[*Gender Reveal* theme song plays]

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

[*Gender Reveal* theme song ends]

Hey, everyone. Hope you're all hanging in there. Welcome to the penultimate episode of Gender Reveal Season Three. This week on the show, I'm really excited to share my chat with Portland Two Spirit Society Interim Director, Jack Malstrom, which was recorded last October. We talk about exploring Two Spirit identity, decolonizing queerness as always, educating white people, as always, and celebrating Indigenous queer culture.

**Jack**: There are definitely times where I feel like Indigenous queers are the only people who are really talking real shit. And I really, I love it, but it can be seen as, like, super radical because they're like, fuck the government, like, what has that ever helped us with? The whole system is built to destroy us.

[happy piano music plays throughout]

**Molly**: But first, I have a very, very exciting announcement for you today. Gender Reveal grants are back, they are twice as big as last year, and the applications are open now. This time around, we are only opening the grant to BIPOC folks, that's Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color. If you're a person who solely identifies as white, we've got you next time, there's going to be another grant, you can apply then. This round is only for any non-white, non-cis person. We are giving out two $350 grants, and two $150 grants. You can apply for either one or both. To apply, check out the link the show notes, or visit [genderpodcast.com/grant](https://www.genderpodcast.com/grant). Applications for this grant are open until April 30. All of your other questions can hopefully be answered by the application form itself. If not, you can hit me up via email, Twitter, Instagram, [genderpodcast.com](https://www.genderpodcast.com/), there's a lot of ways to ask questions, but hopefully it's straight forward.

By the way, these grants, this $1,000 in grants, is funded by listeners like you. Your generosity allows us to make the show, and it also allows us to fund grants for other trans people. If you would like to contribute to making Gender Reveal possible, and making the Gender Reveal grants possible, the best way to do that is to join us on Patreon, making a monthly donation as little as one dollar a month at [patreon.com/gender](https://www.patreon.com/gender). You can also make a one-time donation via PayPal, or Cash App, those links are in the show notes. You can also support the show by buying pronoun buttons, or select trans flag pride buttons at [Stick To Resist](https://www.etsy.com/shop/sticktoresist). Our friend Jery donates a hundred percent of sales on select merchandise to Gender Reveal. It's made us an absurd amount of money, considering that everything costs fifty cents. Thank you so much to everyone who's bought pins, it's been really incredible, and of course, thank you, as always, to Jery.

[piano music ends]

Now, it's time for This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender intro music plays]

This week in gender, we are once again back to good news. Welcome back to good news! First of all, just an update from a recent This Week in Gender, that No Promo Homo trans bill in South Dakota is dead after being voted down seven to two in state senate committee.

For our main topic this week in gender, I can't remember whether we've talked about Dana Zzyym on the show or not, but Dana is an intersex and non-binary person in Colorado who has been lobbying the US government for years to give them an accurate passport. Their birth certificate says their sex is unknown, their driver's license says X, the VA recognizes their gender as non-binary, but they can't get a passport because the application requires everyone to mark either male or female, and lying on a federal form is perjury.

Last September, a federal judge ruled that the State Department needed to give Dana a passport with a non-binary gender marker. The State Department moved to stay the judgment, basically asked if they could just not do it, until they could appeal the ruling, arguing that they can't add X markers to passports because the change would, quote, “take approximately 24 months and cost 11 million dollars.” But last month, the judge denied the stay, saying that, quote, “complying with a judgment necessarily involves some harm to the party against whom a judgment is entered.” Zing.

The State Department is appealing to the Tenth District Court of Appeals, and I'd bet to the Supreme Court after that, but in the meantime, Dana is cleared to get a passport and get the heck out of here.

And, speaking of which, several US airlines claim to be working on adding additional genders to their ticket purchasing forms. Passengers will soon be able to choose between M for male, F for female, you can already do that, but also U for undisclosed, or X for unspecified. Passengers will also be able to choose Mx. as a title. Participating airlines include United, Alaska, American, Southwest, and Delta. Now if only there was a way to get the TSA to stop touching trans peoples' bodies. This has been This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender outro music]

[Gender Reveal theme music starts]

Jack Malstrom is a Two Spirit podcaster from Portland, Oregon, and the interim director of the Portland Two Spirit Society. Jack is the host of Rose City Native Radio on KBOO.FM, a co-host for A Tribe Called Geek, and a DJ, DJ Gila River Monster.

[Gender Reveal theme music ends]

So the way we always start the show is by asking, in terms of gender, how do you identify?  
  
