Tuck Woodstock: Urbody is a gender affirming underwear and activewear brand that designs gender-inclusive collections by and for the community that address the fit, functionality, and style needs of those across the gender spectrum. Urbody created its own sizing and grading system that’s built to fit trans, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming folks. Use code TUCK15 for 15% off your first Urbody purchase. Shop based on fit and style, and remember, you deserve to get dressed for the day with confidence, and that starts with what’s underneath.

[Gender Reveal 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 Music Ends]

Tuck: Hey everyone! Hope you’re all hanging in there. Thanks for sticking with us as I took a week off last week. I know, I can’t believe it either. Anyway, this week on the show I am thrilled to share my conversation with Dean Spade. You might know Dean as a founder for the Sylvia Rivera Law Project or the author of books like *Normal Life* and *Mutual Aid*. In this episode, Dean talks with us about mutual aid, plus burnout, law school, gender markers on IDs, why civil rights laws won’t save us...

Clip of Dean Spade: Racism has been illegal in the United States for half a century and during that time, the actual lived conditions of white supremacy have worsened.

Tuck: And whether we should be paying people to do movement work.

Clip of Dean: Do we want to create more workplaces and hope that we have justice for people in workplaces, or do we want to end wage labor and give everything to each other for free?

Tuck: But first, just want to let you know that although Gender Reveal did not have a new episode last week, I was a guest on the Rainbow Parenting Podcast, hosted by Gender Reveal listener, Lindz Amer. My episode is called “The New York Times is Wrong About Trans Kids” and I meant to drop some clips from it when it came out last week, but I dropped the ball on that instead, so my bad, but I do encourage you to check it out, especially if you like to complain about the *New York Times*. And now, it’s time for This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender Music Plays]

Tuck: Later in this episode, we’re going to talk about gender markers on IDs, so it seems appropriate that we talk about the gender marker news that broke last week.

[“The Dustbin” by Blue Dot Sessions Plays]

According to a *Washington Post* reporter, Molly Hennessy-Fiske, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton asked the Texas Department of Safety, AKA the people in charge of Texas driver’s licenses, to tell him how many total Texans had changed their license gender markers in the past two years. Now, according to *Washington Post*, the AG’s office did not clarify why they wanted this information, but *WaPo* does point out that the information was requested just one month after the Texas Supreme Court ruled that Paxton and his team had overreached in their efforts to investigate families with transgender kids for child abuse, so hmmmm. Sounds like they needed a new target to me! Regardless, the DPS, that was the Department of Public Safety, they ran the numbers and found more than 16,000 instances of people changing their license gender marker in the last two years, and then from there, according to reporting, DPS staff members basically said, “Well, that’s way too many people to provide usable data. How do we narrow this data set down to only include transgender people?”

And that’s the part that’s confusing to me. Who would be on that list other than trans people? The only reasons I can think of to change your license gender marker are transsexuality and clerical error; and I know that people make mistakes, but do we really think that a statistically significant amount of those 16 thousand instances are mistakes? Could that be true? Are people messing up that much? Or was the Texas DPS and co. just shocked that there could be 16,000 trans people getting new licenses in a state of 30 million people? And here’s another question: Should they be shocked? Ozzy and I lost our minds trying to solve this mystery so bear with us. We’re going to do a little math here.

[“Lumber Down” by Blue Dot Sessions Plays]

Ozzy found data that said that there are roughly 92,000 trans adults living in Texas, and that data is a few years old, and while many trans people have fled Texas since then, others are being created all the time via social contagion, podcasts, whatever, so let’s guess, for ease of math, that there are 100,000 trans people in Texas right now, or trans adults specifically. That would mean that roughly 16% of trans adults in Texas would have changed their marker on their driver’s licenses in the past two years. Is that likely? I have no idea, but as Ozzy wrote in the Slack: “A lot of people came out as trans during the pandemic. We’re in a very unique time of ‘visibility’ and anti-trans animus. There’s a COVID backlog, and the percentage of out trans people in the population are much higher for younger people.” So, maybe? Or maybe the DPS just make a lot of mistakes. Look, I’ve heard stories multiple times about trans people who have gotten their gender marker changed in places where that shouldn’t be possible just because they went to the DMV and the clerk looked at them, looked at the gender marker, and said, “Whoops! That’s clearly not right. Let’s fix that.” But I never know if that’s covert allyship or if they’re just used to fixing gender mistakes all the time?

And of course, this literally doesn’t matter at all. It doesn’t matter that we figure any of this out. Ozzy and I just got really stuck on this question of like, is it realistic that the 16,000 people are all trans? Because it’s more fun to do gender detective number crunching than to report on the actual substance of the situation, which is of course, that the Texas government was trying to create a database of transgender people. Luckily, the DPS said that there was no way to tell which of those 16,000 people were transgender, and refused to provide any information. So, do not tell Ken Paxton that we did math about this because it’s for the best if everyone thinks that this is unuseful data, which it is. More on the hazards of gender markers in this week’s interview, but in the meantime, this has been This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender Music Plays]

[Gender Reveal Music Starts]

Tuck: Dean Spade has been working to build queer and trans liberation based in racial and economic justice for the past two decades. He’s the author of *Normal Life*, *Administrative Violence*, *Critical Trans Politics*, and *The Limits of Law*. He’s the director of the documentary *Pinkwashing Exposed: Seattle Fights Back*, and the creator of the Mutual Aid Toolkit at BigDoorBrigade.com. His latest book, *Mutual Aid: Building Solidarity during this Crisis and the Next* was published by Verso Press in October 2020.

[Gender Reveal Music Ends]

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

Dean: [Laughs] That is such a funny question. Lately, my favorite joke is that my gender is a dinosaur. [Tuck laughs] The way that I came to my gender seems so archaic to the young people of today. You know what I mean? I started doing something like this gender in my late teens and early twenties and I’m 45, so they don’t make ’em like this anymore. [Tuck laughs] It’s just so outdated. It’s not in vogue I would say. I mean, that’s just a joke between me and other people who are my age who are just like, “Wow, our genders are so old.” But I guess it really depends on who I’m talking to, how much complexity that person can handle, so at my job, I use pronouns he/him. I think that if I had been myself at a later date, I might have used they/them, but it’s like whatevs. Now I’m used to this, but I don’t mind they/them at all, and my gender is just trans, the word I would use most frequently.

