from obtaining care. Then, I mean, this is introducing another vector in which they’re typing something to their computer, and they don’t know they’re being surveilled, and then that’s going to out them to school administrators, or their parents, in ways that may not have happened before. So that’s a real, sort of alarming thing. And you could think of things like Facebook or even Twitter, and the way that those things could possibly be weaponized as modes of surveillance. And it’s actually quite telling, saying this now, but a lot of my early research of Facebook and Egypt is sort of relevant here. A lot of the early people in the West were like, “Oh yeah, Facebook is great. It allows for all these Arab people to organize against their oppressive regimes.” But I was told by activists that they would actually type things online, like that they knew that the police were watching them, when they became really savvy to that kind of work. So you can imagine something of that nature happening, something where there’s a monitoring software on all the devices at school, that becomes a real danger, right? I mean, there was a lot of discussion after Roe v. Wade was repealed around data privacy, and searching for abortion services, and the New York Times actually had sort of a myth-splainer, and the New York Times didn’t have much helpful things. [Tuck laughs] But they interviewed people like Kate Crawford from ACLU, who’s awesome, who said things like, “The reality is we’re already giving away so much data rights to companies like Facebook, and Twitter, and Google.” It’s pretty hard to get away from any kind of tracking, any kind of search histories. And Google and Facebook comply with requests from law enforcement to give up search history data pretty regularly. And so, it’s not just going to be period tracker devices, or trans-centered apps. It’s going to be things that do collect your data primarily for ad targeting, that could be implicated in that, too.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I have thought a lot about digital privacy because of doing protest reporting. But I know that a lot of people don’t think about that, and have the attitude that I think I had years ago, which was, “Well, they already got it! What am I gonna do?” If there are people who are sort of newly worried about this for whatever reason—I realize this is not your exact job, but you also think about this—so do you have things that you would suggest people do, to be a little bit less easily surveilled and have a little bit less of their data sucked up in the big fire hose, or whatever it is?

**Alex:** Yeah. [Laughs] I mean, there’s not a lot of preventions. Putting the onus on individuals, is sort of this big problem. Individual protests to privacy are just, not completely ineffective, but just kind of, the onus should not be on private individuals. We need privacy legislation. But barring that, the things that are helpful are: you can switch all your messaging to Signal, because you can’t get snooped on. Whatsapp is owned by Facebook, so don’t use that. iMessage is owned by Apple. And then you want to switch to some browsers that are probably better. So Firefox is one, Brave is another which I know is popular in the EU. You can’t really get off Google…I mean, as much as you can. You can search with DuckDuckGo, which maybe doesn’t store your data locally, but still uses Microsoft’s Bing on the underside of it. And then there’s sort of further-ranging things one could do. I saw this today as a tip that was cited by, I think someone in the EFF—if you’re going to a location for medical services that may not be allowable in your state, then leave your phone at home. Don’t turn it off or put it into airplane mode, but have it at home so they think you’re at home, and then you travel to your location. But yeah, these are all sort of band-aids on a gaping, dam ex-plosure… Explosure? I’m just making up words now. [Both laugh] An *explosion* of data privacy violations. It’s not really sufficient to do this. I mean, for kids it might be a little more…weirdly enough, the privacy legislation that exists for children is the strongest we have nationally. And recently, actually, the FCC directed a company to delete its algorithm and all of the data that it had, so they actually did force them to delete all that data, because they didn’t have parental consent to log onto this app. But at the same time, kids are not going to be attentive to all these kinds of individual strategies of data privacy, on the whole. So it’s a bad situation, and it’s just gonna get worse without some major privacy legislation at a national level.

**Tuck:** Yeah, I appreciate you making that point that it shouldn’t be up to individuals. I live in Oregon right now, and I feel like one of our senators, Ron Wyden, is one of the only people that ever talks about this in Congress. And I’m always like, “Thanks Ron, thanks for thinking of us. Too bad you can’t do anything!” [Both laugh] But I also appreciate you plugging Signal, because I feel like in 2020, everyone got on Signal, and they were like, “I understand the value of this.” And then when those people individually stopped going to protests, they went right back to iMessage?! [Alex laughs]. And I was like, “But what if we just all stayed on Signal? And then you can text about crimes, and you can do anything you want. It’s fine!”