**Jack**: I identify as Two Spirit. I use Two Spirit as a sexual identity and a gender identity, or sexual orientation and gender identity. I guess like, in other terms, I guess I'm kind of fluid, but, I'm so fluid that I don't even really stick to labels at that point. I'm just kind of whatever people see me as, and I'm comfortable with that.

**Molly**: Yeah. What pronouns do you use?  
  
**Jack**: Uh, she/her or he/him. Again, I just don't have like, that much of a preference, it's however you're feeling in the moment. Whatever energy I'm doing.

**Molly**: Yeah. So, folks who are listening might not be familiar with what Two Spirit means. I think people have heard it as a term, but not really had it defined.

**Jack**: Mmhmm.

**Molly**: Can you talk about what it means to you?  
  
**Jack**: Oh yeah, totes. Two Spirit is a umbrella term that was created in the ‘90s to reclaim the spaces and the roles that queer people held in Native American cultures across this country and beyond. So, for me, you know, Two Spirit is not only just like an in-between space, not necessarily in a binary way, but like, you're able to really be able to empathize with the extreme masculine, extreme feminine, and everything in between. But it's an important role, so like, in our communities, it's why people who are Two Spirit are seen as blessed. It's, in some communities, you have a male and female spirit, and you're blessed to see through, like, the other dimension or whatever you want to call it. Yeah, and Two Spirit means different things for everybody's culture.

I'm still learning about what my roles would be for my tribe. I’m Pima and Yaqui. And so I'm still learning what that would mean for my community, in my specific culture, but overall, it expands across gender and sexual orientation. It's also a term that's specifically only for Native American people because of the cultural roles that are tied to it. We were name-givers, negotiators, ceremony holders, medicine people, all kinds of specific roles that were put on us and trained at a young age for that.

**Molly**: Thank you so much for explaining that. So, like you mentioned, there are literally hundreds of Indigenous tribes in the US. Can you talk about whether every non-binary gender or sexuality is considered Two Spirit, or if only some of them are considered Two Spirit?  
  
**Jack**: It kind of depends. It's not really like an outsider necessarily putting it on a kid, being like, “That kid is hella Two Spirit," you know what I mean? It's a label for yourself, there's some tribes that, you know, didn't even choose a gender pronoun until the kid chose what they want to identify as. Two Spirit can encompass anything like that, but at the same time, if you're Native American and queer, that doesn’t automatically make you Two Spirit. It's a cultural role, so on top of being queer, it's I'm queer *and* I choose to take on these responsibilities, and to fulfill these duties that people who are like me have been doing in our communities.

So, we do a lot of social work, we do a lot of work for the people and try to build those bridges because just naturally that's what we've been doing for centuries. So, it's like a bit of a role, but it's also like, people use it however they want to and are kind of free to use it like, I use it for both things, right?  
  
**Molly**: Right.

**Jack**: Some people don't do that, some people say, “I'm gay and Two Spirit,” or “I'm Indigenous queer,” like, it's really, it's flowy like that, but Two Spirit does come with a little bit of weight to it when you choose it.

**Molly**: I did want to follow up on that, too, because I think that a lot of, like, white trans people really want to emphasize that their gender and their sexual orientation are, like, totally different, but it turns out that in other experiences, they can be really closely tied. And that's something that Meredith Talusan talked about when she was on the show, and then that's something that you mentioned, that they were tied together for you. Can you talk a little bit more about how you feel that your sexual orientation and gender identity are both Two Spirit?

**Jack**: Mmhm. Yeah. Early on, I used to say, like I went through this whole stage, and even then, I get like, itchy, like, trying to use labels, even though I'm not a person to be like, “I don't like labels.” It's a whole thing I'm battling myself with, but I'm a Gemini, so it happens.

**Molly**: Oof.

**Jack**: See? That's everybody's reaction..

**Molly**: But the thing is, okay, being a Two Spirit Gemini is really cool.

**Jack**: [laughs] It's like layers, right?  
  
**Molly**: Yeah. So I--

**Jack**: Think of it in that aspect, we can be an in-between...

**Molly**: Yeah.

**Jack**: ...and understand both sides. We're useful. So, early on, I used to just say I'm not picky. My parents were always, like, chill. They were always, from a very young age, 'We'll love you whether you bring home a boy or a girl,' even before I even realized, like, I thought they meant friends. [Molly laughs] So I never had to come out to my parents, it was just, never an issue.