Tuck: Yeah. It’s so funny. There are a lot of people who will come onto the podcast, and I’ll ask that, and they’ll be sort of apologetic. They’ll be like, “Um, just girl, just normal girl. Sorry, is that–” And I’m like, “That’s fine!” [Laughs] You can just have one of the two, not that that’s what you’re saying, but I just think it’s funny when people are like, “Oh I picked my gender out 15 years ago and I’m not reassessing it now.”

Dean: For me, it’s more, I think there’s a lot of people who think now that if you identify as trans or you use he or she pronouns, it means your gender is binary, and I’m like, that’s not what it meant to us back then at all! We were more into using the word “genderqueer,” but there was a different set of terms available, so now I definitely feel like I’m mistaken by younger people as having some kind of conservative gender, but I don’t really care. [Tuck laughs] I never had the expectation that people would or should see me accurately. I don’t think anyone sees anyone accurately, and gender is a violent system that I’m navigating however, but I’m not hanging my hat on being seen correctly by anyone, you know, but I think I’m just a regular fag. I don’t know what to say, not really. [Tuck laughs] Just a regular transfag from the 90s, you know.

Tuck: Yeah, so you’ve done so much, it is hard to know where to start, but I wanted to back way up because you made this decision to practice law, but you don’t really strike me as someone who ever believed in the law, so I was just curious where that impulse came from twenty or however many years ago.

Dean: Yeah, I think that there were a few things to it. Even though I was already, before I went to law school, a part of grassroots radical movements of people doing interesting work against government systems of violence, and doing mutual aid with each other and stuff, I also saw what so many people, which is people I loved and cared about in tangles with the law, either at the welfare office or with the cops, or whatever. And so trying to figure out, I think as a lot of people go to law school, I want to be of use in more ways in my communities when we need to work with lawyers. They’re jerks and we have a hard time finding people to help us with these things, so maybe I should do this, and also I’d gone to college with people who had some of my same intellectual interests who are going to PhD programs, and I just thought like, “I’m from a working class and welfare background. I don’t have parents. I can’t do that. That’s not a real job.” You know what I mean? So I kinda was like, “Well, I love school. I’ll go to school more but it’s more tied to a trade,” or something. And I think most people in the U.S. have some kind of idea that if you want to make social change, you change the law, and even though I did have some critique of that, I didn’t have as much critique of that as I have now when I was in my twenties making this decision.

You know, now I really, really, really have twenty thousand deep abiding reasons, and have had way more time to study social movements and really think about social change, but on some level, I still needed to go through some more kind of demystification of the law and understanding it, both on the level of like, “Yes, getting a colonial legal system to recognize your people does not constitute liberation, and it’s actually just a PR project for that colonial legal system; it does not change the lives sufficiently of people in your communities,” but also the part where practicing law and directly representing people who are struggling with all kinds of marginalization and violence, also terribly unsatisfying in ways I didn’t expect. Oh, I’m mostly the one delivering the bad news. I’m like, “Yep, you can’t do any more appeals of your case,” or “Yep, you are being evicted,” or “No, they still don’t think you’re qualified for this,” or “Yes, we got you to keep your benefits this week but they’re going to illegally terminate them again next week, and we’re going to have to go to another hearing.” You know, just actually the frustration of how when you have a legal system that’s designed to benefit rich white people and settlers and corporations and stuff, you can’t win that much in it for everybody who’s on the losing side of that, and how in some ways you become just the front lines of the systems telling people “no,” you know, or even if you win something, it doesn’t change. You can win something that says that something’s not supposed to happen to people in foster care, prison, or whatever, and then the systems keep doing that stuff to people because of course, also similar with cops. You know, they have a million rules that they’re not supposed to do all the stuff they do every day to everybody, so you know, I think my instincts to go to law school were the same as many people who have that idea now, and I spend a lot of time trying to convince people now not to go to law school, or just making sure they really, really, really know what they can and can’t do with that degree, and how it relates to the forms of social change they’re interested in.

Part of the problem is that it is a path where you’re like, “Oh, I can just go to school for this.” Whereas organizing does not have the same path. There is not a bunch of school programs that help you become a radical organizer in your community. There’s actually not even a bunch of jobs. It gets hard for people to not see it as a way to kind of stabilize that path. It makes a lot of sense especially when people are just figuring out what they want to do and how they want to contribute, but I think it can be a really.... You know, people wind up in debt and people wind up spending three years learning a bunch of conservative ideas, and mostly end up in jobs they hate, and that’s my real concern. Those jobs are actually very more than full-time. They don’t have time to do the community based work they were doing, so it’s like, now your life is quite disconnected from the movement work you actually wanted to do and that we need you to do. I’m not sad about how that turned out for me, but I haven’t been a lawyer in years. I mean, I got a job as a professor because that was a way that I could do all my unpaid movement work much more easily, and I don’t practice law. Sometimes I help people with different things in legal systems, but I never got barred in the state that I live in. I don’t go to represent people in hearings. That doesn’t feel like the best, for me, the best way for me to contribute to the change I’m trying to see. I’m so glad some people do, in some particular areas, but we actually have, there’s so many people who want to go law school and do that, and there always will be because their parents like it, or it’s elite, or all these reasons I just said. If there’s people we can move off that track towards organizing, I think it’s better.

Tuck: So, we actually have a group called Queer Candle Co. who sponsored a bunch of Gender Reveal episodes, and they donate 10% of their profits to the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and I started doing little teasers in the ad where’d I go, “And soon you’ll find out what that is!” So while you’re here, I wanted to talk about what the Sylvia Rivera Law Project is ,because we keep mentioning it. But the question I was going to ask you is maybe what you already actually just addressed, which was, you know, you founded this 20 years ago, I was curious maybe what surprised you about how it unfolded over the last 20 years, compared to some of what you imagined in 2002, when you were getting it going.