**Alex:** Yeah, right? Yeah, no, I had the same experience where I text somebody and they’re like, “I’m not really on Signal,” and I’m like, “Why not?” [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** I know! There is a really high threshold, I have to love you very, very deeply in order to text you on iMessage. There’s like a small handful of people that they will *not* get on Signal and I’m like, “[Sighs], okay….” [Both laugh] Well, I guess since we’re already talking about like, “should we be more paranoid than we are?”, over the last several years, there have been all these different AI-driven online trends…. Games? Memes? I don’t know what to call them. I’m thinking, most recently, of like the Dall-E art generator. But then there have been other things before that, whether it’s like “Input some text,” or, “Upload a photo of yourself and we’ll do something weird.” When you see that stuff roll across your timeline, I’m curious what your reaction is, as an AI ethicist, and if we should be thinking about this any more than we are, about diving into those kinds of things?

**Alex:** Yeah, so it depends on the thing. I mean, the things where it’s like “Upload your face,” I’m just like, “Haha, no.” [Both laugh] Although I admit, I used one of those things recently, and then I felt gross about it like, “I don’t know where this is going. This is probably going to some Macedonian teenager’s repository of faces or something.” [Tuck laughs] And so, I kind of face-palm on that. Dall-E is sort of the interesting case, because that is taking existing pictures, and doing an association with the pictures and the text, and it has this generative model that produces these very specific images. The criticisms of Dall-E are, well one, what is an actual use case for this? But it is kind of interesting from a very technical perspective, but I’m just like, “All right, and…where are we getting with this?” There’s also pretty clear biases when it generates, if you type in any sort of racialized word, you just get terrible shit, or gendered words. So that’s more of the generative-model thing. I guess those are just the two trends that I see. One is just the, “Here, give your data up, and you can do xyz and join the club!” And the other one is like, “Oh, look at this really bizarre thing. Isn’t this so cool?” And I’d say what they have in common, is that both of them really bolster this idea that these things are magic, or these things are superhuman, or that we sort of need to kowtow to this amazingness of AI. And it’s not magic. It’s just intense sort of pattern matching, right?

**Tuck:** Yeah, I mean Cosmopolitan made a Dall-E cover. [Alex laughs] And it was like, breathlessly, like, “Dall-E makes its *first* magazine cover,” and there were articles about it, and it’s like…no one…again, like to what end? Why? Who cares? like..no one…

**Alex:** Oh lord…. Dall-E has its Kim-Kardashian-breaks-the-internet moment!

**Tuck:** Exactly!!

**Alex:** Like, what? Well, the New York Times also had an article on GPT-3, and it was just like a complete puff piece for OpenAI as well. And so, it’s just like, why are you doing this puff piece for OpenAI?’ I mean, I imagine OpenAI’s PR department is just on overdrive, doing corporate PR for them and saying like, “Look at this thing!”

**Tuck:** Yeah, that’s interesting. I hadn’t thought about that. But so much of my work is reading articles about trans people and being like, “I can see why a random cis person would think this is a good article, but *actually* it is… completely repulsive in its dishonesty, and its bias, and blah blah blah….” Obviously, I’m not gonna know enough to, if I’m trying to read something about AI or technology, to catch those things. So when you’re reading coverage of stuff like what you were just talking about, do you feel it is mostly leaning towards, ‘Wow, this is so amazing, look at this great thing”? Yeah, tell me more about that.

**Alex:** Oh yeah! Oh, definitely. I mean, what is it? Emily Bender had this thread about the AI hype cycle, and sort of, who plugs these things, and why. I mean, there’s a real political economy to it. There’s a buck to be made, right, from running these things. And so, the kind of most recent version of this was Blake Lemoine—he was the person that was like, “Oh, I talked to this model that Google released, and I think it’s sentient.” And I was actually really conflicted with that, because I’ve actually worked with him in a personal capacity at Google. And historically he has been, actually, this very careful thinker. And what I really was annoyed about, was how even if he believed that on a level of faith, there’s also a very strong way in which saying that AI—there’s such a thing, or such thing is possible, as a sentient AI, also lends itself to giving immense amounts of power and credence to an existing set of power players. And so, even if you don’t believe that LaMDA—what this particular AI is called—even if you don’t believe that it has sentience, it still opens the door to a class of actors who are going to cash in, and say that something in the future is sentient or near-sentient or something. And we’ve seen this, because the lead scientist of OpenAI, his name is Ilya Sutskever, he tweeted something a few months ago that said, “Large Language Models are possibly slightly sentient.” Like, what the fuck does that mean? [Tuck laughs] That doesn’t mean anything. What does that even mean?