So before, I was just, oh, I'm not picky, and then, like, after I graduated high school, then I was like, okay, I guess if I had to put a label on it, I'm bi. But bi never really sat quite right with me, and I still don't even really know why, I just, it didn't completely encompass how I feel in my existence. I went with bi for forever, and then once I started getting involved in the Native community here about four years ago, I learned about Two Spirit, and I was researching it, and I was trying to find out more, and everyone I asked, I got a different answer. Some people would be like, oh, that's a term for transgender people, or, oh, that's a term for LGB people, and it's like, well, which is it? Or is it both? And it's both, but it's just that a lot of straight Native people don't know what it is.

**Molly**: Yeah.

**Jack**: They just don’t… it's still very new. Okay, for lack of a better term, for lack of better wording, it's still very new in the Native community, it's a new concept that there are LGBT Native people because that's just been something forced on us for centuries. So, the more I looked into it and I realized that there was a weight to it, but also that it was just wrapping up my identity in one nice little bundle, one little prayer bundle you could say [laughs] Once I realized it was, like, an umbrella term, because that's what I really liked, too, is those umbrella terms, instead of being like, here's my alphabet soup of my identity. Cause I already have enough of that, you know, I'm two tribes already, on top of that, I'm an adoptee, so I have to explain my three families, why one's white, why one's brown, and why one I don't talk to, all these different things. I have enough explaining to do in my life, I'd like it short and sweet.

But I was nervous to take on that title, and so I really, I talked to a lot of people, and eventually found other Two Spirits here in Portland, and in other places, and talked to them about it, and really worked on it, and then after about a year and a half of, like, really, really thinking it over, I decided, okay, I think this is the term for me because the way everybody describes it, it's, it's again, just back to that in-between space. I don't feel super masculine, I don't feel super femme, and with all those other, like, there's 80 billion labels out there, right? Like, oh, are you a femme or are you a butch? You know, are you lipstick lesbian or are you whatever? And I'm like, I like pants and I don't like dresses, but, like, I like a good push-up bra, like where do I go?

So, Two Spirit just made everything a lot easier, and it also, again, was something that meant more to me because it's like a fuzzy blanket I can wrap myself in that's not only my identity, but it's interwoven with my culture, which is something I adore, so, it just, it was really the right fit.

**Molly**: Not only are you Two Spirit, you're the leader of the Portland Two Spirit Society.

**Jack**: Yeah. Interim Director of the Portland Two Spirit Society, yes.

**Molly**: Yes. Can you talk to me about how you first got involved with that group?

**Jack**: Yeah. So Asa Wright actually started the Two Spirit Society back in like, 2003 or something. But it's kind of been on and off since then. It was handed off to Candi and, you know, we tried to revive it for a little bit, and then it was in limbo for a while. Yeah, so it's kind of been, like, up and down. And then we were made Grand Marshals of the Pride parade. [laughs] And, so, that was a thing, and we were excited, a little nervous because it was, at this point, it was right after Pulse, and so everyone was on edge, and there was already a little bit of, you know, community drama about us and our place in the parade or this or that. And we really held our ground and were like, you are a guest on this land, and you're going to acknowledge that.

So we did a prayer at the front of the parade route before it started, and then we let them go, and then we went back to our place, and we had a tipi, which has now been designated the Education Tipi after the last three years because people will come in and ask questions. Some extremely rude and racist, other genuinely wanting to know.

**Molly**: Not to, like, drag up too much overt bigotry, but I'm curious what kind of questions people had that they felt was appropriate to ask in this tipi.

**Jack**: A lot of people curious about what the Two Spirit identity is, and then some people who knew what it was, would be like, “Well, I'm Two Spirit!” and they'd not be Native, they'd be white people, and we'd be like, “No, actually it’s for Native people, but you know what you are? You're a Two Spirit ally.” It was mostly, like, correcting ignorance in general about Native Americans. So, we would hear, “Oh, I lived in a tipi at, you know, Burning Man, for like, two weeks, and it was great, and I did peyote and blah blah blah.” And it's like, okay, here's why everything you said is garbage. And there's various levels, right?