Dean: That’s a great question. I mean, times have changed a lot, and also not. Right? I think the average person who’s low-income, trans or gender nonconforming or non-binary and dealing with shelters, prisons, foster care, public school, immigration proceedings, is not really in that different of a situation than 20 years ago, just to be totally frank. In fact, there’s many reasons that lead people to be worse off because housing is more expensive than it was then. There are more cops on the street than there were 20 years ago because every year of our lives the police budgets have increased. The wealth divide is stronger and the racial wealth divide is stronger and the gender wealth divide is stronger, you know, so this is not a progress narrative, but the context for doing the work has shifted in some ways, which is that there was a moment of trans mainstreaming which I never knew—you know, you never know if you’re gonna live through that or not. And there was a moment of mainstreaming of critiques of criminal punishment systems, both before 2020 and then even more so after 2020. I don't think that mainstreaming actually usually benefits people the way that it’s narrated to. It’s like the culture changes its story about a group of people or an institution, but mostly to kind of recuperate or rehabilitate institutions that are still harmful, so I don’t think that Caitlin Jenner being on the cover of *Vanity Fair* changed things for homeless trans women struggling with harassment. You know what I mean?

Tuck (sarcastically): That didn’t fix it?

Dean: The kind of conditional acceptance, the kind of narratives of deserving this that often go with that, the images of the people you could tolerate accepting, the fact that some set of liberals in the U.S. now are like, “People with nonviolent drug offenses shouldn’t be in prison,” it actually reifies the stigma of people who get the worst charges and whose criminal punishment experiences are the most entangled and stigmatized etcetera. So anyway, I think that in many ways starting SRLP, it was a very different moment in terms of people’s basic awareness about trans stuff. I was talking to someone the other day about how much time we spent doing trainings just for people at every kind of social service agency and shelter and different departments, you know, in New York City, the government, just because everywhere trans people are just being kind of kicked out, rejected, like, you know, “I showed up for my workfare job requirement thing and they were like, ‘We’re counting you as absent and ending your benefits because you’re wearing women’s clothes and we think you should be wearing men’s clothes.’” Anyway, I think a lot of those things are still going on but there is a different cultural narrative in which–at that time, even the gay and lesbian organizations didn’t have trans in any of their mission statements. You know, they didn’t have any trans employees, any of the gay and lesbian big national orgs. We were just pushing against something that was so untested. It was so hard to get any kind of funding for our work because people were like, “How many trans people could there really be?” You know those kinds of stuff, you know.

Tuck: They’re still saying that, but also saying there’s too many at the same time. Like, “How many can there be? Seven?” But also, “They’re taking over!”

Dean: Yeah. Definitely. We actually definitely are taking over. They should be very afraid. [Tuck laughs] So yeah, it was a different moment in terms of just trying to break through some of those very, very initial conversations in so many different kinds of spaces, whereas now I think we deal with more of the problems with mainstreaming, which is people think the problem’s resolved, and it’s not because they’ve made one statement or “We’re going to put an anti-discrimination policy in our institution,” and then that’s it, and then people are experiencing the exact same things, and so you just get a different set of cemented conditions. I mean, there’s so many more trans orgs. That’s a big difference. There’s so many more people doing all this work which is really interesting and a lot of that is really relieving to me. I love being like, “Ahh, look at those people. They’re worrying very deeply about–” It’ll be like some policy issue I used to work on a lot that I don’t work on anymore. I loved getting to let go of some of the kinds of policy work that I did a lot of, cause there was just this feeling there was so few of us trying to hold a lot of work. Yeah, it just feels like it’s more people to help now, of course insufficiently for the amount of suffering trans people are still facing, but I love all the brilliant people doing all the brilliant work, and that changes that feeling of having to try to stop bad things from happening in so many different places at once, and knowing you can’t do a good job of it. You know what I mean? I definitely felt like fraud, starting that work so young and there being so few, especially lawyers, in it, and so many of our people in systems that needed that kind of support and just being like, “I don’t know what I’m doing, but we have to do something,” you know.

Tuck: Yeah, well I want to talk a bunch about mutual aid, but I do want to ask you a little bit of policy stuff first because specifically I know you had done a lot of work with gender markers, and I was just curious where you land on X gender markers because we get a lot of advice questions regarding the sort of cost-benefit analysis for trans people, and even the cost-benefit for cis people as allies getting X ally markers on their driver’s licenses, and I also have just seen it lead to such funny administrative jumbles. So like, I was updating my car insurance because I moved and there is a little note that says, “If anyone on your car insurance is nonbinary, call this number” because they can’t process it on the website but they have to be able to accommodate it, and I was like, “I’m not going to call to find out what the nonbinary rate is on my car insurance is but I am interested in it. [Laughs] I’m interested in what that means.” So, anyway, I was just curious what your thoughts were.

Dean: I mean, my feeling about it in general is I think it’d be great if none of us ever carry any ID.

Tuck: Right.

Dean: So I think our ID reform approaches should all be oriented towards hauling out the meaningfulness of the surveillance state and reducing it, not trying to be seen accurately, and so I wanted to get rid of gender markers on ID, of course.

Tuck: Of course.

Dean: But in the meantime, trans people screen so much harm from not being able to get a gender marker that works better for us, and so trying to make it so that it was easier to change gender markers, so getting rid of surgery requirements was a huge one, or in some places having a way to change it at all, you know, just trying to make it so that eventually even if they have this gender marker on, it doesn’t mean anything about me. Basically, that’s for me is the emptying out its meaning or surveillance potential so it doesn’t link to any genital, it doesn’t link to any medical whatever, record, experience, etcetera, but in the meantime, the idea of getting rid of gender markers on ID, getting rid of ID, and so I was never interested in pushing for a third gender marker because to me that feels more like a project trying to be seen accurately and in general, with supporting individual trans people trying to get better ID, one thing I’ve always really counseled clients is like, “Just so you know, what you have on there isn’t going to change your experience, likely.”

So right now, if everyone thinks you’re an M and you have an F on there, and that’s causing you problems, then that might help you to get an M on there, but if I’m already being harassed for being trans, people can tell I’m trans, changing my ID doesn’t have any magical power. It doesn’t make the transphobe go away, right. It doesn’t make people go, “Oh, I have to respect this person’s gender now.” People are going to be how they’re going to be, and making sure people have realistic expectations, and so I think that’s one question I have with the X. I’m just like, “What is the person expecting, and are they ready for that? Is it going to cause more harassment for some people? Is it going to–” You know, administrative systems do not make any sense and are not consistent, so you can have a different gender marker on multiple pieces of ID because they have different standards for changing it, or because you did or didn’t change it or you couldn’t afford to or whatever, and all of the chaos that ensues lands on you, like the DMV system when it got tied to federal stuff through the Real ID Act and people are getting these mismatch letters, and it’s like, *you’re* the one who loses your license out of it. They don’t care that their administrative system can’t digest you, so it’s interesting that that happened with your car insurance that they’re actually trying to do something about it kind of customer service-wise. So on the one hand, I love how the X is causing the system to freak out.