**Tuck:** *Slightly* sentient.

**Alex:** Like why? What? Yeah. [Sighs] You know, what a thing to tweet. Just sort of a mind-numbing claim, you know? And so, I don’t know, it’s just…. [Groans] [Both laugh] So I mean, I’m thinking about, even just reading these trends, it’s sort of like, what kind of political economy does this support, if we really look at these thing? We can’t just look at the technology, or the hype around the technology, but we need to expand our view outwards, and really say, all right, but why are people just making these claims? Why would they make such an inflated kind of claim?

**Tuck:** Mm, interesting. Well speaking of, I think, being critical about things, I have a question. I didn’t come up with an eloquent way to put it. [Alex laughs] My notes just say, “If you work as an ethicist, which means you are often critiquing your employer, dot dot dot, how do you, dot dot dot, keep, dot dot dot, job, question mark.” [Both laugh]

**Alex:** How job?

**Tuck:** How job? But for real, it seems like what you’re doing is so important, but outside of the group that you specially are in, do big companies—like Google, where you were—do they have an incentive to employ ethicists that are going to tell them that what they’re doing is wrong? Or is there a way to make that system where they actually have checks and people questioning the power that they’re creating for themselves? Or are they, I guess I’m just curious, it just seems so against corporate incentives to bring people in just to tell you that you’re being shitty. [Laughs]

**Alex:** Yeah, no. I mean, you hit the nail on the head. I mean, in the AI front, and in the data front, corporations have two incentives. One of them is in regimes with intensive legislation and regulation, they are trying to avoid suits and fines. And so this is more the case in the EU, where Google and Facebook, and the companies that collect massive amounts of data, they don’t want to run afoul of the EU data regulator, because they’d be hit with a couple-billion-dollar fine. In the US, there is no data protection regulation, and the legislation exists only on a state-to-state level, except when it comes to children. And so their only incentive not to mess up there is bad press cycles, and even bad press doesn’t really hit their bottom line that much. So you’re right; they don’t really have incentives. And they will kind of hem and haw, or say, “Oh, we have these AI principles,” or, “We have these principles to be responsible.” But as for things that are actually gonna hit their bottom line… no, there’s nothing that really forces that. It hasn’t stopped these companies from developing tools or teams. Part of the teams are staffed by people who are sort of avoiding, or trying to help them avoid, different kinds of suits. Facebook, for instance, recently their team, internally—and I know people on this team—were able to finally get rid of what they called “lookalike audience targeting.” The thing about lookalike audience targeting, is what it does—so say you’re some advertiser on Facebook. I’m getting hella, like, bras and weight-lifting equipment right now. I don’t know, the second one makes sense because I’m kind of a jock. But the first one was like, “Do you have small boobs?” And I’m like, “How dare you, Facebook!” [Both laugh] Anyways… it will give you something of that nature. And then those targeters, they’re brands, or they’re commercial entities, and what they’ll do, is they’ll take some sort of audience they’ve had before, and try to upload it. The problem with that is, you know, if you have used this thing for years and it has been targeted mostly to men, or people with high incomes, or you know, this happens a lot in housing, right? That’s when you quickly run afoul of EEOC regulations, National Fair Housing Act restrictions. And the National Fair Housing Association actually went after Facebook for this tool, and *finally* it was deprecated because of kind of the interference of housing and employment. Not under data privacy or data protection legislation, as much as specifically the housing and employment legislation and regulation. So those have been sort of tools, and there are teams that do this work, and do this sort of policy and technical work, in order to avoid that. But beyond that, it’s very reactive. And the only thing that I’ve really seen to force the hand of these companies have been regulation, and threats of litigation.

**Tuck:** Hm…. I think I'm just gonna leave this on an incredibly ominous note and pivot into fun-seeming, because we’re running out of time and I want to ask you about this thing you did a decade ago, where you did, I don’t know, data? To predict who was gonna win season five of *RuPaul’s Drag Race*. Did it work? I didn’t look at who actually won.

**Alex:** So, I think my predictions came rather close… I have to go back to the site to see if it actually worked. [Laughs] So, the first season that I did was season five. The most predictive variables were, not surprisingly, the number of lip syncs that one has to do—so that’s a negative indicator—and then the number of wins and the number of “high placements.” And I think “high placements” was, you don’t win it, but Ru approves of your thing. So when I was estimating this, I developed a relative risk of being kicked off. And I think who won that season was Jinkx Monsoon. In my predictions for this season, she had the second-lowest relative risk, so that did a pretty good job of predicting that Jinkx Monsoon won that season. So yeah. I’m actually, I’m surprised I didn’t write anything about that. So you know, pretty good.