When you do this type of work, cause it's *work*, but when you have the capacity to try and educate folks like this, right, you kind of are able to pick up those who actually want to learn, even if it's like, they fetishize you so much they just want to absorb as much as they can, or those who have no interest in what you have to say. So, it's kind of like picking your battles, but either way, like, you challenge them, and they'll take it how it is. Last year, I was in the tipi, and there was some dude who was talking about past lives. And how him and his boyfriend, they were both white, and him and his boyfriend was saying, “Oh, we should get one of these for the backyard, one of these tents.” They keep calling it a tent! Which also drives me insane. I'm not even from a culture that does tipis, and it drives me insane. And they keep calling it a tent, and I was like, “It's not a tent. This is a home. This is a domicile. This is something completely out of your reach." And they were like, “Yeah, I need to get a tent,” and so I was like, “Oh, really, what tribe are you?” And he was like, “Ah… well, I've been many different tribes over many different lives, in my past lives, so I don't always remember them, though. But I have been many different tribal people in many multiple incarnations, and it's just that, alas, this one, you know, has no tribal affiliation, but, you know, deep down, I have all those other ones.” And I was like, “Huh. Well, it's important to keep in mind that the body that you're currently in, with all of its privileges that your skin has and your status has, right?” And then eventually he grabbed his boyfriend and stormed out, and I was like, cool, get out of my tipi. [laughs]

But like, various things like that. People will say some ignorant stuff. SAMHSA, the center for mental health and substance abuse has this really cool thing called a culture card, and it's this whole fold-out thing that basically talks about how to interact/work with Native communities because SAMHSA does a lot of work with Native communities, like that was what I used to do for work, and it's fantastic. So we always have those on our table, and we're like, “Maybe you should read this.”

But at the same time we get Native folks coming through, too, which is always great. Every now and again they're like, “Your tipi's set up wrong,” and we're like, “We know.” We know. Nobody who sets up that tipi is actually from a tipi community. And also, we turn the door so it's facing people. And it's supposed to be, I think, facing east, and, you know, some people have been kind of wary about having a tipi there because it invokes thoughts of stereotypes and things like that, and while we understand that, at this point, it's not necessarily to invoke stereotypes, it's to make our presence really visible and known. Like, all my friends know, at Pride, to find the tipi, and I'll be there, which also just sounds hilariously stereotypical. But it's just such a strong symbol and invokes such a strong reaction out of people that that was kind of our goal. We are physically here to be in their face and remind them: You are on stolen land. Like this year, we had a bunch of hand-painted posters inside the tipi that had the various names of the different tribes who lived in the Multnomah Territory here. And it's like, “Come inside to see whose land you're on,” and they're all lined up, and people didn't know there were that many here. So, I think next year we're going to kind of focus on that and do a little bit more of history lesson. Because they just don't know.

**Molly**: Yeah. And speaking of not knowing, I just want to go back a little bit to what you said about “for lack of a better word,” like Two Spirit identities are new to many straight Native Americans. And I just want to clarity, I'm assuming what you mean by that is, like, there were these practices, and then they were sort of, like, taken away through colonization, and now they're being relearned. Is that...?  
  
**Jack**: Yeah.

**Molly**: Okay.

**Jack**: So, during colonization, there was a specific tactic where it was kind of a “Join us or die.” So, they knew to specifically target medicine people and people that seemed to be highly respected in the community, right? So the goal was to either convert the medicine people, but if the medicine people didn't convert, then you just kill them and scare the shit out of everybody else. There's even stories of one community going through that forced conversion process and sending scouts to the next village over being like, “You need to hide these people because they are at my village right now, and they're going to come for you, too.”

And so, it started off like that, with specific targeting, and then over the years, once Indian boarding schools came up, you know, which were facilities that were built all across this nation and in Canada to, and I use big quote fingers here, “civilize the Indian.” There's a saying, “Kill the Indian, save the man,” which was started by Captain Pratt who founded all these boarding schools. Basically what the US government would do is, they would force and sometimes even kidnap Native children and take them to these schools run sometimes by the Catholic Church, I think mostly by the Catholic church, and force them to learn English, they would cut their hair, they would give them Christian names, if they spoke in their language, if they did anything Indian-like, they would be beat, and there are mass, mass children graves at those places.

Oregon actually has one of the few remaining, still running Indian boarding schools, Chemawa, which there's a lot of mixed feelings about that. But in boarding school, even, right, with the introduction of Christianity, also what was forced upon us was the gender binary and gender roles and things like that. So, it was weird mix because there's also various figures throughout history, there's We'wha who was Pueblo, ooh, I really hope I got that right, We'wha was a figure who was a Two Spirited individual and dressed in feminine clothing, did feminine tasks like basket-weaving and rug-weaving and things like that, and the Europeans were like, completely just loved her. She even got to meet the, I don't know which president, but she went to the White House, basically, and it was only until they found out that, like, We'wha wasn't what they figured a female was, then she was disgraced and all of that. So, there are sometimes where it's seen as, like, an oddity, but an interesting one, but overall, homophobia, of course as we all know, is a learned behavior, so that was also hammered into it, so it was gender binary, it was “What you're doing it disgusting.”