Tuck: Yes!

Dean: But all trans and nonbinary people, we caused the systems to freak out and crumble. The problem is we usually pay the price, so my main thing is living with ID is just a survival problem that we all have while ID exists and for those of us who are eligible for any of it, and I’m not interested in being seen accurately by the government. I’m interested in reducing government surveillance. In terms of the sort of ally thing, should allies get X’s, I think that’s interesting. There was a moment in New York City where people advocated to create a New York City ID, and the goal was to have a piece of ID that could easily be obtained by undocumented people, unhoused people who often have lost a lot of their ID and it can really hard to ID if you don’t have any cause you have to prove yourself somehow, and also by trans and nonbinary people cause you could get a piece of ID that had your current stuff on it, even if you couldn’t get any other, and you could choose a gender marker or no gender marker, so there’d just be no field for that. So there was a kind of push like if you were going to get the – we want more people to get to get the New York City ID so that it’s not just these stigmatized people who have it, and so that people use it, and that so clerks and stuff are used to seeing it. So, that was a call to allies, and then also a call to allies to get it and not have a gender marker on it, so it’s not *just* people who have a gender problem according to the system who have no gender marker on their ID.

So it’s kind of an interesting parallel, and there was a controversy inside that question too. Should we be asking for another piece of ID, right? A New York City ID is another piece of ID, or is this diluting and undermining the surveillance desires of the state by getting an ID that basically anybody can get, and doesn’t have this kind of backdrop of proving behind it? And so, I think these are really juicy, strategic questions. I think it’ll take us years to be able to know to what degree does having an X on people’s ID increase or decrease their safety, and in what kinds of settings and what kinds of people, and to what degree did the creation of the X in the gender field cause more or less coordination between different surveilling institutions. What kinds of trouble did it cause for them versus what kinds of trouble did it cause for the people who are holding these IDs?

Tuck: Yeah, so I feel like a lot of your work is so much about what is pragmatic and what will actually help people which is great. We love that, and so a big theme throughout your work has been that civil rights laws are not going to actually save us because writing down in a book somewhere that people have to respect us is not going to make them respect us, so I’m interested if going for more civil rights laws, which people are actually really into right now in this moment, is not the best way to actually serve queer and trans people in terms of health and safety. What do you see right now being better avenues for trying to ensure that trans people have access to healthcare, housing, employment, education, basic things like that.

Dean: Yeah, so a huge part of my work, you know, which really comes from critical race theory that helped me figure this out, but it’s just is so obvious that racism has been illegal in the United States for half a century and during that time, the actual lived conditions of white supremacy have worsened. We’ve drastically expanded policing and imprisonment. We’ve drastically expanded militarized border enforcement. The racial wealth divide has grown. There’s something wrong, a missed bit, where the civil rights law is the story the law tells about itself versus the material reality for people on the ground, and so that should tell us something, and yeah, so a lot of my work has been about how civil rights law, like laws that declare that we can serve in the military, or we are not supposed to discriminated against in employment and housing, or that the cops should punish and the prosecutors should punish people really hard if they kill us for being trans, like that stuff, does not prevent the harm in our lives, and actually builds, justifies, and legitimizes the systems that we actually need to dismantle that are the biggest sources of harm in our lives. So then it’s like, what does actually help?

One part of my work has been if we’re going to do legal reform work, we should focus on the very specific things that actually do have a material impact in our lives, so let’s get rid of Medicaid bans on trans healthcare. We should be doing legal work that gets people out of prison because so many trans people are criminalized related especially to being poor, doing illegal work to get by, so if anything we can do that decriminalizes and reduces policing, all of that work, that is work for trans liberation, and that includes legal reforms, like decriminalizing stuff or includes government work, like reducing the city budget around policing. You know, that kind of stuff, that kind of legal work is material change instead of symbolic like, “The government said they like us and we shouldn’t be hurt.” You know what I mean? Those don’t protect us, so that’s the sort of difference in the kind of legal work, and then people in our communities are struggling right now, and need direct and immediate support, and so that’s the mutual aid piece, right. I’ve been so frustrated seeing the liberal freakouts about the bad anti-trans laws coming in in certain states. It’s so frustrating to me because it’s this obsession with law. It’s like, “Things are actually really terrible for trans people in that state and in your state already.”

Tuck: Mhmm, mhmm.

Dean: And yes, they might get somewhat worse, but the good laws don’t really work to make things better and the bad laws, it’s kind of uneven how they play out and really complicated, and in any of the cases, the thing that makes the difference is the people doing mutual aid work for trans people right now where they live. So if you’re so worried about trans youth in Alabama or Texas or something, look around your own town in Seattle or whatever, and be like, “Well there are trans youth who are unhoused right now. Could I get together a bunch of people and could we figure out ways to provide basic necessities?” If you care about trans youth, they’re already in trouble everywhere. It just feels really frustrating to me, the obsession with law, and then also it’s super pacifying. It’s like, “All I can do is wring my hands and worry about Alabama or worry about Texas or vote in four years or something.” It’s the same thing with the abortion stuff. It kind of really ignores that we all have direct action options right now to support people who are not getting what they need and who are getting hurt, and so that’s a big part of it for me, trying to decenter law in that way, and also I really believe that people....

Like why I am a poverty lawyer, and what I care about that work, and you know, my job is I teach people to be poverty lawyers, you know, I think that also that while we have these systems that are chewing up our communities, everybody should be accompanied in them. Nobody should be going to court and benefits hearings and housing court *alone*. You know what I mean? And also it makes a difference in the outcome of your case if you’re not alone in it, and also lawyers are not guaranteed in many of those settings, and also you don’t need to be a lawyer to accompany somebody, and also lawyers mostly suck, even if you have one, or there’s no tools for them to use anyway, but just having people not get chewed up in those systems by themselves, that part of mutual aid where it’s like, “We’re going to make sure to accompany people, and to build community around people.”