**Tuck:** Yeah, what I’m hearing is that you’re crushing it. Are you still watching *Drag Race*, are you watching *All Stars All Legends*?

**Alex:** No, I stopped, after you know, RuPaul was like… fracking. [Laughs] I was like, ugh, I don’t think I can deal with this.

**Tuck:** Totally. They keep doing majority-trans seasons now, so now I’m… I’m in.

**Alex:** Oh, are they? Wow.

**Tuck:** Yeah, but the frontrunner for *All Stars All Winners* is Jinkx Monsoon, so you could really just do the same thing again. [Laughs]

**Alex:** Oh! Well there you go. I’ll have to update the data. And the thing is, a lot of people have done statistical methods to predict *Drag Race* after me. So, not to brag, but I sort of *started a literature.* [Both laugh]

**Tuck:** You did! You’re a trendsetter. Well… this is the part where I ask you, is there anything that you want to talk about in the world that we haven’t talked about yet?

**Alex:** Well… there’s a lot of shit happening and, you know, I just encourage you to be nice to each other, and love your loved ones, support your local mutual aid fund, do what you can.

**Tuck:** Yeah, download Signal. [Both laugh] Okay, one more fun-seeming thing then, before our last question. I know you’re a long-time roller derby-er….

**Alex:** [Laughs] Yes.

**Tuck:** Just tell me about that.

**Alex:** Yeah, it’s roller derby. It’s a silly sport where we are on roller skates, and we smash into each other. What a concept, you know? [Both laugh] But yeah, I’ve been doing roller derby for about ten years, and I skate for Bay Area Derby. My name actually is Kate Silver, which came about after I was doing *Drag Race* predictions, when somebody called me “The Nate Silver of drag.” [Tuck laughs] But, so yeah, I like it; I still do it. I like to be part jock, part nerd.

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

**Alex:** Oh lord…. Good lord, I don’t know. [Both laugh] It would, you know…uh, some kind of something. I don’t know!

**Tuck:** I’m hearing the same answer to, “What is your gender?” Just…ehhh. [Both laugh]

**Alex:** Ah, I don’t know. I mean, you know, the way in which gender itself can be this liberating technology, as well as this incredible way of being this technology of… intense anxiety? I mean, I watch a lot of *Star Trek*, so I think they did an episode about this on a feminist *Star Trek* podcast called Women at Warp. And it was sort of about the episodes in which they do, like, race transitions? There were questions like, “Do they cut up their bits? Do they also do genital surgery or something?” And so that’s super invasive. And there’s even an episode where someone wakes up as the race of their oppressor. That’s the nightmare of the future, right? But then do you have this type of embodied gender dysphoria if one so chooses it? And here, I think I’d take much more of an inspiration, less from the nonconsensual horror of *Star Trek* race transitions, to the kind of trade involved in Octavia Butler’s *Xenogenesis* series. In which like, there is sort of this third gender that enables pleasure and one has much more of kind of a determinism in their own genetic makeup, you know. And so maybe that’s a more positive way of viewing it.

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

**Tuck:** That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. You can find Alex on Twitter @alexhanna, and at alex-hanna.com. You can find us @gendereveal and at genderpodcast.com, where we have transcripts of every episode, along with other resources. If you like what we do here at Gender Reveal, please consider supporting the show at patreon.com/gender. By signing up, you automatically get access to our weekly newsletter andour monthly bonus podcast, which features catchups with past guests, including Niko Stratis, Hil Malatino, and an upcoming episode with Eden Rohatensky. You’ve got one week left to grab a “Trains Flag” mug, or a “Trans Wrath” sticker, or whatever else you want at bit.ly/gendermerch, and as always all proceeds are split between trans artists and trans-led organizations. If you would like to join our community for Gender Reveal listeners, that is at bit.ly/gender-slack. This episode was produced and edited by Ozzy Llinas Goodman and by me, Tuck Woodstock. Our logo is by Ira M. Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. We’ll be back next week, with more feelings about gender.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

**Tuck:** There’s a lot of things I just don’t say on iMessage. But also the voice memos suck there. And the reacts suck there. So why not? Anyways, but, it’s fine.

**Alex:** [Laughs] I hate this thing where you have an iPhone, and someone reacts, and it just says, like, “Liked! Loved! Haha-ed!” It’s like….

**Tuck:** Yes! Exactly! Like, “Tuck lived-laughed-loved your message!”

**Alex:** Exactly! [Laughs] No it did, that’s exactly what it is. I’m just like, “Where’s the pray react?” You know?

**Tuck:** [Laughs] Exactly.

**Alex:** My god.