One of the earliest terms for Two Spirited people was this term called *berdache*, which I think has like, French origins if I remember correctly, and basically the translation roughly is, like, male prostitute. Like that was how they translated what was going on, and they didn't bother to try and find out. So that's the other tricky part when it comes to this whole Two Spirit movement is like, there's not a lot out there, really, because they didn't want to record it. They wanted to crush it. They wanted to destroy it. So there are some Spanish writings about it and some journal entries, and there's a lot more in academia, a lot of Native folks who are trying to research this and get more answers, you know.

Something I used to talk about when I did trainings on Two Spirit stuff was just, talk to your elders as much as you can, even though they've been affected by boarding school, like, talk to them, and see what you can pull out of how they were treated, or what words were used. I mean, it's a mixture because, like, I know in my language, in O’odham, we have this word, *wik’ovat*, but *wik’ovat* is derogatory, it means feminine man, but it's used as a derogatory term. Sometimes we have those derogatory terms, but you have to wonder, like, where does that really come from? So, in our communities, since this has been going on for centuries, generations, the boarding schools lasted until, like, the 80s or early 90s So with that in mind, and all these generations being affected, it's really hard sometimes because even within cultures, like my culture, the Pascua Yaqui, we're super Catholic, but we integrated Catholicism with our traditional beliefs to where it's something... if you ask a Yaqui, like, “Oh, are you Catholic?” No, we're like something else completely separated from Catholicism. It's one of those things, right? Like, oh, but we've been doing it like this for years, and it's like, yeah, but where did we really get that from?

So that's the tricky part, is trying to separate that. I mean, just because we've been doing it for years, we need to really recognize the historical and inter-generational trauma that was forced upon us, and really be honest with ourselves. I mean like, “Is this something we have done? Or is this something that was forced upon us that we eventually just made normal?” You know? Like in any society. Is this normalized? Or is this something that maybe shouldn't be?

**Molly**: I know I've said this a bunch of times already, but this time for real. Thank you so much for explaining that. I'm like, just nodding vigorously for five minutes straight, just like, yeah. Yep. Mmhm. Yeah, yes. So thank you so much. How do you think that the mainstream queer community could better make space for Two Spirit Indigenous folks or queer Indigenous folks?  
  
**Jack**: Dang. Well it could start by really just making space for the overall queer POC community in general. Because they got a lot of work to do either way. Queer culture is so whitewashed. I mean, most mainstream culture is whitewashed, but even queer culture is whitewashed to the point where you have a movie about Stonewall, and instead of Marsha P. Johnson throwing freaking a shot glass, it's some white twink throwing a shot glass or starting a riot or whatever, and you're like, wait a second, that’s not at all how it happened. I mean, they're already erasing us from history, they're continuing to colonize queerness, so if we could stop that, that'd be great.

That's step one: decolonize queerness. Step two would be just to educate yourself, really look at dismantling the white supremacy that's infiltrated the queer community. I mean, you know, you see all this stuff on Grindr about, “Well, it's just a preference,” you know, the “no fats, no femmes, no Asians, no whatever,” which is just disgusting. But really educating yourself and dismantling that in yourself, but also in your group of friends, and like, correcting, just like anything else, just correcting problematic behavior that you see. It's even the little things of like, “Let's have a powwow!” you know, like, maybe don't. Maybe don't say that. Maybe don't do Cher's half-breed song in your drag performance. Just saying. It's like, it's the same advice to even straight white America, just like, educate yourself and really look at what you're doing because it doesn't directly effect you, but that doesn't mean that it's not harmful.

On the opposite end of that, aside from ignorance, there's people who really want to be informed, so much so that they end up pushing the actual person aside and trying to speak for them. And we don't need people to speak for us. So use that privilege to provide and platform and don't tokenize us. Like, be supportive, but understand like, Indian issues aren't about you, so don't center yourself around them. POC issues aren't about you, don't center yourself around them. Yes, you can be queer and be racist. It is a *thing*. It's possible. It's so possible. Queer folks experience discrimination, yes; however, have you tried being brown and queer? Have you tried being black and queer? It's oppression upon oppression upon oppression, of course I'm not trying to do the oppression Olympics, but at the same time, you need to realize, again, you have certain advantages despite also disadvantages, so really just making space, getting educated, uplifting those voices who have been screaming for decades. We have been really talking about this stuff overall for years, and only when it becomes trendy do your white friends be like, “Oh my god, did you hear? Police are like, killing Black people? Oh my god, did you hear that like, oil companies are like, destroying Native lands?" “No, Barbara, I had no idea oil companies were destroying my sacred burial grounds, but thank you for sending me that Buzzfeed article.” I'm a little salty about it.