Ultimately, my belief about how change happens is through collective action, right. Organizing by millions of people is what makes change happen, not trying to convince the government to say nice things about us in its law, and one way to think about this is that I don’t believe in elite solutions, things that come from on top, but instead, I believe that the only way conditions ever change is through huge amounts of people on the bottom being like, “We’re stopping it now, we’re not letting it happen anymore, we’re disrupting it, we’re attacking it,” instead of, “We’re begging for it to change,” and so the other part of the mutual aid piece is that when we, ordinary people, get together to support each other and accompany people through these systems and try to make any conditions better right away, we are building that organizing. We’re mobilizing. Instead of being demobilized, passive observers of you know, “Are they going to pass this civil rights law for people like me or are they going to pass a mean, bad anti-trans law.” I’m instead actually doing something in my community. We’re knowing each other. We’re getting ready for the next crisis.

We’re also getting ready for the next moments of opportunity like 2020, when it’s like, “Oh, things are popping off. This is a moment to push stuff forward. This is a moment to expand our reach. This is a moment to share wisdom that we’ve developed in our projects with other people who want to do similar projects. People are getting involved.” So to me, the goal here is movement building so that we can win through collective action. Mutual aid is about providing people immediate support and building that level of mobilization, so that we can do things together that range from taking people, you know, from our community through a court process and having them not be alone, or helping people in prison and visiting them or supporting them while they’re sick, to burning down the police station, blocking the pipeline. I think a lot about this example I’ve heard lately about the Confederate statues and how people tried so hard to sue to get rid of the Confederate statues and it’s so hard because they’re historic monuments and all these things, and then people just defaced them and took them down, and then they just never got put back up. It’s like, direct action gets the goods that cannot be gotten through legal and official processes, and there’s so many examples of that, so that’s my take on kind of how do we meet the immediate needs of suffering in trans communities if civil rights doesn’t work.

Tuck: Yeah. Well, speaking of the mutual aid of it all, you literally wrote this book on mutual aid that came out in 2020 during this boom of mutual aid projects, including ours. Ours was also created in April 2020, and I had heard you on a couple of other podcasts that had been out earlier be like, “Hmm, I wonder how that’s going now.” So I was curious, do you have a concept of whether those groups have largely grown, collapsed, kept chugging alone?

Dean: I don’t think anyone knows. I get asked this question a lot. It’s really interesting. I often get asked it by journalists who are writing articles on, they want to either declare that it’s all over or something. [Tuck laughs] So I love that because it’s like, nobody knows. I don’t even know! I haven’t even heard from any researchers who are doing – I would love to see more people do high quality, not terrible, research of just really following up with all that stuff because one of the things that happens in our social movements, like I saw this happen with the Occupy moment where people were just, after the cops destroyed the Occupy encampments in every city, they were like, “No, that movement was a failure,” and it’s like here in Seattle, people who got politicized and went to Occupy and had never done anything before have stayed so active in so many parts of our movement and done so many amazing things. I’m just like, “Occupy still lives and has such a long term impact,” but I spend a lot of my time these days, most of my time, supporting people in mutual aid projects of many different sizes and types, all over, and so I’m often talking to people where it has sustained, you know, where they kept their project going. Sometimes, they’ve had periods, a lot of groups, it’s like their project was going hard and then at some point, they stopped getting new members and the need was so high, they stopped having time, it felt, to recruit new members or to orient new members, and then it can get kind of into a stalemate where you have so much work to do because so many people are in ongoing crisis that’s not going to end in our lifetimes, and then you start to have capacity issues.

People sometimes have conflict when there’s capacity issues, like, “We don’t think there’s enough people doing this work but we’re not actually recruiting new members and a few people moved away or a few people got sick, I mean, different things, there’s not as many as when we started,” and so that’s a really big thing I support groups with is like, how do you continue recruiting and orienting new members so they really feel like they have co-stewardship over the org and full decision making power with everybody else, instead of having it kind of devolve into just the founders feel like they really know what’s going on, and they’re annoyed because they feel like there’s too much on them, but the other people aren’t being invited to really co-lead and there’s not a clear decision making method that lets them step in and make proposals. So a lot of what I spend time doing is supporting people with that. I have no way of making a real assessment about what projects have ended or shrunk. I’ve talked to some people where a lot of money came in at the beginning in early 2020 or in the first half of 2020, and then less money came in but people in their community were still seeking from that fund, you know, “I actually need a new trailer home. I need a new wheelchair,” really expensive items people truly need very badly, and then groups being really struggling, like “Oh my god, now we feel like a charity because we have to pick between these different people.”

So, I think one of the things that I’m always trying to help groups do is remember, “We are not going to ever be able to give away enough stuff to solve the crises caused by having capitalism’s boot on our neck, extracting from us. Mutual aid has to be a strategy of movement building. If it’s going to win, it can’t just be like, “We’re going to somehow raise enough money five and ten dollars at a time to give people all the housing, healthcare, etc. they need.” It’s not going to happen, and so returning to the recruitment, returning to building a strong group, returning to building, you know, a group that’s so big that it splits into two and three groups, you know, and just that kind of stuff because the idea that we’ll just build enough infrastructure while living under these systems – We have to build a big enough movement to combat the systems, and mutual aid is a way people enter movements, and so they do things that include both changing diapers and distributing food, and burning down the police station and blocking the pipeline, you know, so we want to make sure the mutual aid projects are politicized, stay politicized, stay a place where new people can join and do work with their immediate desire to help others, and get involved in more and more parts of the movement because it needs to be part of a broader set of strategies of attack and care for each other while we attack that system, you know.

Tuck: Yeah. Well, speaking of the recruiting aspect of it, something that you said on a different podcast, I don’t recall which one, that really struck me was, you were talking about the sort of CHOP and CHAZ of it all in Seattle, and how people would come from a long ways away to show up and join, but then not really have any task to do, so they’d just be hanging out, and that reminded me a lot of the DMs I was getting in Portland at that same time were people would be like, “Ok, I’m coming! What do I do? Where do I go?” And I’m like, “I can’t tell you, buddy. I’m not in charge, I'm a journalist.” But, that is just to say that I do completely understand that need, and then also, on the other hand, at that exact same time, a lot of people who were doing a lot of mutual aid were very mad at each other and would love to talk about how other people are doing COINTELPRO,” and I was like, “You guys, not everything is COINTELPRO,” and you know what, some of it was, and reports came out later, and I was like, “You were right.” You know, you actually still have to be thinking about the government infiltrating and sabotaging your movements because they did demonstrably do that. There’s a paper trail, and so I was just wondering if you could speak to – Obviously not all mutual aid is going to have to think about that in the same way, but some of these more fraught mutual aid initiatives, how you can balance recruiting new people and bringing people into the fold and trusting them with the very real fear and concern of government infiltration and surveillance.