[Molly laughs]

I can't help it. But at the same time, I'm salty because I care. I'm like a little pink Himalayan salt heart. Just be mindful of how much space you really take up. The queer community really owes Black and brown cultures so much. I mean, it's amazing. So many white folks don't even know where the term 'Yassss' came from. They think it came from, like RuPaul or something, and it's like, nah, man, that comes from, like, something else completely, it comes from ballroom culture. They just don't know. And sometimes they sometimes don't care to know. So, like, get educated and just be mindful of your own dang privileges and make space for everybody in the rainbow.

**Molly**: When you were talking about the intersections of being queer and Indigenous, I was thinking we're recording this the week that someone leaked to the New York Times that the Trump administration was thinking about redefining gender to make it mean sex, and to have sex mean something that you're assigned at birth that can never change. And when they said that and when people started talking about using that to erase Indigenous people, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, you see where I'm going with this. [laughs]

To erase trans people, one of the first things—oh! And to use genetic testing, they even said to use genetic testing, like, obviously, the first thing I thought of was genocide tactics that had been used on Indigenous folks for centuries and centuries. So, I was wondering if you had feelings coming up too, and like this, having multiple identities that are all at the same time trying to be erased by the government.

**Jack**: Yeah. I mean, as an Indigenous person, of course, like, same shit, different day. The government's always trying to erase me, our existence is always a political act whether we want it to be or not. But I, I mean it's definitely concerning and upsetting to see, and frustrating to see, too, because it's like, I mean this government is just so old and crotchety, and they just can't pull out anything new. They're using the same exact tactics over and over again. And, I mean, I'm used to it at this point. I'm not surprised. White supremacy will never really surprise me, I think. Like, oh, Trump said something shitty? Wow, is the sky still blue? Like, I wish we could stop being outraged that they're doing shitty things and instead just accept or nail down that cemented truth that this is a shitty person, and they're going to continue to do shitty things, but we're not going to be shocked by it. We're just going to address this, and attack it, and burn it to the ground. But yeah, I mean, if we constantly are just being surprised all the time, I feel like that doesn't really get us anywhere. And I'm already used to pushing back, so that's all we can really do, is push back. Hard.

**Molly**: Yeah. You mentioned decolonizing queerness, and I wanted to ask what decolonizing queerness or gender would look like to you?

**Jack**: Dang. I really like that term because [laughs] it's not from me, but, to me, it would really just be kind of an open space for anyone to just express however they feel. And stepping away from categorizing. Like, that's a very colonizer thing, everything has to be categorized, and everything is very linear as opposed to just letting it exist. You know, looking at how everything is trying to be forced into these specific areas and, again, I didn't feel like I fit in any of the areas, I'm not really butch, I'm not lipstick lesbian, I'm just me. So, it would be a more open space of like, you don't even, I mean, if you have terms, again, like that's cool, and if you like your terms, that's rad, and you can use that. But to remove that pressure of having to find terms, right? ‘Cause for a while, I thought I'd be okay, and then as I started to get more involved in the community, I felt pressured that I had to come up with terms because people would be like, “So what are you?” and it was like, “What?… Sometimes I kiss girls, sometimes I kiss boys, sometimes I don't really care.” But people really want to know. So I think it would just be stepping back from labels and letting people exist how they want to do and express how they want to express. Because sometimes I will use male terms, if I mess up, I'm like, “Man, I'm not a smart man,” and people are like, “What do you mean? You're not a man.” And I'm, “Uh... Okay, that's a whole conversation.”

**Molly**: Yeah.

**Jack**: But, like, if I want to do stuff like that... I always joke, like, “I'm a boobs man.” Like, I say I’m a “boobsman,” I never say I'm a “boobs girl,” and it should be fine. No one should question that. It's just however I want to say stuff is how I'm going to say stuff, and it's okay. And how I exist, nobody questions that, it's just, oh, that's just Jack and that's chill. It's really just letting down all those categories and accepting people for who they are at the end of the day, and celebrating that and loving those differences because that's what is the spice of life, variety, right? Like, why do we need to be the same? Or even just categorized? It gets boring after a while. It's not how the world works, and it's not how we should be trying to work.