Dean: That’s so true. Yeah, one of the things I’ve noticed in my movement experience is that some of us are more oriented towards fear around security threats, and some of us are more oriented towards inviting lots of new people. I’m an “invite lots of new people” person. I’m just like, “I met you today at the rally,” and now I’m like, “Come stay over at my house,” you know, to a fault, to a severe fault. I’m like, “So Tuck, I know you’re having a party tonight. Can I bring 20 people?” [Both laugh] You know what I mean? I can’t verify the quality of these people. I’m just excited about who they might be, and I definitely project up. I just project that everybody’s more radical than they are, whatever, and that has some political benefits. Sometimes people rise to the challenge and it has some political detriment. Anyway, so we need people like me in groups and we need people who are like many of my friends, the polar opposite, who are just like, “We can’t let anyone in. They’re all, you know, agents.” I just think it’s interesting to notice if those are emotional tendencies in us. I think that first and foremost, just like, “Okay, am I someone who thinks I love people or thinks I hate people,” and whatever, you know, those are very simplistic things.

But in the same way that when we have groups that are doing any handling of money, you got people in that group who are just like, “Spend it all right now,” and you got people in that group who are like, “We must save forever,” and those tendencies are fine, and do not need to be source of conflict. They can be really complimentary, especially if we know we have them. So, I’m like, “Dean, you’re an over-inviter. Listen to the wisdom of the other person, but let’s not pick either of these extremes.” You know what I mean? And so, that’s one thing I talked to a lot of groups about, is like, “Can we do a realistic security assessment?” If we’re handing out water bottles in a really hot space to people who are worried about having water access, we need less security concern than if we’re trying to help people get medications that are illegal in our state. Just when is the right time for certain kinds of security? And it’s not like we can figure this out perfectly, and the government infiltrators are smart, and it does happen. I mean, just yes, but I just worry sometimes people make the movement too small, or make their group too small, or whatever, when they’re too concerned about security on things that they don’t have to be, or either can we divide the clandestine or underground work from some of the work that’s a really good place to invite newbies because we do need to invite and develop people, and sometimes new people are also people who can easily be picked off as informants and things like that, so just getting out of an autopilot that we might be in.

Sometimes a group has a group culture that was set up by somebody who has an autopilot that’s over inviting and under interested in security stuff, or overly secure and can feel paranoid, and either of those can make the group culture that way, and it can feel like when you join the group, “I have to act like this. This is the norm of the group culture, so I have to act like this too,” you know if you have some concerns in one direction or another. What we want is a group culture in which we can notice, “Okay, some of our founders have this type of vibe and we think it’s imbalancing a little bit and so we’re going to balance it. Some other people are noticing it that are new.” That can often be a good thing about new people. They notice that stuff, you know, and yeah, we have opponents, and the better and more threatening our work gets, the more we’re going to be seeing them, and it’s already happening and has been happening, you know, for hundreds of years, infiltrating our work, hurting people inside our work, undermining us, and thinking about what kinds of trust and relationship building help people build stronger groups and just basically increasing direct communication and feedback I think can often undermine some of the....

I remember reading some kind of counterinsurgency document from some law enforcement agency that was talking about how they could infiltrate and undermine anarchist organizations. Maybe it was from 20, 10 years ago, a contemporary document, and it was showing the things in our subcultures that just make us so vulnerable, like we love to decide that other people are the worst and are terrible, so it’s really easy to get us to stigmatize somebody. I think also any kind of hierarchical decision making structure makes us really vulnerable to law enforcement infiltration cause then they have less people to take out or to influence or to buy off or they can climb the hierarchy and can take over our orgs and pretend that they’re us. Yeah, so I think there’s a lot to think about there, but I do think that that self-awareness piece like which kind of person like, “Am I a little tending towards security, you know, or am I a little tending towards over inviting?” And then just knowing about that before I walk into this meeting and push my view really hard, kind of not knowing that I’m on autopilot, you know.

Tuck: Yeah. Well, you were mentioning how sort of two sides, those two tendencies to also either hoard money or spend a bunch of money, and I did want to ask you about money because one thing that happened to a lot of groups in this mutual aid explosion in 2020 is that a lot of groups got a ton of money really, really fast and they weren’t prepared for it. And the big example in my mind is Riot Ribs cause I’m from Portland, but there are many other examples. And this can lead to, not only huge tax burdens for individuals running a Venmo account, it can also lead to accusations that groups are hoarding money because they don’t immediately give 100% of it back out because they don’t know what they’re going to do yet. I was wondering, I know you go into this a bit in your book, but if you had tips to share for mutual aid groups who handle money, particularly when they end up accidentally handling a lot of money, because I’ve definitely seen that end groups immediately. They just have too much money and it makes it too fraught, and then it collapses.

Dean: Yeah. I should say we did this webinar with this really smart law professor guy who specifically focuses on doing very detailed support to mutual aid groups. If you look at the Barnard Center for Research on Women, it’s called something like Handling Money for Mutual Aid Groups. I want to just offer that to people. We go through stuff like if you’re going to take money, if you take it in through cash or checks, it’s not traceable. Whereas, if you take it through Venmo or PayPal, and you accidentally take in a bunch, you’re going to end up with a big tax bill, like you were saying. I mean, he was talking to people getting tax bills, taking in tons for Standing Rock, buying tons and tons of tents and supplies, and then getting a hundred thousand dollar tax bill, and you’re just some kid, you know, just trying to help out, cause why would people know that if they haven’t ever done it before, and a lot of things that are happening are unprecedented, so yeah, or having that being like, “Who in our group should have that Venmo account, or could we divide it between a lot of different people,” you know, just lots of questions about that, or a common things in groups is like, “You’re kind of technical, you know a lot about how to get a bank account, and stuff like that, or you’re more comfortable with particular administrative systems than I am, and so you’re kind of holding and dealing with the money, and everyone is like, you have the power and I don’t.’” So, I think this is a question that I have.