It gets tied into, like, my name, even. I go by Jack, right? And I've been called Jack since I was five, but it's kind of interesting because, part of how I've managed to structure my life and the people in it, is you can kind of tell where-slash-when people have met me is if they call me Jack or Jackie. Work environments, I go by Jackie, but out of work environments, I go by Jack. Or in high school. If they met me in high school, they call me Jack. All of my ex-partners have called me Jack, and felt it weird hearing my parents call me Jackie. My boss used to call me Miss Jack, and I was like, “That doesn't... not... just call me Jackie. Just please call me Jackie.” Or my mom trying to call me Jack, and I'm like, “Actually, Mom, you can just call me Jackie. Just, it's fine. You've called me that for eons. You don't have to…" It's not like I'm Jack *now*. It's just... it encompasses my two, right? My masculine name and my feminine name. It's a good way that I think about my pronouns, too, like why I don't care is I meet so many people that are confused. Like, “Wait. You're Jack? That's a boy's name.” Or I have friends who are like, “I'm with my friend Jack. She's a girl, though.” You know, stuff like that, and so it's just like, yeah, if Jack is going to make your brain malfunction too much because I have boobs, then call me Jackie. If it's too complicated for you, if that's really, if you're hung up on my name, just call me Jackie, and it's fine.

Same with pronouns. If I present as feminine to you, or if I exude feminine energy somehow, or I exude masculine energy at this point in time, like, then just use whatever pronouns you want. Use Jack or Jackie, you know? It doesn't matter.

**Molly**: So, we mentioned that mainstream queer culture is very white. But Indigenous queer culture exists. How would you describe Indigenous queer culture to someone that had never been exposed to it in any way?  
  
**Jack**: Oof. Pretty radical. At least from my experience. A lot of Indigenous queer people really, really make it their mission to, like, make settlers uncomfortable. Make everyone uncomfortable, but like, really push back hard on everything that has been put on us. There are definitely times when I feel like Indigenous queers are the only people who are really talking real shit. Who are actually saying real stuff instead of thoughts and prayers, you know what I mean?

**Molly**: Yeah.

**Jack**: And I really love it, but it can be seen as super radical because they're like, "Fuck the government. Like, what has that ever helped us with? The whole system is built to destroy us." I know some Native artists that are just, like, “Dude, fuck voting. What has voting ever got us?” Really, if you think about it? Why are we choosing the lesser of two evils here, it's always going to be an old white person. Like, we lucked out, I guess, with Obama, but even Obama has his issues. Like, this whole fucking country sucks, and we need to stop acting like it's going to get better if we vote correctly. Of course, that can be seen as radical, but Indigenous queer art is really, like, it pushes the boundaries of gender and what that means. From my experience with Indigenous queer culture, it's a lot of artists. So many of us are artists, which is great, and I love it, it's so wonderful. Like, a lot of them just make the biggest middle finger they can out of their art as a giant “Fuck you” to colonialism.

I think there's a queer painter from Canada who does these, like, murals, but it's weird-ish because it's a Mountie having sex with, like, a stereotypical Indian, and playing with stereotypes, but he's bottoming or something, like... it's a whole thing, right? And then there's Native drag performers, too, Lady Shug, who's amazing, and I think she was Miss Gay New Mexico? Oh my goodness, she's going to strangle me. She's amazing, she has a title, I met her in Albuquerque and was really starstruck. She just did a performance that was on missing and murdered Indigenous women. It was very graphic, from the pictures I've seen, but she makes a point to talk about that. And also just to talk about the violence that happens to us because that's the other sad reality.

When I'm talking about how LGBTQ topics are still new in Native America, that also comes with the fact that queer Native people are being killed in their communities for being who they are. There's a documentary called *Two Spirit* about a two-spirited person who was murdered on the Navajo Nation, and that happens a lot. We have the highest suicide rates in America to where multiple tribal communities are doing state of emergencies because their children are committing suicide. And it's not just their children, but it's Two-Spirited children as well. A majority are Two-Spirited children.

So we face a lot, so not only are we holding the colonizer responsible, but a lot of queer artists I know and in the community, we really try to hold our community responsible. It varies, of course. Like, I've talked to other folks who, in their community, they have meet-ups, but the meet-ups are in secret. Still. In 2018. We still have a long way to go. But there are a lot of amazing people in the Native queer community that are really, really loud, and that's why I love them.

**Molly**: Yeah. Are there any specifically that you would recommend that folks check out?

**Jack**: Demian DinéYazhí, who's amazing...

**Molly**: Mm hmm. They've been on the show.

**Jack**: Yay! Good! I love Demian. I haven't seen them in forever. Who else? Oh my goodness. Jeremy Dutch is a very, very talented, Two-Spirited pianist and musician who just does gorgeous, oh god, just the most amazing voice I've ever heard in my life. I play him a lot on the show. There's also this thing called The Two Spirit Project, that's basically a photo project where Two-Spirited people would submit pictures and a bio and talk about their identity and how they see it as being Two Spirit. Two Spirit Project is really great. There's Native Youth Sexual Health Network, which does amazing, amazing stuff on Two Spirit identity and educating youth about safe sex and what Two Spirit means and all this amazing stuff, so that's just another one that I love. Yeah. Just google and you'll find stuff. We're around.

**Molly**: Yeah. We're running low on time, but you mentioned your show, and I was wondering if you wanted to tell us about it.

**Jack**: Oh, yeah. [laughs] I have a radio show every Thursday, six to seven PM, Pacific Time, on KBOO 90.7 FM here in Portland, or you go online at [KBOO.FM](https://kboo.fm/), it's called Rose City Native Radio, and it's basically just your run of the mill Native show. I play Native contemporary music, not really powwow, I'm talking about hip-hop, electronic pop, all of that stuff. And I talk, I do rants, sometimes I have somebody in the studio with me and we talk together about various issues that are coming up in Native America or locally. We play poetry, we play radio plays, and then every last Thursday of the month, we have the Indigenous Power Hour, which is an extra hour added on to our time, and it's an hour-long music mix of Indigenous music, and... yeah. And then I also do a podcast called “A Tribe Called Geek.” You can just type in [atribecalledgeek.com](https://atribecalledgeek.com/), we have a website. The podcast is a little bit harder to find, but it's in there. Or you can check out our Facebook page at [A Tribe Called Geek on Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/tribecalledgeek). I'm [@jackthepima](https://twitter.com/jackthepima) on Twitter even though I don't use Twitter a ton.

**Molly**: I'm really excited about your show. Do you have, like, are there archives online?  
  
**Jack**: Yeah--

**Molly**: Cool.

**Jack**: So, if you go on [KBOO.FM](https://kboo.fm/), that's actually the web address, it has archives of my show. I also mix music, if you look up Gila River Monster—it's Gila with a 'G,' but—Gila River Monster, that's my DJ name. I'm posting mixes, so I do Native music sometimes, but also contemporary.

**Molly**: Hell yeah. The way we always end the show is by asking, in your ideal world... You kind of already answered this, but in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Jack**: Yeah, I did kinda... [laughs] It wouldn't really exist. It would just, people would just be who they are, and it's okay, and everyone's chill about it, and no one questions it, and people just can exist and not have it be an issue.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

**Molly**: That's going to do it for this week's show. Don't forget to tell all of your trans, non-white friends about our grant. We are giving away $1,000 to trans people of color, please help us do this by spreading the word. You can find and share the application form at [genderpodcast.com/grant](https://www.genderpodcast.com/grant). While you're telling your friends things, why not tell them about the show? Don't forget that even if you can't apply for the grant, you can support the grant and the show with your money by going to [patreon.com/gender](https://www.patreon.com/gender) or PayPal or Cash App or [Stick to Resist](https://www.etsy.com/shop/sticktoresist). You can also contact us and learn more about us and find transcripts for almost every episode—we're always working on it—at [genderpodcast.com](https://www.genderpodcast.com/). And you can find us on Twitter, on Instagram, both at G-E-N-D-E-R-E-V-E-A-L, and you can join our extremely wholesome and good and supportive and soul-nourishing Slack community, the link to do that is in the show notes as well. Our logo is by Michelle Leigh. Our theme song is by Breakmaster Cylinder. Additional music this week by Blue Dot Sessions.

Next week is the last episode of Gender Reveal season three, and I will tell you right now because you listened all the way to the end, it's with author of *Amateur* and *Man Alive*, Thomas Page McBee. I am so excited. I asked him so many questions about men and masculinity because, like, what are men, even? Please tune in and subscribe if you haven't, tell all your friends, tell your enemies. I'll be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]