One of the things we talk about in that webinar is should you become a 501(c)(3), should you get a fiscal sponsor, are you trying to be tax exempt, all the kind of dilemmas of institutionalizing, and of relating with different institutions. I really encourage a lot of groups that– I was just talking with a group that does all this amazing work with people in prisons and coming out of prisons, and I was just like, “If you don’t want to have this dilemma of the taxes and the fiscal sponsor and stuff, you could just one at a time, do little fundraisers for each person that gets out, or for each person’s commissary,” or like groups who decide to stipend everybody who participates in a workshop or something. The difference between stipending people and kind of creating an institution that gives out the money, and the feeling of when you pass the hat because everyone’s like, “Dean doesn’t have rent this month. Can we pass the hat?” The different culture that produces when you kind of make the group a central resource of care versus when you just do the care as needed, I think is really interesting. I think sometimes people are more real about their needs, and people do less pretending that they’re poor when they’re not, when you actually do it like, “Dean needs rent this month.” Like people are less likely to lie. Whereas if there’s a stipend, everyone suddenly says they’re low-income. I don’t know. [Laughs] You know what I mean? All that weird stuff in our movements where people are unwilling to really notice differences in wealth and income access for so many reasons.

I think there’s a bigger question for me about the role of money in our movements. So, one lesson from 2020 is that a lot of people did mutual aid projects that were just money. “Just send money on Venmo to us for this group for people of this type of need,” and then a lot of people are getting requests for that money on Instagram or whatever, and then giving it out, and I just think there’s nothing wrong with doing that, but it is very limited in terms of movement building. It’s very, very thin on the relationship level. It’s like, “I send money to people I don’t know on Venmo. I’m not going to any meetings or I’m not meeting anyone. I’m not breaking my isolation, and then I ask for money electronically.” So there’s nothing wrong with that except for in terms of the value of mutual aid as movement building, I don’t think it does a lot of that, and it comes with a lot of dilemmas. As soon as you add money to any social movement group, you are making a recipe for conflict. How many groups have fallen apart after getting money? I mean, I think people listening can probably picture it in their own communities and just, so we want to just ask, do we have a thing set up to make sure I don’t steal all the money? How are we going to give it out? We have to decide who gets it. We’re already stepping into “deserving, undeserving.”

As soon as we do that, we are in the problem of charity. It’s okay to do it, to be like, “Yeah, we can’t do it perfectly,” of course. You know what I mean? I really believe in giving people money, you know what I mean, but I just think groups are unprepared for what that actually brings up in terms of the potential for conflict or values questions, the fact that you can’t do it right, you just can’t. You’re like, “Do we give all the money to this one person for this trailer home that’s in really dire straits, or do we give the money to 50 different people who are not in as dire straits?” Impossible question. What about how you will think this kind of need is more dire than this other need based on our own life experiences? All of that, and I have the broader sort of questions: what does money do to movement groups, how does it change movement culture, what is the idea of paying people to do movement work do? There’s kind of an assumption that you should get paid for all work, which feels confusing to me as somebody who wants to end wage labor, and also if you’re getting paid, you’re definitely pretty much getting paid by our opposition. The groups we’re talking about that are just taking money in through Venmo, they’re not paying staff. If you’re paying staff and having people on health insurance and stuff, you are getting paid by our opposition. It’s rich people, philanthropy, or government grants. It’s very rare to find a staffed organization that’s all taking in money just through little donations. So then what are the dilemmas of that? Who are you accountable to?

I find that, we saw this in 2020, nonprofits and groups that are funded by our opposition and have really strict work plans that they’ve created through those grants, they don’t respond to crisis and to political opportunities. The nonprofits were invisible in 2020. They *closed* when COVID took off and when the uprising happened. They were all closed! They can’t respond. Whereas mutual aid groups of unpaid people are just like, “Oh gosh, things are happening, we’re going, we’re going out and we’re doing stuff.” Do we want to create more workplaces and hope that we have justice for people in workplaces, or do we want to end wage labor and give everything to each other for free? And I’m not saying that that’s – Obviously, there’s reasons people want to get paid for stuff and I’m not saying we should never pay anyone for stuff, but just in terms of getting a little more suspicious of the role money has in our movement, organizations and of institutionalizing, and that institutionalization around money and are there ways to still redistribute and include things, including cash, but that are more oriented towards building collective action, building people’s deep relationships.

I also got tons of emails in 2020 who had these kind of Venmo based mutual aid projects, and they’d be like, “We think that some of these people who are asking for this money are fake, because we get these exact same requests from lots of different accounts,” and it’s like, who wants to be doing that job of trying to figure out if someone’s request is real? Gross. It’s like a welfare fraud investigation, so awful. Of course you want to be like, “Oh my god, you’re in need? Have it, have it all.” That’s a feeling in our movements, but when there’s no relationship and it’s all distance, and it’s only electronic, how do you do this well, you know? I thought that was a real dilemma that I did not know the answer to, and I was just kind of like, “Hey, you can’t do it wrong cause we’re not fixing this entire problem through your Venmo project so go for it, do whatever.” You know what I mean? It’s like, try stuff. You know what I mean? But yeah, I’m just really struggling with seeing the limits of redistributing money as our main tactic, and being like, “Yes, we need to distribute that, we need to pay people’s bail, we need to pay people’s rents on time. Even better if we can go on rent strike, even better if we can break people out of jail and prison,” you know. That would be the dream. How are we getting from here to there, instead of becoming bogged down and becoming basically a social services agency in which none of us are paid, and we’re just kind of complementary to the existing system, and it’s not moving towards a strategy I think will get us out of this crisis.

Tuck: Do you have any sort of quick words of wisdom, not to say that now you will magically fix all of this in one easy step, but so many people are struggling with burnout, and when I was reading *Mutual Aid*, something that struck me were the signs of burnout that you listed that were being really controlling of the work, doing a lot of work, not letting people help you, and I was like, “Oh no, I’m feeling challenged by this book,” because it’s so easy to be like, “Well, I would love to stop doing this work, but I simply cannot,” and I was aware of those tendencies but I hadn’t realized that they were direct – [Ruby meows] Hi Ruby – that they were direct symptoms of burnout, so I was wondering if you could speak a little bit to why when we need breaks the most, we for some reason create reasons why we can’t take a break.

Dean: Yeah. You know, I do this exercise a lot with mutual aid groups where I’ll bring them through exercises about giving or receiving feedback, or about capacity. A lot of people have fights in their groups about capacity, like “I’m so mad because I think I’m doing all the work, and you’re not doing any of it,” or “I’m so mad cause you’re bossing us,” or whatever, very typical dynamics that lead to stress in groups, and one of the exercises we do is, “What goes through my head right before I take on something that is really actually too much?” Right before I volunteer for the task, I know my plate is full, and everyone says the same things. They’re like, “I’m the only one who can do that right.” “I want people to see me working really hard.” “I want to feel important in this group.” “No one will do it if I don’t.” That’s another common one, and everyone writes those things, and then people say, “Oh my god, I’m so relieved to see other people wrote that down too,” because everyone’s ashamed cause we know there’s something wrong with some of those thoughts, or it’s something a little sideways, like “I’m trying to get a lot of credit,” or “it’s my insecurity that’s making me do extra,” or “I don’t trust others to do well,” or “I need it done my way,” and those things don’t feel great. They’re not like, “I’m doing this for liberation.” You know what I mean? They’re our own stuff.

And I just think that having more self-awareness about – I don’t know if you’ve experienced this but when I’m really overstimulated, and working really hard, and doing back to back to back meetings and events all day, teaching and whatever, and then I have a half an hour break, sometimes I cannot bring my nervous system down during it, so I should pet the dog or slowly eat something, but instead I want to turn on a podcast. There’s something about noticing, where can I see some dysfunction in my overdoing, or for some people it's the opposite. It’s the collapsing and the avoiding, procrastinating, anything related to the thing. Where can I see some of that dysfunction and just notice how did that feel? What does that feel like? You know, what does it feel like when I take on too much? What does it feel like when I don’t give myself a break? Just bringing a little awareness to it, not even trying to change it yet, can really help, and I think most of us, if we were more aware of some of our sort of sideways feelings and motivations in these things, then when there’s conflict in the group, I wouldn’t be like, “How dare you, Tuck, tell me I’m being controlling.” I would be like, “Tuck might be onto something. I do notice that about myself a little bit.” [Tuck laughs] You know what I mean? And that’s really helpful.

I’ll say one more thing that really has helped me around this stuff is noticing the difference between avoidant feelings and feelings of being on purpose. The avoidant piece is that we live in a culture where almost all of our work, our school work when we were kids, our housework when we were kids, you know, work-in jobs, is stuff we are forced to do. There’s a feeling of coercion. There’s a feeling of not getting to choose, and so you spend your life being like, “I have to do this stuff, but I don’t really want to” and you get really used to the embodied reality of that, what it feels like to do a task while kind of not wanting to, and while kind of procrastinating, ditching it, turning it in late, whatever, all the range of things that go on inside that, and what we want to feel in our social movement work, whether it’s your paid work or not, is like, “I want to do this. I’m choosing to do this, and I know why. I can remember that filling out this spreadsheet about who’s going to deliver the whatevers to the whoever is because I believe everyone should have food, or because I believe whatever,” your deepest beliefs, and then when you act, and you still do that possibly boring task, but with this feeling of purpose.

Maybe, for me, I might picture people in my group are behind me, or our ancestors who do this work are behind me. Emma Goldman is with me while I do this work, she did things like this, or the trees are behind me, or the children of the future, whoever you’re doing this for or with, or how you feel accompanied, figuring out that feeling, and then trying to invoke that feeling sometimes when you are taken over by the avoidance feeling which makes so many tasks unpleasant, and makes us grumpy at other people, like “they don’t do enough,” and just shifting so I’m not spending my whole day bracing myself away from what I know I actually want to do, and I think people do this too. People feel avoidant about social stuff with their friends, and then all you want to do is escape and watch TV and play your video game or get wasted. When that is happening, when that picture is happening in our lives, like “Okay this isn’t my fault. This is capitalism, consumerism set this up for me, and I need to Tetris my way out of this emotional landscape that I did not invent and that is designed to control me, and find out how it feels to feel on purpose and feel like I’m not alone and remember what I actually want and do it, and do it on purpose.”

Tuck: Yeah. That was beautiful and I would love to leave it there, but we do have to ask you the last question, so the way we always end the show is by asking; in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

Dean: I love this question because we live under such severe, violent gender systems that I think that if we didn’t have them, which is what we’re working towards, gender, the kind of unrecognizable concept, people would still be all the ways, you know, and do all the fun things with their sex and their body and their appearance, and their, you know, expression, and their way of talking and moving, but without the threat of death that hangs over all of us in humiliation, and all the other dimensions, if we do it wrong. I think it would be unrecognizable and also, in that ideal world we’re living in where gender has ended, where gender violence and gender coercion has ended, that’s only possible if we are living in a context of collective self-determination where all of us can have everything we need to live. None of us have to go into a wage labor situation. No one is in a cage. There are no borders. There are no coercive mechanisms forcing people to be extracted from. That’s the only place in which we can have that kind of freedom around our gender, so I think it requires us to really get to have all that thinking about all the relaxing contexts we would have to be in, and who we would get to be if we got to live that way, how we would feel, and what kinds of stuff we would do together if we lived when there was no militaries and no police, and yeah. For me, those are all very tied up in imagining the world without coercive, violent gender enforcement.

[Gender Reveal Music Starts]

Tuck: That's going to do it for this week’s show. If you had a good time or learned something, please share this episode with folks in your community, and if you really enjoyed this episode and want to hear more, we will once again be releasing about ten extra minutes of this conversation on our Patreon only bonus podcast, Gender Conceal. Yes, I did take part where Dean says that he hates paywalls and I did put it behind a paywall mostly because I think that’s very funny. You can sign up for that on patreon.com/gender, but as always, if you really want to hear a specific bonus episode but cannot afford to join the Patreon at $5 a month, just email me, and I’ll send you the file. Meanwhile, you can find Dean at deanspade.net where he has very generously offered almost his entire body of work online for free. You can find his books, *Normal Life* and *Mutual Aid*, wherever you get books, and Dean has also created a free mutual aid toolkit at bigdoorbrigade.com, and I’ll put even more links to free resources by Dean in the show notes.

As always, you can find us on Twitter and Instagram @Gendereveal and at genderpodcast.com. We also have a Slack community for listeners and the link to that is always changing, but if you hit me up, I can send you the current link. Today’s 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. Additional music this week by Blue Dot Sessions. We’ll be back next week with more feelings about gender.